



The Mulatto Solitude

Born around 1780, the Mulatto Solitude was a historical figure of the 1802 uprisings against the reinstatement of Lacrosse, who had been appointed Captain-General of Guadeloupe by Napoleon Bonaparte and expelled in October 1801 following a coup by the army's officers of colour. The little known of her is recorded in the book *Histoire de la Guadeloupe* (History of Guadeloupe) by Auguste Lacour (1805–1869).

In 1802, eight years after slavery was proclaimed abolished in Guadeloupe for the first time by Victor Hugues on 7 June 1794, Napoleon Bonaparte sent General Antoine Richepance to Guadeloupe.

In charge of 3,500 men, he was instructed to reinstate Lacrosse as Captain-General, disarm all soldiers of colour, deport rebel officers and restore discipline among the former slaves. On his arrival, he ordered the disarming of soldiers of colour and made them board his ships.

Illustration by Yann Degruel.



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In response, Battalion Chief (Commander) Joseph Ignace and Captains Palerme and Massoteau organized an uprising.

On 10 May 1802, their fellow rebel Louis Delgrès, a native of Saint-Pierre, Martinique, who was Battalion Chief and Commander of the Basse-Terre district, launched a proclamation entitled 'To the whole universe, the last cry of innocence and despair'.

The Mulatto Solitude, a few months pregnant, joined this fight against Richepance's troops.

After eighteen days of unequal combat (between more than 4,000 soldiers on Richepance's side and around 1,000 regular soldiers on the side of the rebels), the rebels were defeated. Ignace, about to be taken prisoner, committed suicide, while Delgrès and his troops blew up the Danglemont house in Matouba, where they had taken refuge. Solitude was taken prisoner around 23 May 1802, when Palerme's camp in Dolé was taken.





Biography

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She was sentenced to death and "suppliciée"* on 29 November that year, a day after giving birth.

A female figure of insurgents in Guadeloupe in 1802, the mulatto Solitude symbolizes the Caribbean women and mothers who fought to protect the ideals of equality and freedom in the context of slavery.



* To be "suppliciée" means to be tortured, which could include flogging or being shackled, and could culminate in death.

