“False Promises”: The U.S. Occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)

by

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Introduction

> We were ready to accept this rule and follow its obligations, despite the threat to our autonomy and the dignity of our free and independent people. But the *false promises*, given by the Yankees, when they invaded our land, brought in almost four years of continuous insults, incredible crimes, killings, theft and barbarian acts, the secrets of which are only known to Americans.
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> - Charlemagne Péralte's letter to René Delage, French minister of Foreign Affairs, 1919 [1]

In July 1918, Madame Exile Onexile noticed her mule was missing. She reported it to the magistrate in Section La Guajon, Haiti. After searching the area, Onexile found the missing animal in the possession of the U.S. Lieutenant Patrick Kelly. The lieutenant refused to return the mule and demanded 135 gourds for it. When Onexile returned with the money, Kelly imprisoned her for two days. Onexile left for a neighbouring town to care for her sick mother, and when she returned, she found out that her husband, who had been sick with rheumatism, was dead. Her younger brother informed her that, in March 1919, Kelly had come with a patrol and hung her husband from the rafters, stole their money and set fire to their house. She knew if she had been home, that he would have killed her, too.[2]

Unfortunately, Madame Onexile's experience was not an anomaly during the U.S. occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Rather, it encapsulates the racialized violence that characterized the U.S. occupation. After the U.S. government invaded Haiti in July 1915 and the Dominican Republic in May 1916, it reinforced its authority through legal treaties and

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[1] This letter is included in Charlemagne Péralte to Delage, Camp Général, July 27, 1919, enclosure to René Delage to minister of foreign affairs, Port-au-Prince, August 8, 1919, dossier 9, Haiti 1918–1940, Archives Diplomatiques, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris; it is cited and discussed by Alan McPherson in *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 62. My translation of the document is taken from "Bandits or Patriots?: Documents from Charlemagne Péralte," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the web*, http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4946/

[2] United States Senate, The Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, *Hearings before a Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo*, Washington, 1922, Vol I, 891.

military power. Despite determined resistance from local rebels, peasants and elites, the United States occupied Haiti until 1934 and the Dominican Republic until 1924.

The United States justified the occupations using political, economic, and socio-cultural rationales, claiming that the two republics of Hispaniola were a threat to their own people, other nations' investments, and U.S. national security. Politically, the instability of the governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic worried U.S. policymakers, as they believed volatility in the region would spur European intervention and thereby imperil U.S. interests in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly following the opening of the Panama Canal and the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Economically, both Caribbean nations had taken out foreign loans and owed money to European creditors. Socio-culturally, the U.S. empire was deeply racialized, which significantly impacted its imperial ventures in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, the United States supported racial stratification and exclusion, as was evident by the Jim Crow laws in the South. Washington sought to establish this familiar racial order in areas of occupation.[3] Internationally, the United States defined itself as a "civilized nation" possessing the authority to rectify the wrongdoings of "lesser peoples." Within this context, U.S. policymakers and intellectuals developed Eurocentric discourses which complemented their self-proclaimed identity. The most prominent was paternalist universalism, which suggested that enlightened rule by Anglo-Europeans could lift up racially inferior peoples.[4] In short, due to ongoing political instability, foreign debt and their non-white races, the United States did not believe that Haitian and Dominican peoples were capable of governing themselves.

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[3] Jason M. Colby, *The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and U.S. Expansion in Central America. (*Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 82.
[4] Stephen Pampinella, ""The Way of Progress and Civilization": Racial Hierarchy and US State Building in Haiti and the Dominican Republic (1915–1922)." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 2020, 6.

Therefore, the U.S. occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic were attempts at state-building, with the intent to safeguard investments and promote political stability. Essentially, the United States sought stable pro-U.S. governments in the Caribbean, and the political turmoil within the sister-nations of Hispaniola provided opportunities for intervention. Yet the U.S. occupation failed at creating positive and sustainable political, economic and socio-cultural change on Hispaniola. For the most part, both republics' citizens rejected U.S. intervention and resisted to varying degrees throughout the occupations. The resistance was caused in large part by "concrete grievances" rather than nationalism. For the most part, local concerns were material, power-related, self-protective, or self-promoting.[5] Furthermore, the paternalism of U.S. policymakers and racialized violence perpetrated by the U.S. Marines only fueled further distrust and resentment towards the foreign invasion.

This paper builds on a rich body of scholarship on the U.S. empire and occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Recent scholarship on the U.S. empire in the Caribbean situate the occupations into the broader context of imperialism.[6] Many historians have explored the domestic and global factors that contributed to the United States' desire to spread political, cultural, and economic influence in the Americas. Significantly, racism within the United States and the U.S. empire led Americans to believe that the political instability and economic crises of independent nations in this region was evidence that dark-skinned peoples could not self-govern. Intervention was, therefore, regarded by many U.S. politicians and American citizens as justified. The internal and external conditions that led to instability were ignored. Within the

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[5] Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations*, (Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

[6] See: Jason M. Colby, *The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and U.S. Expansion in Central America. (*Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, (Itheca: Cornell University Press, 1963); Emily S. Rosenberg, "World War I, Wilsonianism, and Challenges to US Empire," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4, 2014; Cyrus Veeser, *A World Safe for Capitalism: Dollar Diplomacy and America's Rise to Global Power*, (Columbia University Press, 2002).

discussion of the occupations, this paper builds upon the work of other scholars to obtain a complex understanding of the political, social, cultural, and economic impacts.[7] Alan McPherson provides a comprehensive account of the U.S. occupations of Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. McPherson argues that political culture was central to the U.S. occupation and domestic and transnational resistance movements. Resistance, however, was not motivated by nationalism, as much as concrete grievances such as "hatred for the brutality of the marines, fear of losing land, outrage at cultural impositions, and thirst for political power."[8] Mary A. Renda explores the cultural aspects of U.S. contact with Haiti during the U.S. occupation and its aftermath. Renda uses a plethora of primary source material to demonstrate what Americans thought about Haiti and the culture of U.S. imperialism. Her central theme of analysis is American paternalism in terms of intent and impact.[9] For his part, Edward Paulino analyzes the contentious Haitian-Dominican border relations during the twentieth century, including the Haitian Massacre of 1937. Paulino argues against the notion that anti-Haitian sentiment was a part of Dominican ethos, arguing that the border region had its own cultural identity, which included Haitian-Dominican collaboration. Rather, the anti-Haitian sentiment was exacerbated by dictator Rafael Trujillo's regime, and efforts were made to place Dominican "whiteness" in opposition to Haitian "Blackness," which led to violence.[10] While an abundance of literature exists on the individual occupations, less work has been done comparing the occupations and

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[7] See: Suzy Castor and Lynn Garafola, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," *The Massachusetts Review 15*, no. 1/2, 1974; Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations*, (Oxford University Press, 2014); Edward Paulino, *Dividing Hispaniola: The Dominican Republic's Border Campaign against Haiti, 1930-1961*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016); Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-194*0. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, (N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

[8] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 1.

[9] Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-194*0, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[10] Edward Paulino, *Dividing Hispaniola: The Dominican Republic's Border Campaign against Haiti, 1930-1961*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016).

even less has included the Haitian Massacre within its analysis of the occupation. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore two consequences of the U.S. occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the early twentieth century: the ongoing resistance movements and the 1937 Haitian Massacre.

I argue that both consequences derived from the U.S. desire to create cooperative governments and ensure stability in the Caribbean Basin, but doing so using violent military force, unwanted centralization, and a lack of long-term direction spurred resistance. In particular, this paper will explore the role of race within the paternalist rhetoric of U.S. policymakers, as well as racialized violence perpetrated against the Haitians and Dominicans alike by the U.S. Marines.

The organization of this paper is chronological, and reflects on the themes of paternalism and the subsequent racialized violence, as well as growing resistance to occupation. Chapter I examines the emergence of the U.S. empire and its early impact on Hispaniola prior to 1915. The early histories of post-colonial Haiti and the Dominican Republic will also be explored, in regards to their political, economic, and socio-cultural structures. Chapter II analyzes the beginning of the occupation, racialized violence, and growing domestic resistance. Chapter III focuses on the transnational resistance movements, the inconsistencies of withdrawal policies, and the impact of U.S. interference on the 1937 Haitian Massacre.

Chapter I: The Emergence of the U.S. Empire and the Republics of Hispaniola

The late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries marked the emergence of the United States as an overseas empire. Due to the industrial developments and growing capital accumulation following the Civil War, the United States sought new markets and areas for investment, like railroads, plantations and public utilities.[11] Although most of these projects were funded by private investments, these American business interests were significant, as they impacted commercial and labour patterns and brought Washington into a more active role in the region. In the early 1880s, British interests controlled much of the Latin American economy, but by the late 1890s, American capital became predominant, as Washington's efforts to promote U.S. interests became more aggressive.[12] Moreover, American exceptionalism—the notion that only the United States could provide security and democracy—led to the assumption that the United States was destined to have control over the territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and beyond.[13] This sentiment was made evident in its economic and military intervention in the Caribbean.

Meanwhile, the peoples of Hispaniola were struggling with the legacy of slavery and European colonialism. In 1804, Haiti emerged from a slave revolution and its status as a free Black republic concerned U.S. officials throughout the nineteenth century. Haiti's independence posed a threat to slavery in the U.S. South, as it was proof that people of African descent could govern themselves. Defenders of slavery, however, also referred to Haiti as evidence that people

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[11] Cyrus Veeser, *A World Safe for Capitalism: Dollar Diplomacy and America's Rise to Global Power*, (Columbia University Press, 2002), 1-2; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, (Itheca: Cornell University Press, 1963).
[12] Colby, *The Business of Empire,* 49.
[13] Paulino, *Dividing Hispaniola,* 36.

of African descent could not do so successfully.[14] Southern Americans worried Haiti's status would provoke slave revolts in the United States. Therefore, the United States maintained trade relations, but withheld official recognition of the new Black republic until 1862. Moreover, during the American Civil War, European powers intervened in the Caribbean, while Americans were preoccupied. In the following years, the United States recognized the strategic importance of this region and attempted to secure a military base, followed by naval expansion.[15]

In the late 1880s and 1890s, the combination of Europe's global expansion and domestic U.S. anxieties heightened U.S. interest in an overseas empire. The United States had previously engaged in imperial expansion at the expense of Indigenous peoples of modern-day Mexico and the United States. Following the 1898 Spanish-American War, however, the United States gained its first overseas colonies. The United States gained control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, thereby, becoming a two-ocean empire.[16] Moreover, in 1903, the United States sponsored the secession of Panama from Colombia. Between 1904 and 1912, Washington asserted hegemony in the Hispanic Caribbean to protect its interests. At this point, however, U.S. influence was primarily spread through private interests, including mining and railroad enterprises and trade of sugar and bananas. These business interests enabled further political intervention, as investors pushed for protection. The U.S. government and U.S. business interests saw themselves as a part of an American effort to bring order, progress and stability to Latin America and the Caribbean.[17] Assumptions about race influenced these efforts. It was generally agreed among politicians and business elites that "dark-skinned peoples were incapable of maintaining public order and protecting private property, which were the hallmarks of

[14] Renda, *Taking Haiti,* 41.
[15] Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934,* (N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 31.
[16] Colby, *The Business of Empire,* 56.
[17] Ibid., 46.

responsible government."[18] In short, the United States saw the Black and Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean as incapable of stability, and therefore, a threat to the interests of the U.S. empire.

The United States had long asserted its right to shape the region's future. In late 1823, President James Monroe had announced that the United States would not tolerate further European imperial expansion in the Americas. This Monroe Doctrine was a defining moment in U.S. foreign policy. By the early twentieth century, moreover, the United States had the power to begin enforcing the doctrine. Following the Venezuela Crisis of 1902-1903, President Theodore Roosevelt added his "Roosevelt Corollary" to the doctrine. The United States sought to protect its empire and access to the Panama Canal by limiting European influence. The corollary announced that the United States would intervene in Latin America in order to enforce political stability and financial responsibility, and thereby prevent European intervention.

Strategic control in the Americas became of utmost importance in the early twentieth century due to the construction of the Panama Canal.[19] The interest and involvement of the United States in the Caribbean area increased substantially, as the nation sought to maintain political stability to prevent foreign intrusion, which could threaten U.S. interests. Moreover, the U.S. Navy desired to secure the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti, as it was a natural shipping route from the Atlantic to the Caribbean. In 1891 and 1913, the United States unsuccessfully tried to buy Haiti's Môle Saint-Nicolas, which was on one side of the passage. In addition, once World War I began, Mexican oil and Chilean nitrates were essential for the allied war effort. Keeping foreign powers out of the Caribbean was seen as imperative.[20]

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[18] Colby, *The Business of Empire,* 56.
[19] Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti,* 9.
[20] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 4.

The greatest perceived threat to U.S. interests in the Caribbean was Germany.[21] In the years leading up to the war, Germany was an enemy power with a small but influential community of expatriates in Haiti. They had been able to bypass Haiti's constitutional ban on foreigners owning land by marriage into prominent Haitian families. The expatriates wielded a disproportionate amount of economic leverage and financed many of the ongoing political uprisings. The U.S. government feared Germany's geostrategic position and American businessmen feared its influence in the Haitian economy. Therefore, the U.S. State Department encouraged the National City Bank of New York to acquire investor control of the Banque Nationale de la République d'Haïti. This was the sole commercial bank and served as the government's treasury. Furthermore, the National City Bank officials, including the vice-president, Roger L. Farnham, pressured the State Department to intervene to safeguard U.S. assets in Haiti.[22]

This effort fit within the larger U.S. policy initiative in the Caribbean known as Dollar Diplomacy. Although launched by the Roosevelt Corollary, the policy grew under President William Howard Taft. Washington worried that the debts Caribbean nations owed to European creditors would bring political instability and European intervention. Under Dollar Diplomacy, Wall Street provided loans to Latin American and Caribbean governments to enable them to pay off debts to European powers. The American loans were then secured through U.S. control of the national customs houses. Many of such governments were in debt to European powers. The first such arrangement came in 1907, when the Dominican Republic signed a treaty allowing the U.S. government to control customs revenue.

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[21] Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 34.
[22] Ibid., 49.

In addition to strategic, economic and political interests in the Caribbean, there was an element of cultural and racial chauvinism. The United States saw itself as an advanced civilized country with the obligation "to lead the world in the uplift of the 'backward' or 'dependent races.'"[23] It was a common belief among white Americans that racialized peoples were biologically incapable of learning modern governance.[24] For instance, American political scientist Paul Reinsch suggested that the United States should establish protectorates over backwards regions and promote civilized institutions of self-governance.[25] In 1908, the *Washington Post* published an article in support of U.S. intervention stating, "there is a universal recognition in the fact that powerful and intelligent countries are under some obligation to the weak and ignorant." This was followed by the question regarding "whether we have any duty to those unfortunate, benighted, semi-barbarous communities on their account, on our account, or on the account of the rest of the world having interests there."[26] Evidently, Americans believed that the political chaos was due to the innate incapability of non-white countries to self-govern.[27] Therefore intervention was deemed necessary, or at the very least, responsible.

Ultimately, the aim of U.S. imperialism was strategic control. U.S. officials sought to limit European intervention, provide economic supervision, and safeguard U.S. investments and interests. In the process, the U.S. government hoped to create stable U.S.-friendly governments to do business with. It believed that the only way for non-white nations to become capable of such civilization was through the tutelage of racially superior powers.

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[23] Jessica Blatt, "'To Bring Out The Best That Is In Their Blood': Race, reform, and civilization in the *Journal of Race Development* (1910–1919)," *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 2004, 693.
[24] Pampinella, "The Way of Progress and Civilization," 7.
[25] Ibid., 6.
[26] "Haiti and Santo Domingo," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1908.
[27] Suzy Castor and Lynn Garafola, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," *The Massachusetts Review* 15, no. 1/2, 1974, 256.

The dynamics of the U.S. empire shifted under the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson. Roosevelt and Taft worked with private banks to offer conditional loans to countries that needed to be subjected to U.S. administration, even when Congress would disapprove. The Wilson administration continued these practices but took it even further. Under Wilson, a plan was developed to promote a U.S.-administered sphere of influence enforced by private bank loans made to governments on condition of their acceptance of economic supervision. Historian Emily Rosenberg argues that in these cases, the influence of the U.S. government was less visible to those being governed and the American public, as there were "no treaties brought before Congress, no executive agreements, and little public controversy."[28] The controlled loans failed to promote stability and instead brought greater debt to the Latin American and Caribbean nations. The subsequent instability was used to justify further intervention. The nations of Hispaniola were affected, as Rosenberg notes, "[c]ontrolled loans and a military occupation to enforce them ended up going hand in hand in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti during Wilson's administration."[29]

The two countries of Hispaniola had been on Washington's radar for decades, but due to recent foreign policy developments and strategic interests, U.S. officials sought to expand their influence. The countries were small, poor, agricultural nations with incipient industrial sectors.[30] Haitians were primarily Black descendants of the French-owned slaves, with a smaller mixed-race or mulatto population. They spoke French and Kreyol. Although Haiti was home to approximately 100,000 people, it had a smaller landmass within Hispaniola. The Dominican

[28] Emily S. Rosenberg, "World War I, Wilsonianism, and Challenges to US Empire," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4, (2014), 856.
[29] Ibid.
[30] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 2.

Republic was home to around 21,000 to 35,000 Spanish-speaking people of mixed Indigenous, Spanish and African descent.[31]

The political systems of both Haiti and the Dominican Republic had been shaped by caudillismo- the militarized political-social domination by a charismatic strongman, which arose after the Latin American wars of independence with Spain in the nineteenth century. The system created a culture of frequent uprisings by chieftains or caudillos and their supporting armies, who would proclaim themselves as provisional presidents of a region or occupy the capital and obtain control. As Haitian historian Suzy Castor observes, "popular sovereignty, suffrage, and constitutions represented unreal affirmations in those societies characterized by the predominance of direct, personal bonds between the oligarchy and the mass of the people."[32] Haiti had a more centralized government than the Dominican Republic, where regional caudillos were most prominent.

Despite Haiti's victory in its struggle for independence, the first "Black Republic" entered nationhood under challenging conditions. Not only was Haiti in diplomatic isolation from the West, but in 1825 the French demanded 150 million francs in reparations for the lost human and land "property" of the French slaveholders in exchange for formal recognition of independence.[33] This hindered Haiti's economic growth for over a century. Haiti was forced to take out high-interest loans from European banks to pay off the debt. Haitians were convinced that no white man cared for Haiti's welfare and did not trust foreigners.[34]

While under French rule, Haiti had been called the "Pearl of the Antilles" due to its thriving sugarcane industry and high production rates. During the revolution, however, many

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[31] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 2.
[32] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 256.
[33] Renda, *Taking Haiti,* 60.
[34] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 8.

plantations, technology, and infrastructural accomplishments were destroyed.[35] After independence, the land was distributed to high-ranking military chiefs and civil officials, creating a landholding oligarchy consolidated through political power.[36] There were two principal classes: elites and peasants. Historian Hans Schmidt writes that the elites sought to achieve "respect for Haiti and the Negroid race by successfully emulating French culture."[37] One estimate states that between seventy-five and ninety-eight percent of the population could not read or write in the early twentieth century.[38]

Since 1821, the Code Rural of President Jean Pierre Boyer had regulated and institutionalized production relations in the countryside and the majority of the peasantry worked on the large plantations. Many issues hindered agricultural production, which created low production volumes. Together, these practices prevented the creation of a domestic market or the development of a reasonable agricultural policy. Haiti was stagnating at the pre-capitalist stage of production.[39]

The nature of Haitian agriculture was not only significant in relation to the economy but also to the political scene. The agrarian oligarchy held power, and although the budding commercial sector tried to develop into a domestic bourgeois class, it failed. Nevertheless, the commercial sector attempted to represent itself politically, which clashed with the agrarian oligarchy.[40] The power struggle became violent, and a political crisis emerged. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Haiti became increasingly unstable.

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[35] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 256.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti,* 34.
[38] John B. Whitton, "Big Brother to Haiti?" *Woman's Journal*, *Nineteenth Century Collections Online*, February 1930.
[39] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 259.
[40] Ibid., 257.

In 1908, President Pierre Nord Alexis was overthrown by General Francois Antoine Simon. Three years later, Simon was removed by a new insurrection and forced into exile, which became the standard procedure. Following Simon, no government lasted more than a year in power. Four governments succeeded one another from May 4, 1913, to July 27, 1915. The last regime prior to the U.S. occupation was that of General Vilbrun Guillaume Sam.

Haiti was in a state of instability due to a decline in agricultural production, a decrease in foreign trade, financial and administrative disorder, and political volatility, opening the way for an uprising led by Rosalvo Bobo. Bobo and his insurgent forces were plotting to overthrow Sam, and instead of fleeing in exile, Sam ordered the murder of 173 political prisoners. Sam and the head of the Port-au-Prince penitentiary, General Charles Oscar Etienne, were killed in the streets. The United States had been awaiting the right moment to intervene, and the death of Sam provided the opportunity.[41]

Meanwhile, on the eastern half of Hispaniola, the Dominican Republic was under Spanish rule until its first attempt at independence in 1821. In 1822, Haitian President Boyer attempted to unify the island with military force and occupied the Dominican Republic until 1844. Slavery was ended, but once again the plantations and land went into state ownership, and the land was distributed among the general and civil officials. Code Rural was applied, and a system of forced labour was created to ensure a supply of labour for the landowners. Like Haiti, two dominant classes were created: landowning oligarchs and peasants.

In the northern region of the Dominican Republic, tobacco plantations created an enclave of economic development and commercial activity. The large property owners were becoming merchants and developing an incipient domestic bourgeois class.[42] They established a political

[41] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 254.
[42] Ibid., 258.

party and sought to defend their interests and modernize the country. Yet they were never able to consolidate their position, as a new foreign sector displaced them in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Spanish arrived and built mills and introduced the sugar cane industry. The sugar cane industry exploded in the south, which increased business volume and limited capitalist development. This development brought in investors, especially from North America. Castor argues that the socio-economic structure had begun to combine feudal and pre-capitalist production and the modern capitalist sector. The latter, she notes, was exclusively controlled by foreigners.[43]

From 1880 to 1899, the Dominican Republic had been under the relatively peaceful dictatorship of Ulises Heureaux. Yet chaos erupted after he was assassinated on July 26, 1899. The two strongest factions of the Dominican oligarchy formed a provisional government. General Horacio Vazquez led the government as the president and Juan Isidro Jiménez as the vice-president. This government did not last long, however. After 1906, Ramón Cáceres maintained relative order in the country but was met with a new challenge in 1907. The United States imposed the receivership over the Dominican customs revenue. American authorities became in charge of ensuring the collection and managing all custom duties for the nation. The Dominican government lost the right to contract loans and to amend custom tariffs.

In addition to the customs receivership, the United States had intervened in Dominican financial and economic spheres prior to the occupation. The Banco Nacional de Santo Domingo, a firm based in the French capital, was evicted by the Santo Domingo Improvement Company (SDIC) of the United States. American companies monopolized the freight line between Dominican and U.S. ports and therefore gained exclusive control of mines, railroads, sugar cane,

[43] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 259.

coffee, cacao and banana plantations. In 1905, the U.S. dollar began to circulate as the national currency, along with the Dominican peso.[44]

In 1911, Cáceres was assassinated, and the political scene descended into chaos. Similar to Haiti, five governments succeeded one another from 1911 to 1916. In 1911, the United States implemented the Farm Concessions Law, which strengthened existing American plantations' position. Furthermore, the U.S. State Department established itself as an arbiter among the various political factions. In 1913, the United States also claimed the right to supervise elections.

[44] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 261.

Chapter II: The Early Years of Occupation (1915-1919)

On July 27, 1915, following the execution of 173 jailed opposition leaders, an anti-government mob murdered President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam. His body was torn to pieces and paraded on spikes throughout Port-au-Prince. The United States was awaiting an opportunity, and this uprising gave U.S. policymakers the pretext to intervene. The United States feared European intervention in the Caribbean, as in 1914, the Panama Canal was completed and World War I began. Secretary of State Robert Lansing viewed the murder of Sam as a convenient excuse for economic and political stabilization. Admiral William Banks Caperton and over three-hundred U.S Marines landed in Port-au-Prince on July 28, 1915. The United States formalized its occupation with the 1915 Agreement, passed at gunpoint by the Legislative Chamber.[45] The military intervention was backed by legal measures. On August 7, 1915, Lansing wrote to President Woodrow Wilson reporting that he spoke to the Haitian minister regarding the republic's affairs. The minister revealed that the Haitians were skeptical about the U.S. intervention. Lansing proclaimed that their motives were unselfish and "that the intelligent Haitians should feel gratified that it was the United States rather than some other power whose motives might not be as unselfish as ours."[46]

Although the initial U.S. landing in Port-au-Prince was met with little immediate resistance, the marines were not welcomed. They were greeted with silence and "dead-eyed stares."[47] The initial surge of resistance began within the first few months of occupation with fierce fighting from the Cacos insurgents. The Cacos were usually armed peasants from the mountain regions who were connected to elite politicians. The caudillos and their insurgent

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[45] Renda, *Taking Haiti,* 86.
[46] "The Lansing Papers," in Papers Relating to the *Foreign Relations of the United States,* 1914-1920, Volume II, Office of the Historian, Washington: August 7, 1915.
[47] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 27.

army's primary motivation was to defend regional and local autonomy from a central administration strengthened by an occupation force. The fighting was disorganized and mostly ineffective. On August 6, Caperton ordered the Cacos out of the capital. In retaliation to being rounded up, the Cacos fired on the marines, prompting Caperton to declare a curfew.

Initially, some Haitians welcomed the occupation. Several elites asked the United States to supervise elections, which led Caperton and his chief of staff, Captain Edward L. Beach, to believe they had the authority to choose a president. Moreover, when the U.S. citizens treated them with courtesy and respect, the Haitians were significantly more receptive to the occupation. Caperton and Beach were some of the most-liked foreigners in Haiti, both of whom instructed the marines to be friendly to Haitians. Ultimately, however, most of the positive reactions to the occupation were based on the assumption that the occupation was only temporary. Generally, attitudes shifted as the occupation progressed, and sectors of the elites realized the United States was there for its own ends.[48]

The U.S. occupying forces were in search of a suitable presidential candidate to present to the Haitian Senate. After several candidates refused, Senate president Philippe Sudre Dartiguenave agreed to accept the presidency in mid-August. On August 21, U.S. officers took control of the Haitian customs, and almost all the employees resigned. In September 1915, the United States and Haiti signed a convention allowing the United States security and economic oversight for ten years. The U.S. Marine Corps commanders served as administrators in a variety of departments. Moreover, this convention provided a U.S.-supervision constabulary, called the Gendarmerie and the allowance of U.S. control over the customs receivership, sanitation, and public works.

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[48] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 59.

The Cacos were not the only group to mobilize against the occupation. Following the election, politicians and professionals founded opposition newspapers. As the newspapers criticized the marines, Caperton responded by declaring martial law.[49] Many of these newspapermen, led by lawyer Georges Sylvain, consolidated as the Union Patrioque, with the explicit mission of spreading information in Haiti and the world. The Union Patrioque held courses on patriotism that focused on land issues, corporate abuses, unfair laws, and incidents of violence against the occupied. In November 1915, young professionals founded the Haitian Youth League, which spread political education to a new generation.

The first wave of Caco resistance occurred shortly after the occupation began. Marines secured the cities in late summer 1915, but Caco resistance continued in the countryside. After tragic losses, some Haitian chiefs accepted bribes and surrendered on October 1, 1915, at Quartier-Morin. Others continued fighting until the marines captured their stronghold at Fort Rivière on November 17. Some Haitians enjoyed relative peace after the defeat of caudillos and Cacos, and there may have been an opportunity for permanent change in Haitian political culture and acceptance of the U.S. occupation.[50] The longer the occupation lasted, however, the more animosity grew.

In 1916, Admiral William Banks Caperton enacted, arguably, the most unpopular policy of the occupation: the corvée system of forced labour. This system was allowed under the 1864 Code Rural and officially lasted until 1918. It initially required that Haitians volunteer a few days per year to work close to home, in camps providing free food, shelter, and entertainment. Upper-class Haitians could avoid the work by paying a fine. Yet the Haitian Gendarmes and U.S. Marines began to abuse the system. In order to find and fight the Caco rebels who hid in

[49] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 28.
[50] Ibid.

mountainous regions, the military required roads to mobilize against them more effectively. The labourers were taken from their homes and bound together with rope to one another. The marines robbed and burned the homes of uncooperative peasants. The gendarmes and marines severely abused Haitian peasants and executed resisters.[51] Renda writes that "the methods employed by Gendarmerie officers to enforce the corvée were fueled by racism and the rank desire for mastery and no doubt were inflamed by Haitian resistance. The process itself reinforced Haitians' belief that this was indeed a new form of slavery."[52] Ironically, the roads and highways created are usually listed as one of the only positive outcomes of the occupation.

Despite U.S. pressure, most of the Haitian Congress supported Dartiguenave for president and voted for the convention. This may have enabled the U.S. administrators to push for further reforms. In 1917, the Haitian Congress refused to pass the U.S.-sponsored constitution and drafted its own. Yet Major Smedley Butler presented deputies with an order for the dissolution of Congress signed by Dartiguenave through coercion. In June 1918, U.S. officials orchestrated a fraudulent plebiscite that resulted in a vote of 98,225 to 768 in favour of adopting the constitution.[53] The revision of the constitution allowed property rights to foreigners, which had been prohibited since 1804. It is estimated that 43,100 acres passed from Haitian to American hands during the occupation.[54] Yet despite ongoing political interference, the U.S. authorities lacked a concrete plan for the occupation.

There was a disconnect from the U.S. Marines and administrators to officials in Washington. Although Washington had a desire to mould Haiti into a suitable stable government, the reality on the ground was much different. Not only did the marines commit racialized

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[51] Renda, *Taking Haiti,* 146.
[52] Ibid.
[53] McPherson, *The Invaded, 32.*
[54] Ibid.,101.

violence toward the Haitians, but many Haitians resisted the occupation. Neither the Navy Department nor the State Department drew up specific plans for political-cultural change, however, and Washington neglected the occupation until the 1920s. Historian Alan McPherson explains a possible factor towards the disillusionment of marines:

> U.S. administrators called for the continuation and entrenchment of occupation in a futile search for what existed nowhere in Latin America: a stable, unifying cross-class nationalism. Instead, U.S. occupiers found widespread regionalism, personalism, clientelism, partisanship, corruption, strict social hierarchies, authoritarianism, and disrespect for the rule of law and for press freedom.[55]

Arguably, this is a reason why the U.S. occupation lasted for nineteen years without creating lasting change. Moreover, as the occupation progressed, both the occupied and occupiers grew increasingly frustrated.

There had been rumours since the initial occupation that the white foreigners had returned to force Haitians back into slavery. The brutality of the corvée only reinforced this fear and thereby increased the popularity of the Cacos and their resistance to the occupation.[56] From 1918 to 1919, Caco leader Charlemagne Péralte led thousands against the marines using guerrilla tactics in what was arguably the most significant resistance movement of the occupation. About 1,000 U.S. troops, along with 2,700 gendarmes, or Haitian constabularies, fought thousands of Cacos in 131 engagements from April to October 1919.[57] Péralte emphasized national unity among the Black and mulatto Haitians and called for an end to elite-only parties, as Péralte saw himself as a revolutionary and a leader of all Haitians against the American occupation.[58] In 1919, he wrote to the French Minister, René Delage, calling out the hypocrisy of Woodrow Wilson's promotion of national self-determination and the U.S. occupation:

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[55] McPherson, *The Invaded*., 33.
[56] Ibid., 67.
[57] Ibid., 59.
[58] Ibid., 61.

> Now, during the peace conference and before the whole world, the civilized nations took an oath to respect the rights and sovereignty of small nations. We demand the liberation of our territory and all the advantages given to free and independent states by international law. Therefore, please take into consideration that ten months of fighting has been in pursuit of this aim and that our victories give us the right to ask for your recognition.
>
> We are prepared to sacrifice everything to liberate Haiti and establish here the principles affirmed by President Wilson himself: the rights and sovereignty of small nations. Please note, honoured Consul, that American troops, following their own laws, don't have any right to fight against us.[59]

Furthermore, Péralte wrote to the people of Haiti in a call for action, asking to "get rid of those savage people, whose beastly character is evident in the person of their President Wilson-traitor, bandit, trouble maker, and thief. Die for your country. Long live independence! Long live the Union! Long live the just war! Down with the Americans!"[60] Although this passage is nationalistic in tone, McPherson suggests that Péralte did not reject foreign economic and financial domination or the loss of administrative and political independence. Instead, the main cause of grievance was the presence of the marines.[61] Péralte, among other prominent national figures, did not want democracy but rather a military rule by Haitians instead of foreign powers. In 1919, Péralte did die for the cause, as he was assassinated by the marines. Lieutenant William R. Button and Corporal Herman H. Hanneken knew enough about Haitian customs and Kreyol to the point that they were able to sneak into a Cacos camp and kill Péralte. There are reports that they "blackened themselves with burnt cork."[62] They pinned his body to a door, where it was left to rot in the sun. The marines photographed and spread the image of Péralte's dead body, creating an icon of resistance and establishing Péralte as a martyr.

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[59] Charlemagne Péralte, 1919. This letter is included in Charlemagne Péralte to Delage, Camp Général, July 27, 1919, enclosure to René Delage.
[60] Ibid.
[61] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 92.
[62] Renda, *Taking Haiti,* 167.

Following Péralte's death, the pace of fighting declined and then almost completely ended with the death of his successor Benoît Batraville on May 19, 1920. This second wave of resistance was longer, more popular and more violent than the first. It was not merely a rejection of U.S. intervention in national affairs but rather specific grievances based on abuses of power and injustice. Even many of the Haitians who did not engage in the fighting refused to cooperate with the marines, either in support or fear of the Cacos. Historian Yveline Alexis adds that "as U.S. forces assassinated the Cacos and other revolutionary figures in Haiti, [non-combatant] Haitians deployed silence as well as a façade of obliviousness."[63] Indeed, resistance was not always violent.

Meanwhile, in the Dominican Republic, the growing capitalist sector of the tobacco and sugar industry was transforming society by the time of the occupation. The economy was improving, which led to a rise in exports, the creation of fractures, and the introduction of wages in production relationships. Yet this sector was almost exclusively controlled by American foreigners.[64] Therefore, the benefits of economic growth were mostly oriented outside of the country. The development of modern capitalism required modern political institutions and the maintenance of stability and order, for which local oligarchs were not ready.[65] This problem led to American businessmen pressuring the U.S. government to safeguard their interests and modernize the political structure through a military occupation.

Since the assassination of Ramón Cáceres in 1911, Desiderio Arias had competed for power against the leading two caudillos: Horacio Vásquez and Juan Isidro Jimenes. In December 1914, after Jimenes became president, Arias sought to challenge his rule. Soon enough, the

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[63] Yveline Alexis, "Mwen Pas Connait as Resistance: Haitians' Silence against a Violent State." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2, 2016.
[64] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 2.
[65] Ibid.

Senate charged the president with misuse of funds, illegal imprisonment, and abuse of power. Jimenes took revenge by ordering the arrest of Arias's aides on April 14, 1916. The aides fought back, getting the House and Senate to impeach Jimenes in early May. Arias then took the capital.

Meanwhile, the Dominican Republic was not only facing internal strife. In late 1915 the United States had demanded that Jimenes accept U.S. control over Dominican finances and customs and a constabulary to replace the existing guard. Jimenes had declined. When Arias took Santo Domingo, the marines landed on May 4 to protect foreigners and the 1907 treaty but did not take the city. Admiral William Caperton, who was also in charge of this expedition, presented Arias with an ultimatum to surrender. But Arias swore to surrender his arms only to a duly elected president.

Arias proceeded north to Santiago with three hundred followers. Six hundred U.S. troops occupied the capital, and they took over the country for an indefinite period. The U.S. officials completely disregarded democracy and refused to recognize any president elected by the Dominican Congress because it was possible that Arias or other armed revolutionaries could impact the result.[66] This greatly angered the Dominicans.

This first year of the occupation led to a popular resistance by the Gavilleros or Dominican band members whose leaders were tied to caudillos such as Arias. The caudillos sought to defend their local autonomy from foreign centralization. Although the U.S. forces occupied the capital, violent resistance continued in the north under the leadership of local politicians and caudillos. Despite U.S. advances, the Dominican fighters persisted until Arias' forces surrendered. On July 25, 1916, the Dominican Congress elected Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal their provisional president. Yet Caperton viewed Henríquez and other Dominican

[66] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 36.

political leaders as reluctant to give in to U.S. wishes. Provincial governors regularly disobeyed orders from the central authority in Santo Domingo.

The resistance sparked conflict between the local authorities and marines, which became so violent that Rear Admiral Harry Knapp proclaimed martial law on November 29, 1916. Officials feared that an election would give Arias or another unfavourable candidate control over the government. Instead, the U.S. forces decided that a navy or marine officer would head the U.S. military occupation instead of a Dominican president. Similar to the Gendarmerie in Haiti, the Guardia Nacional was created in the Dominican Republic. The U.S. forces banned firearms, imposed censorship, and suspended Congress and elections.[67] The "Knapp Proclamation," eliminated even the veneer of Dominican self-government.

As a result, members of the populace united in opposition to the U.S. occupation. Though many caudillos continued operating after the Knapp Proclamation, Vicente Evangelista (or "Vicentico") emerged as the dominant leader in the east. Among others, he led Gavilleros in the first wave of guerilla fighting against the marines in 1917. This period represented a transition from internal caudillo conflict to a focus on fighting the marines. Initially, the Gavilleros sought to defend their regional leaders, but as the occupation progressed, resistance movements became mobilized against the abuses of the occupation. The Dominican people, including the middle and upper classes, became increasingly upset by the marine sanctioned torture, land grabs, taxation, and tariff reforms.[68]

The experiences of Haitian and Dominican insurgent groups were similar, but the latter was more successful, as the group endured longer and suffered fewer casualties. The Dominican resistance was decentralized: there were no strategic goals, no coordination, and no national

[67] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 46.
[68] Ibid., *68.*

reach.[69] The culture of roaming bands had been long established in the sugar-producing east of the republic, and after 1917, they shifted their rhetoric and tactics to focus on the methods of the occupation. Notably, because of the poorly occupied border region, from 1916 to 1919, the Haitian and Dominican insurgencies overlapped, occasionally sharing commanders and information and trading resources. Dominicans, like Ramón Nateras, even enlisted Haitians in the Dominican resistance.[70]

The abuses committed by the marines and constabularies turned increasingly brutal as the resistance grew. Locals did not care which group perpetrated the crimes, as they assumed the marines were to blame regardless.[71] The occupation forces kidnapped the Dominican teenager, Leocadio Báez, also known as Cayo Báez. He was forced to act as a guide against the insurgents, but when they suspected him of knowing the location of an arms cache, forces tortured him with a hot machete. He was the only survivor of a group of seventeen people. The rest were shot.[72] He became a symbol of Dominican resistance against the occupation.

Although Americans saw the Dominicans as closer in proximity to whiteness than the Haitians, both groups suffered due to racialized rhetoric from U.S. policymakers and racialized brutality from the marines. Historian Mary Renda discusses paternalism and states "that the U.S. government called on marines to serve as benevolent but stern father figures in Haiti." This appealed to the racial consciousness of white marines who may think of themselves as benevolent. Furthermore, she discusses white southern marines and the culture of racialized violence they grew up with and inflicted on Haitians. "Violence," Renda argues, "had always been part of the system; within the framework of paternalism, it had been couched as

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[69] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 69.
[70] Ibid., 107.
[71] Ibid., 100.
[72] Ibid., 96.

discipline."[73] This attitude of racial superiority initially existed in the Dominican Republic too, where marines beat, hung and tortured occupied peoples, walked them down country roads with ropes around their necks, and ordered them to dig graves for others.[74] The Dominican newspaper *El Cable* reported the case of a marine killing a man buying a cup of coffee for no apparent reason.[75]

The marine behaviour was offensive and inappropriate in numerous other ways. Other grievances varied from the disrespect marines displayed by not learning local customs to extreme intoxication and the violence that likely followed it, like the cases of the Dominican Ana Julia Peña and Guzman Perez, who were both assaulted by intoxicated marines. U.S. Marines shot Peña in the leg, and beat Perez, who was blind.[76] Moreover, sexual assault became common under both occupations. The *Chicago Defender* reported that "[i]n one night alone in the 'Bisquet' section of Port-au-Prince, nine little girls from 8 to 12 years old died from the raping of American soldiers."[77] Haitian and Dominican women feared the marines, and yet rape was one of the least punished offences. The future Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo began his rise to notoriety in the Dominican constabulary when a commission of marines acquitted him of rape charges.[78]

The U.S. occupation in Hispaniola was characterized by racism, oppression, and brutality. Any initial relief or hope turned into disappointment, fear, and anger.[79] Progressive sectors of the upper-classes promoted movements of peaceful resistance and national sovereignty. This resistance was led by the Union Patriotique in Haiti and by the Union Nacional Dominicana in

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[73] Renda, *Taking Haiti,* 64.
[74] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 97.
[75]"Another Murderous Marine," *El Cable,* March 25, 1922, Translated by Amaury Rodiguez.
[76] "A U.S. Marine Injures a Woman," *El Cable*, May 27, 1922. Translated by Amaury Rodiguez; "A Marine Assaults a Blind Man." *El Cable*, May 27, 1922. Translated by Amaury Rodiguez.
[77] "U.S. Troops Attack Haitian Girls," Chicago Defender , May 15, 1920.
[78] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 97.
[79] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 92.

the Dominican Republic. These groups were able to mobilize broad sectors of the population in each country and participate in the transnational resistance in order to end the occupations and reassert full independence.

Following the end of World War I, both Haiti and the Dominican Republic saw improvements in communication, transportation and education, which facilitated a transnational anti-occupation movement abroad. Transnational networks of activists, writers, scholars, religious leaders, and government officials voiced their disapproval of imperialist occupations. Such networks were vital for the resistance movements, as McPherson states, they provided "crucial links to an anti-occupation chain that began with the invaded and ended with policymakers in Washington."[80] Yet the Dominican Republic received substantially more international support than Haiti.[81]

Like Péralte, Henríquez criticized the hypocrisy of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's promotion of self-determination in Europe when the U.S. was occupying- once independent nations in the Americas. In September 1919, Henríquez had the opportunity to meet with U.S. officials, where he requested reforms and gradual emancipation. In October, he made a convincing case for withdrawal to Secretary Lansing, in which he claimed the occupation was "unjust from the legal point of view, intolerable in practice, unnecessary for any end that may be pursued, illogical in its results, and absolutely discordant with the ethical and legal principles of international life."[82] In 1919, Henríquez and Tulio M. Cestero planned a South American tour to promote pan-Hispanic solidarity and support for the Dominican cause. The Dominican Republic was able to gain support from not only other Hispanic countries in the region but also in Europe.

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[80] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 3.
[81] Ibid., 173.
[82] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 162.

Spaniards were the most supportive, as there were calls for “racial solidarity” against the Anglo-Saxons, and the Spanish Congress sent messages of sympathy.[83]

The Dominican Republic had a much easier time obtaining sympathy and support than did Haiti. By claiming a Spanish-European identity in opposition to Blackness, Dominican elites legitimized self-determination and made a withdrawal from their republic seem practical and inevitable. Dominican elites did not pursue solidarity with their Haitian neighbours. As Dominicans used their proximity to whiteness as a claim for sovereignty, independence was, therefore, further distanced from the "Black republic." Dominican liberation came at Haiti’s expense.

Despite Haitian claims to self-determination and the ongoing anti-occupation movements, both domestically and internationally, the occupation administrators were reluctant to concede. This is predominantly due to race. Anti-Black racism permeated U.S. foreign policy.

[83] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 165.

Chapter III: U.S. Withdrawal and the Haitian Massacre (1920-1934, 1937)

Prior to 1920, the occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic were strictly censored domestically and in the United States. As such, activism abroad was vital for anti-occupation movements. Moreover, during World War I, the U.S. government and citizens had pivoted their attention toward Europe. The *New York Times* published an article in 1919 that began by stating, "[d]uring the Great War the American people almost forget the existence of Haiti."[84] Following the Versailles Peace Conference, however, American public opinion was shifting from support or indifference towards the occupation, to greater skepticism toward the nation's imperial endeavours.[85]

African Americans played a prominent role in the rising domestic opposition to the occupation of Haiti. The most prominent was James Weldon Johnson, a former U.S. diplomat who was now an official for the National Association of the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP).[86] As a former U.S. diplomat, who had participated in a U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, Johnson initially believed the strategic interests of the United States justified the occupation of Haiti, but he changed his mind following implementation of the 1918 constitution. In March 1920, Johnson spent two months in Haiti, speaking to locals and documenting what he saw. In August and September 1920, he published a series of articles in *The Nation*, which shocked the American public. He emphasized the economic interests of the United States and the First National City Bank of New York, which led them to intervene in Haitian affairs. He discussed the rampant abuses of power and American ignorance, declaring, "[w]hen the truth about the conquest of Haiti- slaughter of three thousand and practically unarmed Haitians, with the incidentally needless death of a score of American boys- begins to filter through the rigid

[84] "Haiti Today," The *New York Times,* October 1919
[85] McPherson, The Invaded, 166; Rosenberg, "World War I, Wilsonianism, and Challenges to US Empire," 858.
[86] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 171.

Administration censorship to the American people, the apologists will become active."[87] Furthermore, he criticized the justification of occupation based on the notion that the Haitians were "backward" and discussed the failure of policies the occupation implemented to "improve" this status.[88] The Eleventh Annual Report of the NAACP congratulated the efforts of activists, stating the most "outstanding achievement in 1920 was the investigation of conditions of the Republic of Haiti, the giving of nation-wide publicity to the unlawful seizure...and abuse of its people under American military occupation."[89]

The Nation, Johnson and the NAACP were vital players in the anti-imperialist force and often collaborated with one another. The magazine regularly criticized U.S. intervention. By 1920, most major U.S. publications adopted an anti-occupation stance because of the efforts of Johnson and *The Nation*'s editors, Oswald Garrison Villard and Ernest Gruening. Moreover, the aforementioned actors and the Union Patrioque held to establish the Haiti-Santo Domingo Independence Society.

Union Patrioque funded trips for delegates to speak on behalf of the Haitian anti-occupation movement. In the spring of 1921, Pauléus Sannon, Sténio Vincent, and Perceval Thoby were in the United States and presented the Union Patrioque's report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In August, Vincent returned to Washington to give a statement at Senate hearings. Unlike the Dominican reports, however, it advocated quick withdrawal and no U.S. supervision of a transition, emphasizing that Haitians opposed the reforms advocated by Washington.

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[87] James Weldon Johnson, "Self-Determining Haiti," *The Nation*, 1920, 5.
[88] Ibid., 12-13, 16.
[89] National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, *Eleventh Annual Report for the Year 1920,* New York, January 1921, 9.

In October 1920, public demands for a formal inquiry into the occupation grew, following the release of a letter documenting abuses inflicted by the marines. In November 1920, Rear Admiral Henry Mayo arrived in Haiti to document cases of abuse yet neglected a more extensive collection of injustices.[90] As this inquiry was unsatisfactory, Medill McCormick, chair of the Senate Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo continued the process. From August 1921 to June 1922, the committee listened to testimonies in Washington, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Anti-occupation activists such as Stenio Vincent and journalist Ernest Gruening, travelled to Haiti to serve as witnesses and prepare those expected to testify before the committee. Vincent claimed that Wilson's administration took advantage of the political situation in 1915 with Sam's death to take over a "small and friendly country." Moreover, he asserted that "[t]he Haitian people never asked [for] American invention. The conditions of the American occupation...have not been such as to cause the Haitian people to change their minds."[91] The Dominican Republic was already negotiating withdrawal, so it withheld the Dominican report. In 1922, however, the Haitian recommendations acknowledged there had been failures but that Haiti could continue under U.S. supervision. Some failures had been justified by the setbacks of fighting the resistance. Regardless, as a result, Haiti transformed into a "pseudo-colony." The Council of State chose Louis Borno to be president. The U.S. government blamed the brutality in Hispaniola on maladministration rather than intervention in general. The Haitians did not want to be occupied, and Washington failed to recognize this. In 1924, the American missionary, Samuel Guy Inman wrote in *The Atlantic Monthly* that "[o]nly in the United States do the press and the

[90] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 176.
[91] United States Senate, The Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, *Hearings before a Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo*, Vol I, 4.

people ignore how our economic imperialism is eliminating friendships and fostering suspicions" with regard to the republics of Hispaniola, as well as European and Asian nations.[92]

After long deliberation between Washington and Dominican politicians, the Hughes-Peynado agreement established a compromise between U.S. and Dominican interests. Washington was able to keep the loan and road-building programs, in addition to continuing the supervision over finances. Dominicans gained the ability to establish a provisional government before elections under occupation. Juan Bautista Vicini Burgos was appointed as the provisional leader on October 21, 1922. The election resulted in a victory for an alliance between two politicians who represented the national extension of regional caudillismo: Horacio Vásquez and Federico Velázquez. In September 1924, the U.S. Marines left the country. Yet Dominican political culture was arguably unchanged. The Dominican political identities did not reflect any program, ideology or loyalty, as they remained primarily concerned with personal self-interest.[93] The United States continued the occupation in Haiti due to political instability but was either unconcerned or unaware of the political instability that still existed in the Dominican Republic.[94] By 1930, a formerly U.S.-marine trained member of Guardia Nacional, Rafael Trujillo, would build a brutally violent personalist dictatorship.

Meanwhile, in Haiti, during the rule of President Louis Borno from 1922-1929, there was little mention of withdrawal. Borno appointed and bribed the members of the Council of State to make him president and re-elect him in 1926. The United States hoped that Haiti could become a stable and self-governing republic, but many of its policies contradicted this claim. Borno was not popular among the Haitian people, and the new generation was more militant than the last.

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[92] Samuel Guy Inman, "Imperialistic America," The Atlantic Monthly 134 (July 1924).
[93] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 190.
[94] Ibid., 191.

There were a variety of oppositional political parties, organizations and petitions against Borno circulated.

On October 31, 1929, students walked out of the occupation's Central Agricultural School in Damiens.[95] They protested a revision implemented into the scholarship system by the school's administrator, George Freeman. He reallocated the scholarship fund. The Patriotic Youth League spearheaded it, and students from other disciplines and schools joined them. In November, they rejected Borno's concessions and continued the strike with the help of the National Constitutional Act League. By December, many politicians, as well as elite, educated and non-Black Haitians, were involved.[96]

On December 4, the occupation reinstated martial law in the port city of Aux Cayes. Stevedores refused to unload ships, and the newspapers attempted to intimidate the remaining government workers into striking. The Haitian constabulary, now called the Garde D'Haiti, met a crowd of four hundred people, who refused to leave. A reliable source states that they fired into the crowd and killed five people, and wounded another twenty.[97] But another source claims that twelve people had been acknowledged dead and forty wounded, and there were hundreds more unaccounted for.[98]

President Herbert Hoover hoped to end U.S. occupations and inventions. Even before the Aux Cayes Massacre, he proposed the creation of a commission to end the Haitian occupation.[99] Cameron Forbes was the chair of the commission, which would arrive in Port-au-Prince on February 28, 1930. Arguably, Forbes' next steps for the United States were as follows:

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[95] Whitton, "Big Brother to Haiti?".
[96] McPherson, *The Invaded, 245.*
[97] Ibid., 246.
[98] "Hundreds Killed by Marines in Haiti," *The Militant,* January 4, 1930.
[99] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 248.

> (1) to effect over the course of the next six years a rapid Haitianization of all services--finance, medical, coast guard, Garde d'Haiti, public works, education; (2) to select American officers for the Occupation departments who were more liberal in their thinking and attitudes toward the coloured race; (3) to recognize the temporary president provided for by the internal settlement so that a legislative assembly might be readily gathered to elect a permanent president and retake the reins of administration; (4) to recognize the president elected by the new National Assembly, provided that no fraud was found to be involved in the election ; (5) to replace the High Commissioner with a non-military minister; (6) to insist that, loss in efficiency or not, this new non-military Minister to the Haitian Government was to achieve Haitianization of the services without delay; (7) to effect gradual withdrawal of the Marines; (8) to modify the treaty when necessary to enable the United States to cut the strand of the occupation by 1936.[100]

Henry Prather Fletcher was a member of the Forbes Commission. Fletcher's account of the commission and his observations are interesting for a few reasons. He commented on the way in which the commission was greeted, with men, women and children carrying small Haitian flags or banners inscribed with phrases like "Termination of the Occupation," "Liberty," "Justice," or "Withdrawal of the Marines."[101] This signified the unity of the Haitian people against the occupation. Furthermore, he stated that the element in U.S. policy most "open to criticism consists in the failure to train Haitians for a larger participation in the administration of their affairs and then gradually to entrust them with it." [102] He continued by explaining how the political and educated classes resented Americans filling Haitian jobs.[103] Castor emphasizes this creation of dependency, which was strengthened in the Dominican Republic and implanted in Haiti during the occupation. She argues that even after the occupation, economically and politically, both countries "had actually become appendages of the United States."[104]

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[100] Robert M. Spector, *W. Cameron Forbes and the Hoover Commissions to Haiti, 1930*, (Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 223.
[101] Henry Prather Fletcher, "Quo Vadis, Haiti." *Foreign Affairs.* 8, 1929, 41.
[102] Ibid., 546.
[103] Ibid., 547.
[104] Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," 272.

Eugène Roy was the appointed provisional leader until the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for October 14, 1930. Despite the allegation that one of the parties was backed by the Cartel and committed voter fraud, the Garde D'Haiti did not intervene, and on November 18, Sténio Vincent won. By August 1931, the process of Haitianization was in place, martial law was terminated, and Haiti had authority over public works, health, and the Technical Service. On August 7, 1933, there was an executive agreement to withdraw troops.

The United States had intervened on both sides of Hispaniola for virtually the same strategic, political, and economic reasons but now decided that the strategic and financial rationales no longer applied. Political instability was used to justify the occupation of Haiti. This was due to racism and the United States' inability to recognize that political instability also continued in the Dominican Republic. After 1930, Rafael Trujillo would establish one of the most brutal and violent dictatorships in Latin America.[105]

Consistent with the Good Neighbour Policy, Roosevelt gave in to Vincent's final demands but planned to retain financial ties.[106] In July 1934, he sailed to Cap Haïtien to deliver a speech commemorating Haiti's independence. In it, he declared he was "certain that when these Americans leave your shores you will think of them with the spirit of friendship and that you will be happy in the days to come remembering that they tried to help the people of Haiti" and concludes the speech with "I want to drink to the health of the President of Haiti, to the Government of Haiti, and to the people of Haiti. May our friendship ever continue."[107] On August 15, 1934, the last U.S. troops left Haiti after a formal transfer of authority to the Garde D'Haiti.

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[105] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 191.
[106] Ibid., 259.
[107] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address of the President," Speech, Cape Haitien, Haiti, July 6, 1934.

The Good Neighbour Policy initiated a shift in U.S. foreign policy. The United States sought to improve relations with its southern neighbours without the use of military intervention. Yet what has been often left unacknowledged about the Good Neighbour Policy, as historian Jason Colby argues, are the contexts of racial and labour tensions in which it took shape.[108] After the collapse of global trade in the 1930s, unemployment rose. Frustration and a lack of available jobs caused racial and labour clashes, which occurred in a social landscape that the U.S. empire had influenced, and upheavals were often consequences of their own policies. Although, in 1924, the United States had withdrawn from the Dominican Republic, it kept the latter as a financial protectorate. By the early 1930s, "American officials were grooming Rafael Trujillo as a pro-American strongman."[109]

Economic policies during the U.S. occupation had driven thousands of Haitians to the Dominican Republic, usually in search of work. In 1926, a law was passed evicting peasants from the land in the north, creating mass dispossession.[110] Hundreds of thousands of Haitians left for nearby countries, including the Dominican Republic. Foreign-owned sugar and fruit corporations hired Haitian peasants to work for meagre wages, which the U.S. officials considered progress. In 1912, Dominican authorities introduced a policy requiring authorization from non-Spanish speaking workers and declared Spanish the official language. In 1919 the occupation allowed the migrant labourers temporary residency, nullifying the requirement for authorization and prompting migration.[111]

Trujillo had gained a reputation through his ventures in the Guardia Nacional, as he was known for "graft, robbery and rape."[112] After becoming the head of what transformed from the

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[108] Colby, *The Business of Empire,* 178.
[109] Ibid., 179.
[110] McPherson, *The Invaded,* 100.
[111] Ibid., 168.
[112] "With God and Trujillo!", *Workers Age*, January 22, 1938.

Guardia Nacional to the new "National army," he made himself president. The Trujillo regime had tried to push out the Haitian workers, but the resistance of U.S. diplomats and employers limited their effectiveness. On Trujillo's command, Dominican authorities lashed out at the Haitian farmers living along the border of the two nations. In October 1937, Trujillo ordered the Dominican army to massacre approximately 12,000 of these residents.[113] Not all of the Haitians were temporary workers; many had lived on the vibrant border region for decades, but it did not matter. Thousands died due to racial or cultural distinctions. U.S. officials intervened to prevent a war, but the Roosevelt administration was reluctant to discard a useful ally.[114]

Roosevelt's failure to condemn Trujillo's actions received criticism from the *Workers Age* newspaper titled "Good Neighbours" With Whom?". The article, published on March 19, 1938, criticized the visit of President Roosevelt's son, James Roosevelt, to the home of Trujillo less than a year after the massacre of thousands of Haitians. The visit was arranged by Ambassador Joseph Davies and served the purpose of convincing the Dominican masses of Santo Domingo that Washington backed Trujillo's dictatorship.[115]

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[113] Colby, *The Business of Empire,* 179.
[114] Ibid.
[115] "'Good Neighbours' With Whom?," *Workers Age,* March 19, 1938.

Conclusion

On September 28, 1937, Cime Jean arrived home after an early morning of work only to see Dominican soldiers approaching his backyard. Assuming they were there to make an arrest, he fled. He returned a couple of hours later to find that nearly his entire family had been slaughtered. His wife, parents-in-law, his three children, his nephew and the nephew's six children, two cousins, his daughter-in-law and her two children were all lying dead on the ground. Jean fled to Ouanaminthe, Haiti, from El Fundo after barely escaping the hands of the Dominican soldiers during the Haitian Massacre.[116]

Despite the U.S. attempts to mould Haiti and the Dominican Republic into stable pro-U.S. governments, both occupations failed. They proved fruitless, in part, because there was no realistic plan to improve the lives of the Haitians or Dominicans. The U.S. Marines occupied Haiti for nearly twenty years and did not start the process of Haitization and subsequent improvements until the final years. They did not have a realistic long-term plan and proved to be incompetent at establishing stable governments in Hispaniola.

Politically, the military occupation did little to promote democracy or self-governance. The U.S. forces gave the occupied people very little power and responsibility within their own countries. Economically, there was not much improvement. Large portions of the population remained poor and uneducated. Despite the talk of developing a middle class, there were very few initiatives created to enable one. The occupying forces provided no improvements to education, apart from the disliked agricultural education program.

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[116] Michele Wucker, "Excerpts from" *Why the cocks fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the struggle for Hispaniola*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1999.

The arrogance and cruelty of the U.S. Marines also hindered the occupations. The Americans viewed the Haitian and Dominican people and cultures with disdain, and did not believe they were capable of self-governance. Many marines assumed a paternalistic role during the occupations, which was accompanied by brutality. The U.S. Marines inflicted extreme acts of violence which not only harmed thousands of civilians but emboldened the resistance movements against the occupation, as well as enabled Trujillo to rise to power through the Guardia Nacional and create his dictatorship. Furthermore, American racism led to a longer occupation of Haiti, and may have inspired Trujillo's anti-Black rhetoric.

Additionally, the land taken from peasants and given to sugar and fruit corporations led to dispossession and migration across the border- either in search of a home or job. The U.S. occupying forces and American business interests impacted border migration, as they simultaneously dispossessed peasants from their land and recruited workers for their plantations. Thousands of peasants migrated across the border; however, as the Dominican Republic had a smaller population, Haitians disproportionately relocated east of the border. To conclude, the U.S. occupation did not directly cause the 1937 Haitian Massacre, but due to the displacement and racialized violence during the occupation, many Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans were left vulnerable. Furthermore, due to the Good Neighbour Policy, President Roosevelt prioritized the pursuit of cooperation and harmony in the Caribbean instead of justice for the victims of the massacre or their families.

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