

THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES: A SERIAL HISTORY OF HAITI



PART VI

MAYHEM TO MADNESS

Michael S. VanHook
International Strategic Alliances



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INTRODUCTION

“Haiti is the hardest country in the world to help.” –Gerald A. Drew¹

On a starlit night, Jean, Carlos, Denis, Keryl, and I stood on the water’s edge of the Bay of Cap Haitien. We had just returned from Port-au-Prince after spending several days assessing the earthquake’s damage and searching for possible avenues to ship humanitarian aid. Everyone’s nerves sighed a great sense of relief for having safely returned from the aftershocks to our northern point of departure. All of us were still attempting to comprehend what we had just witnessed. As we talked, laughed, and even prayed, Jean said something to me that I’ll never forget. He remarked, “I consider you Haitian because you treat us as equals.”

My heart melted. This was the greatest compliment that I had ever received from all my years of working in Haiti. It resonated with my hopes that the Haitian people would know that I loved them and desired to serve them as my brothers and sisters. It also recognized to a small degree that our successful collaborations were accomplishing our vision.

Haiti is a land of distinct contrasts. Its beauty was once renowned as the “Pearl of the Antilles.” The first European visitors were captivated by Hispaniola’s lush forests and floral vegetation. Today with only one percent of the land forested, it stands on the brink of an ecological disaster as its hills erode into the sea. The European powers once craved and bled for Haiti’s wealth as it produced nearly two-thirds of France’s commercial interests and 40 percent of its foreign trade. Today, the lonely western half of Hispaniola is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 80 percent of its people living in abject poverty, and one of the poorest anywhere in the world. Haiti’s independence was snatched from the cruelest forms of slavery instituted in the New World, by a bloody revolution where unimagined atrocities were employed, and it yielded a government that has oppressed and brutalized its people for over 200 years. Yet the Haitian people are some of the most hospitable and kind people despite their suffering. They hold a deep place in my heart.

¹ Robert Debs Heinl, Nancy Gordon Heinl, Michael Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People 1492-1995* (Langham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1996, revised and expanded edition) 586.

I am constantly asked, “Why is Haiti like this and what can be done?” I am convinced that the deep roots of many of these problems and some of the plausible solutions can best be understood by probing their historical lines into the present. Haiti’s history teaches us to appreciate its resilient heritage and its distinct culture. It also helps to recognize some of the “why’s” and the “what’s.”

John Chandler, a visiting Englishman, wrote in 1842 that. “The history of Hayti has yet to be written.”² Until *Written in Blood* was penned by Robert and Nancy Heintz (1978), no complete history of Haiti existed in any language. As noted in the revised introduction to their book, “The rebel slaves who founded Haiti were largely illiterate or semiliterate. They kept no public records.”³ Most of the national historical documents have been destroyed, dispersed, or stolen. Therefore, “documentation of Haitian history in the conventional way from internal primary sources and national archives is an impossibility.”⁴

Penning a history of Haiti presents unique challenges. I have written this historical text to educate individuals or groups who are traveling to Haiti with the International Strategic Alliances or other organizations serving the Haitian people. It is my hope that an overview of their history will facilitate greater understanding, compassion, and solution-building.

I have attempted to provide a document that is both readable and accurate. The content is presented in smaller narrative vignettes with accompanying images so that one can navigate easily through the various stages. Every attempt has been made to present data that has stood the test of time and historical scrutiny; though as previously noted, primary sources are in short supply.

This project comes from a deep place in my heart for Haitian people. They live inside of me every day; and because of them, I’ve changed. They have my sincerest gratitude for their years of friendship and service. Particular distinction goes to **Pastor Bruno Cherenfant**, my constant companion, advocate, and on-the-ground instructor. Without him, my work would not be as effective or joyful.

In addition, I appreciate those who have raised me for this work. Special recognition goes to **Gregg Shaffer**, who planted the seed and guided me on those initial, extraordinary journeys; **David Michel**, “my Jimo,” who continuously grows the vision and gently corrects my paths; and **Wendell Mettey**, who mentored me in non-profit leadership. The **International Strategic Alliances Board of Directors** has been

² Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 7.

³ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 7.

⁴ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 8.

faithful to me even when they didn't have a clue where I was taking them—thanks to David, Mark, Deb, Doug, Gregg, Keryl, and Jerry. All of this would not be possible without the financial contributions, encouragement, and prayers of our partners. Thank you for making my dreams come true.

Last of all to my wife, Luciana (“*eu te amo*”) and my daughters, Megan, Lauren, and Chelsea, I hope one day you'll better understand my obsessions and join me in watching the sunset on the Bay of Fort-Liberte.

Michael S. VanHook, March 2017



Bay of Fort-Liberte

PART VI

MAYHEM TO MADNESS



Chapter 1

FORMATIVE FORCES

It's the house's rat that eats the house. – Haitian proverb



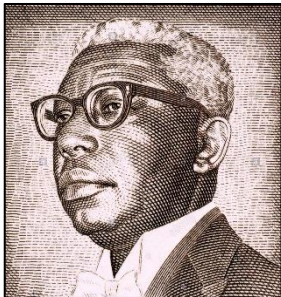
“I know the Haitian people because I am the Haitian people.” – Dr. François Duvalier



Everyone was wrong. In the beginning, the simple hope was that he would prove not to be worse than the long line of prior inept leaders who would eventually flee into exile and disgrace. Everyone completely underestimated the diminutive man and his sinister schemes. No one foresaw the reign of terror that would be unleashed on an already desperate nation, plunging it into its darkest and most vicious era. No one could have predicted that his legacy would place him in the pantheon of the twentieth century's worst despots, with the likes of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao Zedong.

Most perceived **Dr. François Duvalier**, a small, black, soft-spoken medical doctor, as an honest and fairly unassuming leader without a strong ideological motivation or program. Certainly, nothing in his background foreshadowed the terrors that would be unleashed, but underneath the quiet exterior some distinctive beliefs and predispositions developed and distilled within to influence the man and his bizarre behaviors.

Early Years and Education



François Duvalier was born in 1907 in Port-au-Prince, only a few blocks from the National Palace. His father, Duval, was a primary school teacher and a justice of the peace. His mother, Uritia Abraham, was a barefoot bakery employee. Though little was spoken about it, François was raised by his aunt, Madame Florestal, because of his mother's mental instability. She was locked away from the family until her death when he was fourteen. His father was deeply resentful and ashamed of her, and François was forbidden to speak of her. Though the family was considered black middle class, Duval's meager salary burdened the family with serious financial struggles as they teetered on the edge of poverty.

His formative years gave him a front-row seat to Haiti's tumultuous first half of the twentieth century. One can only speculate about their impact on young, impressionable François. Violent outbreaks in the streets were commonplace; economic and political scandals crippled the fragile nation; the invasion and occupation by US Marines humiliated Haiti's collective national pride, and the hope of a second independence died with reoccurring, failed attempts to establish peaceful, democratic rule. When he was one-year-old, military dictator Alexis Nord was overthrown; a revolution ousting General Antoine Simon occurred when he was four; at five-years-of-age, the Presidential Palace was blown up killing President Cincinnatus Leconte; the following year, President Tancrede Auguste was supposedly

poisoned, and a succession of four more rulers were deposed by his tenth birthday. At age twelve, the peasant *Caco* rebels unsuccessfully attempted two suicide attacks against US armed forces in Port-au-Prince, leaving bodies strewn in the streets and homes burning.

Those who remember young François note that he was quiet, introverted, and bookish. He attended primary and secondary school at the state-owned lycée founded by Alexandre Pétion in 1816. Two professors made lasting impressions on the young student, **Dr. Jean Price-Mars** and **Dumarsais Estimé**. Mars was Haiti's leading ethnologist on African roots and recognized as an influential intellectual. He published a significant book the year François graduated (1928), which inspired Duvalier to zealously study Haitian folklore and culture, particularly Vodou. Duvalier became one of the leading researchers and proponents of *Négritude*, a critical and literary theory developed by intellectuals, writers, and politicians of the African diaspora who advanced the self-affirmation of black peoples. It produced the *noiriste movement* (black pride), a central theme for the rest of his life.

Estimé, a black nationalist mathematics professor, was elected president in 1946. He gave Duvalier his first job in politics, but when Estimé was deposed in a military coup d'état, Duvalier learned strategic lessons that he would never forget.

Elizabeth Abbott, in her highly insightful and personal chronicle *Haiti: The Duvaliers and Their Legacy*, imparts an influential event in the shaping of François Duvalier:

In 1924 a teenage boy stood shaded by a stunted pine tree on the bank of a cold mountain stream. A few yards away a man and three women held a struggling child while his mother scrubbed mercilessly with lashed twigs at the running sores that covered his body. His small, dark face, now distorted with pain, was not spared. Only when the diseased flesh had been excoriated and blood flowed from the wounds did the woman stop. As the motionless teenager watched, she stayed the blood with crushed herbs and bandaged the wounds with rags. The cruel treatment for the even crueler tropical disease of yaws was finished. Snuffling quietly, the child took his mother's hand and allowed her to pull him along beside her.

The incident made a deep impression on François Duvalier, the shy teenage with the grave, myopic expression, who years later liked to recall how at that moment he had decided to become a doctor.⁵

⁵ Elizabeth Abbott, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and Their Legacy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988) 8.



After graduating from the lycée, Duvalier pursued his dream of becoming a doctor when he entered the School of Medicine, which had been reorganized by the American occupation forces without an entrance examination requirement or tuition fees. Students respected his intelligence, but he was considered a mediocre student because he only studied enough to pass due to his pre-occupation of studying *noiriste* philosophies. François also probably felt out-of-place among the predominantly mulatto faculty and students.

An instructor at the medical school revealed a story which sheds some light on the young intern's character.

Duvalier shared a room at a boarding house with another medical student. He heard from the houseboy that his roommate had spoken unfavorably about him. Without questioning the gossip Duvalier moved out and never spoke to the roommate again. The doctor commented on his pupil-president, 'He feels that nobody less educated than he could ever deceive him, so he believes them.' As President, Duvalier later followed this belief in choosing associates he could trust, no matter how ignorant they were.⁶

Papa Doc

In 1934, the same year that the US Marines departed, Duvalier received his medical diploma and started an internship at the Hospice Saint Francois-de-Sales. His first medical assignment was a government consultant job to a home for the elderly in Port-au-Prince. He scraped by on a tiny government paycheck, but it allowed him considerable time to devote his energies to a small group of literary intellectuals called the *Les Griots* (an African term meaning poets or storytellers).

Les Griots adhered to the philosophy that Haiti's African traditions and culture should be preserved, and they believed that wisdom and the future could be interpreted through the practice of Vodou mysticism. They were anti-elite and anti-mulatto. Duvalier was committed to wiping away Haiti's French facade and returning the country to its African origins by rejecting any assimilation of European and American cultures.⁷

⁶ Bernard Diederich and Al Burt, *Papa Doc and the Tonton Macoutes* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005) 45.

⁷ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 579.

Duvalier did not transform his medical position into financial affluence. In a country with an acute shortage of skilled practitioners, Duvalier was probably the only doctor struggling to find enough patients to make a decent living.⁸

A fellow doctor described Duvalier at this time as too introverted to develop a successful private practice, which—in addition to a winning personality or bedside manner—took money and enough social standing to surmount the barriers facing a black man.⁹



A dreadful disease would draw Duvalier into closer contact with the United States while bringing him exposure and acclaim throughout the countryside. *Yaws*, an endemic infectious disease, was wreaking human havoc and devastation in rural Haiti. Three-quarters of all Haitians were afflicted. It is highly contagious and maims its victims while subjecting them to a life of torment. Yaws attacks the vital organs and may render complex changes to the bone structure in many parts of the body. It can shrink and twist major limbs into a useless state; it can eat away at facial features; it causes open infectious lesions and cripples the soles of the feet. Though it is a non-venereal contagious disease, yaws is caused by a spirochete (spiral shaped) bacterium similar to that of syphilis. It flourishes in tropical areas like Haiti where the poor go barefoot and do not bathe often. Yaws is transmitted by human contact.

In 1943, the United States, in cooperation with the Inter-American Affairs Commission, launched a yaws eradication project in Haiti. They sent Dr. James Dwinelle to administer the program using a newly discovered penicillin vaccine which was proving to be an effective treatment. The project would also train Haitian physicians to diagnose, treat, and follow-up on the care. Duvalier applied for the program and was hired as a translator because his English was better than the other doctors. The first clinic in Gressier, 15 miles south of Port-au-Prince, became very popular as Haitians flocked by the thousands for treatment with their yaws infected bodies, sometimes crawling like crabs down the hills. Duvalier was the clinic's chief trainer. As the program was proving itself to be successful in eliminating the disease from Haiti, soon, mobile clinics were opened in other mountainous regions.

⁸ Philippe Girard, *Haiti: The Tumultuous History—From Pearl of the Caribbean to Broken Nation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005) 98.

⁹ Diederich and Burt, 51.

The shy, awkward, preoccupied scholar put aside his obsessions and transformed into a beloved country doctor who cured thousands. These medical excursions into the countryside familiarized him with the everyday concerns of the people, their predisposition toward paternalistic authority, and the ease with which their allegiance could be secured. As his reputation among the peasants in the countryside soared, scores of grateful patients referred to him as their beloved “**Papa Doc**”. During his presidency, Duvalier was fond of stating, “The peasants love their doctor, and I am their Papa Doc.”

Dwinelle remembers Duvalier as a placid, near-sighted assistant who rarely spoke unless spoken to. He regarded him as a poor administrator because he rarely refused a request even if it disrupted established procedure. Dwinelle, years later, said he had no inkling that Duvalier was interested in politics or even Vodou. Duvalier and Dr. Auréle Joseph who worked with him at Gresslier, and later succeeded him as director, were nicknamed the ‘dumb twins’ by their fellow workers. In Haiti, where the love of humor and gossip is legendary, Haitians interpreted their silence as meaning they had nothing to contribute.¹⁰

In August of 1944, Duvalier was selected, along with 20 other Haitian doctors, to study in the graduate school of public health at the University of Michigan for two semesters. His lack of academic English proficiency caused him to fail his courses, and he would later relate that he experienced several unpleasant incidents of racism.

In 1939, in a match made by friends, François married a nurse named **Simone Ovide**. Born the illegitimate child of a mulatto businessman’s sexual tryst with an illiterate, black domestic servant, she was soon isolated away and educated in an orphanage run by a Frenchwoman and supported by the elite. The union of a poor doctor and a poorer, painfully shy nurse seemed to be a perfect match. Her beautiful features of light-skin, high cheekbones, and long thin figure coupled well next to the small François. She later bore him four children: Marie Denise, Simone, Nicole, and Jean-Claude.

Simone’s mother was a fanatical devotee to Vodou, and she followed in her mother’s steps. François was mesmerized by the depth of her spiritual beliefs and practices.

¹⁰ Diederich and Burt, 56.



The power of Vodou in Duvalier's life and rule cannot be overlooked or underestimated. Under him, it attained its greatest notoriety and reached deep into the nation's soul as an instrument of terror.¹¹

In 1942, mulatto President Élie Lescot and the Roman Catholic Church in Haiti launched an "anti-superstition campaign," against the practice of Vodou, even though the two religions had peacefully coexisted for centuries. Fanatical Gonaïves Bishop, Monsignor Paul Robert, preached vicious anti-inflammatory sermons equating it with Satanism. His devotees and the military dispersed throughout the countryside destroying numerous Vodou temples, ceremonial artifacts, such as drums and gourds, and sacred trees. Practitioners, priests, and priestesses were arrested and imprisoned. They forced the people to renounce Vodou through a catechism.

Who is the principle slave of Satan? —The principle slave of Satan is the *houngan*.¹² What is the name the *houngans* give to Satan? —The names the *houngans* gives to Satan are *loas* [spirits], angels, saints, the dead, the sacred twins. . . . They take these names to deceive us more easily. Have we the right to mix with the slaves of Satan? No, because they are evil doers, they are liars like Satan.¹³

¹¹ To better understand Haitian Vodou and its prominence in Haitian life, read "Blood of the Land: Haitian Vodou" or "Pearl of the Antilles, Part IV: Incompetence to Instability," Appendix D by the author.

¹² Houngan- witch doctor

¹³ Abbott, 53.

French anthropologist Alfred Métraux became alarmed at the possibility that this folk culture could disappear. He founded the Bureau of Ethnology with writer Jacques Roumain and Dr. Price Mars. They saved many valuable Vodou pieces from the fires and commenced research into various aspects of the cultic religion.

The Bureau hired Professor **Lorimer Denis** as assistant director. Denis' sway over Duvalier was noteworthy. He was a rigid and ominous man with a solemn, stilted disposition. Students considered him a mystic. Through their intensive Vodou studies together, they became *houngans* (priests). Later, most believed Duvalier was a *bocor* (sorcerer). Denis always wore a hat and carried a cane. Duvalier adopted this appearance. The little man with thick black rimmed glasses always dressed in a black suit with tails, a dark tie, and a black homburg hat.

One Haitian who knew them described the relationship as “Duvalier was like the female egg that needs a male to make it reproduce. In this case, Denis was the male.”¹⁴

“Later, some would say Duvalier fed the soul of Denis to the *loa* [*a pantheon of spirits; accessible intermediaries*].”¹⁵

“Duvalier was equally interested in what it [Vodou] could do. In the present it perpetuated the African past. In the past it had inspired the slaves to such an indomitable pitch that it effectively caused Haiti's independence. From this was only a short step for Duvalier to extrapolate to the future, and what Vodou could do for him.”¹⁶

In the end, the Church and State failed miserably to extinguish the peoples' religion. It went underground for a period, but the masses' devotion deepened, and their resentment intensified. On February 22, 1942, unknown assailants sprayed a Catholic Church with gunfire as a priest celebrated an anti-Vodou mass.

Over time, Duvalier evolved and cultivated a cult persona as the earthly manifestation of **Baron Samedi**, the most feared *loa* who kept the gates to the grave. To the superstitious and uneducated peasantry, his appearance was instantly recognizable and feared. He would often speak in a deep nasal



¹⁴ Diederich and Burt, 54.

¹⁵ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 562.

¹⁶ Abbott, 54.

tone and wear dark glasses—like Baron Samedi who had to protect his eyes from the light since he spent most of his time in the invisible realm. He is often called upon for healing by those approaching death because only he is able to accept an individual into the realm of the dead.

François was also deeply knowledgeable in other spiritualisms, especially *onomancie*, a magical Haitian numerology from whose divinations he became convinced that the number 22 would confer on him high and sinister powers.¹⁷ Therefore, it was not surprising to those who knew him that he was elected to the presidency on September 22, selected October 22 as his inauguration day, and set other important events on dates bearing that number.¹⁸

¹⁷ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 562.

¹⁸ See APPENDIX B: “Les Sanglots d’un exilé” (“An Exile’s Lament”) a Duvalier Poem

Chapter 2

THE TURNING POINT

Throw the rock and hide your hand. –Haitian proverb



*“Revolutions are not made with literature. Revolutions equal gunfire.”
–Dr. François Duvalier*

Doorway into Politics



Haitian politics, once again, went down the same tired, predictable road that it had for the past hundred years—the rulers become more inept and corrupt; the masses cry out; the rulers unleash repressive measures; the masses rise up; the military and parliament reacts, and the rulers flee into exile with a large amount of cash. Duvalier had always steered clear of the mess and played the role of silent observer, anthropological philosopher, and overlooked physician. But now, he would be personally affected and would transform himself into a vocal critic, a revolutionary, and a force to be taken seriously.

As World War II ended, the clouds of discontentment appeared over unpopular President Élie Lescot's government and his incompetent and exploitive administration. His days were numbered. With the nation's anemic economy and the government on the brink of bankruptcy, he extended his presidential term an additional two years from five to seven and initiated ruthless acts of intimidation against the opposition. Haiti cried out for social reform and justice. The US occupation had left a string of wealthy mulatto rulers in power; now, the black majority demanded their place at the table. After he closed a student newspaper, violent revolts erupted in Port-au-Prince with ferocious student demonstrations. The Presidential *Garde* responded by cracking heads. The students were joined by *noirists*, Marxists, and workers from every industry. Mobs protested at the National Palace; a general strike was called; the homes of ruling officials were plundered.



1946 Student Strike

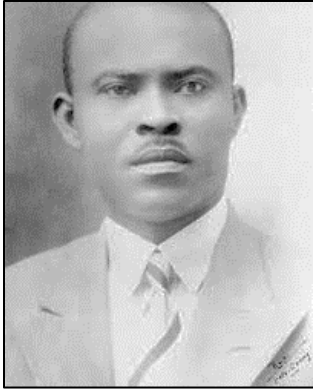
On January 11, 1946, a coup d'état sent Lescot and his cabinet fleeing into exile. Haitians celebrated with wild demonstrations, mass excitement and violence, and the police administering numerous beatings. A three-man military junta assumed power and pledged to organize elections.

Political parties proliferated and behind the scenes, partisan maneuvering ensued. Lorimar Denis persuaded his protégé, François Duvalier, to join the **MOP Party** (Mouvement Ouvrier Paysan/Peasant Worker Movement). This was Duvalier's first political party participation. He was named Secretary General by founder **Daniel Figiolé**. Figiolé was the champion of the people and a particularly interesting character, worth noting for his magnetic and uncompromising personality. At his fiery word, streets would flood with flash mobs of poor urban demonstrators called "steamrollers." His inflammatory rhetoric regularly ignited the black empowerment movement against the mulatto elite. Duvalier had a kindred spirit, or so it would seem.

Figiolé and the mobs attempted to "steamroll" the National Assembly into submission as they went about the business of creating a new constitution and to begin the process of electing a new president. They stormed the Assembly's galleries and chambers. Not to be intimidated, the *Garde* restored order and enforced stern rules against seditious rhetoric while public debate occurred. Their officers were strategically placed in the assembly hall and chambers with submachine guns conspicuous on their laps.



President Estimé with the three-man military junta: Magloire, Lavaud, and Levelt.



On August 12, 1946, the Assembly elected Duvalier's former mathematics professor, **Dumarsais Estimé**, as the nation's first *noir* president since US occupation. Estimé had been an outspoken opponent of the United States during the occupation, but he developed a respected political resume as a member of Haiti's lower chamber of Parliament and the Minister of Education in the Vincent government. He served as the president of the Chamber of Deputies from 1934 to 1935. Estimé had allies from the mulatto elite though he was known to be a staunch racist. His campaign slogan was "*Un noir au pouvoir*" ("A black man in power").

Reversing course, he immediately initiated an ambitious wave of social reforms in a genuine effort to improve the living conditions of the neglected, poor black majority. His programs increased the daily minimum wage from thirty to seventy cents, built new schools in poverty-ridden villages, improved literacy programs and community services, and started new road construction projects. The implementation of an income tax encouraged black middle-class growth, as well as, creating favorable economic conditions for local businesses to expand and to encourage foreign investments. Sixty acres of Port-au-Prince's most appalling slum was cleared away in order to welcome the world to the 1949 International Fair. Investors and tourists arrived and spent lots of money. Estimé amended the Constitution to allow workers the right to form unions. For many, their lives improved.



Exposition internationale du bicentenaire de Port-au-Prince or International Exposition organized by Haitian President Dumarsais Estimé in 1949.

The tables were turned. Government jobs and cabinet positions were overwhelmingly doled out to blacks instead of the mulatto elite. François Duvalier was named Director of Public Health because of his position with MOP. Three years later, he was elevated to the cabinet position as Minister of Public Health and Labor. With his new government income, he was able to move his family into a new home in a middle-class neighborhood.

True to his form, Duvalier remained quiet. Considering the volatility of Haitian politics, silence could be self-preserving. No one could recall any programs that he proposed, and he seemed, as always, to be very secretive about his work. “At a medical convention, some were surprised to see that his only contribution was to exhibit a few pictures of yaws patients. He aroused few enmities and made few strong impressions on anyone.”¹⁹



President Dumarsais Estimé with Minister of Public Health and Labor François Duvalier

¹⁹ Diederich and Burt, 61.

Underground Savior

But the dream was short-lived. Scandals erupted. Numerous bureaucrats mismanaged their positions by lining their pockets through graft, exercising a general lack of discipline, and launching strategic economic blunders. The nationalization of the US Standard Fruit Company destroyed the banana market and lost a source of valuable foreign revenue.

The long-simmering blood feud between the blacks and mulattoes intensified to greater animus. As discontentment with the Estimé government increased, multiple opposition forces closed in for the kill: the elite, the socialists, Figiolé's laborists, students, an unsupportive US State Department, and Dominican President Rafael Trujillo. The elite turned to a reliable ally, the military, to bring the final curtain down. Colonel Paul Magloire handed Estimé a proclamation of resignation and deposed him in a bloodless coup on May 10, 1950. Estimé boarded a ship and died in exile three years later.

Duvalier took Estimé's ouster personally. It marked a profound turning point in his life. The private, silent Duvalier became fiercely angry. Diederich reports that he threatened to put Port-au-Prince to the torch.²⁰ Duvalier learned a vital lesson that he would never forget, and when he came to power, he would take forceful steps to neutralize the elite, the students, and, especially, the military.

One memory haunted him above all—his mentor Estimé forced to walk between two rows of soldiers as he left his homeland for penurious exile to die, brokenhearted, after only three years. 'Do you see those men in olive green?' Duvalier would ask his friends bitterly. 'They're not to be trusted. Do you remember what they did to Dumarsais? But the same thing will never happen to me.'²¹

Duvalier and his *Griot* associate, Lorimar Denis, collaborated on a book, *The Problem of Classes Throughout Haiti's History*. It was a political treatise in which Duvalier the politician emerges for the first time. The past was used to support their conclusions about Haiti's race relations.

These conclusions were that bloody conflict between black and mulatto had to be reopened, because Haiti's entire class structure was predicated on it. The ruling class, born of French and colonial racism, had for over a century refused to lead its people. . . . they fought against social justice, dominated the government, scorned the black masses, and forced the nation to derail from its

²⁰ Diederich and Burt, 64.

²¹ Abbott, 57.

historic destiny as the world's first Black Republic. Only Estimé and his 1946 "Revolution" had managed to restrain them, and this "Revolution" was the culmination of generations of struggle.²²

Abbott insightfully asserts,

Duvalier had longed for a savior for his people. . . . Estimé seemed to be that savior. But then Magloire, the elite, and the army crucified him, and Duvalier was pushed back to tread between the abysses now filled with bitterness and despair. As he walked, he pondered, and **very soon he came to believe that the savior he had once seen in Estimé was, in fact, no other than himself, Dr. François "Papa Doc" Duvalier.**²³



Estimé was replaced by the man who escorted him out the palace door, **Paul Magloire**. Duvalier refused to serve in his administration as many of the other cabinet officials did. He returned to his previous work with the American Sanitary Mission with a burgeoning bitterness.

After the initial honeymoon wore off, the tired, predictable patterns kicked in. Magloire and his cronies enriched themselves while the onerous mulatto elite exercised unabated dominance. Again, the masses raised their voices, and Magloire responded in the sure-fire fashion by jailing opponents, real or suspected, unleashing the army to physically intimidate adversaries, and by silencing unfriendly journalists. Thousands went underground.

Duvalier was forced into hiding in 1954. Magloire informed the Americans of his political activism, and they dismissed him from the Sanitary Mission. Even his 70-year-old father was arrested for refusing to disclose his son's hideouts. Friends secluded him and provided for his family's well-being.

During this period of seclusion, he pondered how to shape his destiny as future Haiti's savior and supreme leader. A new character evolved, more intense and vengeful. What emerged was a total lack of personal loyalty, a universal mistrust of individuals, an ability to lie and break promises with stone-faced regularity, and a

²² Abbott, 57.

²³ Abbott, 59.

penetrating ability to identify an opponent's Achilles heel.²⁴ He also learned lessons from Haiti's troubled history and devised strategies to prevent the circumstances and upheavals that had ousted his mentor Estimé and so many others before him. Duvalier's long-held devotion to the gods and rituals of Vodou deepened. His favorite book was Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Friends said that he always kept a copy close to him and read it into tatters. Another item that he always kept close were firearms. He stowed them everywhere, a penchant that he would carry with him into office. While underground, Duvalier built a devoted following, many of whom would play vital roles in his future reign.

By 1956, the gig was up for Magloire, whether he knew it or not. Confrontations against his government proliferated and turned violent. Open insurrection started with students battling police and striking unions demanding the President's resignation. In a bizarre twist, the wholesale-market women who carried the fresh produce to market stayed home fearing werewolves were roaming the streets.

A new anomaly commenced. Random terrorist bombings and shootings struck fear throughout the capital city and forced a declaration of a state of siege. Though in hiding, Duvalier became a central figure in the terrorist acts. Much of the blame for the acts of violence were cast upon his followers. The discovery of a bomb factory and arrests of his agents confirmed that they acted with his approval. He was always quick to deny any personal involvement, even publishing a statement in a newspaper:

In a last desperate effort to cling to power, Magloire packed the prisons with more of his opponents and ordered storeowners to keep their doors open, but all of them remained closed. One-by-one, loyalty around him collapsed. The US Ambassador Roy Davis and the Papal Nuncio informed him that their support had evaporated and advised him to leave the Presidency as scheduled. Eventually, the army withdrew their backing, though most of the officers were afraid to own up to it. Conceding defeat, he flew with his family to Jamaica, leaving behind his beautiful marble villa in Turgeau.

François Duvalier emerged from hiding and declared his candidacy for the next elections. Now, he could pursue his mission.

²⁴ Abbott, 61.

Chapter 3

THE PATHWAY TO POWER

A cockroach is never right in front of a chicken. – Haitian proverb²⁵



“They have gone mad.” – Duvalier campaign speech mantra

²⁵ HAITIAN PROVERB: “Ravet pa janm gen rezon douvan poul.” (A cockroach is never right in front of a chicken.) Meaning- The strongest side will always win.



Turmoil and mayhem escorted Magloire out the door into exile. Anarchy and bickering stepped into the void.

What was to follow for nine kaleidoscopic months was a dizzying succession of provisional regimes and arrangements signifying in themselves absolutely nothing. Within six months alone, five governments were to rise and fall while Haiti, in the words of Leslie Manigat, ‘exhausted all forms of transitory government that has been used throughout the nineteenth century: provisional constitutional presidency, provisional revolutionary presidency, collegial government, provisionary military government, and the unavoidable Constituent Assembly in a kind of *bas-empire* competition.’. . . the truly ephemeral governments of 1957 represented surface phenomena while the real contests went on below the surface.²⁶



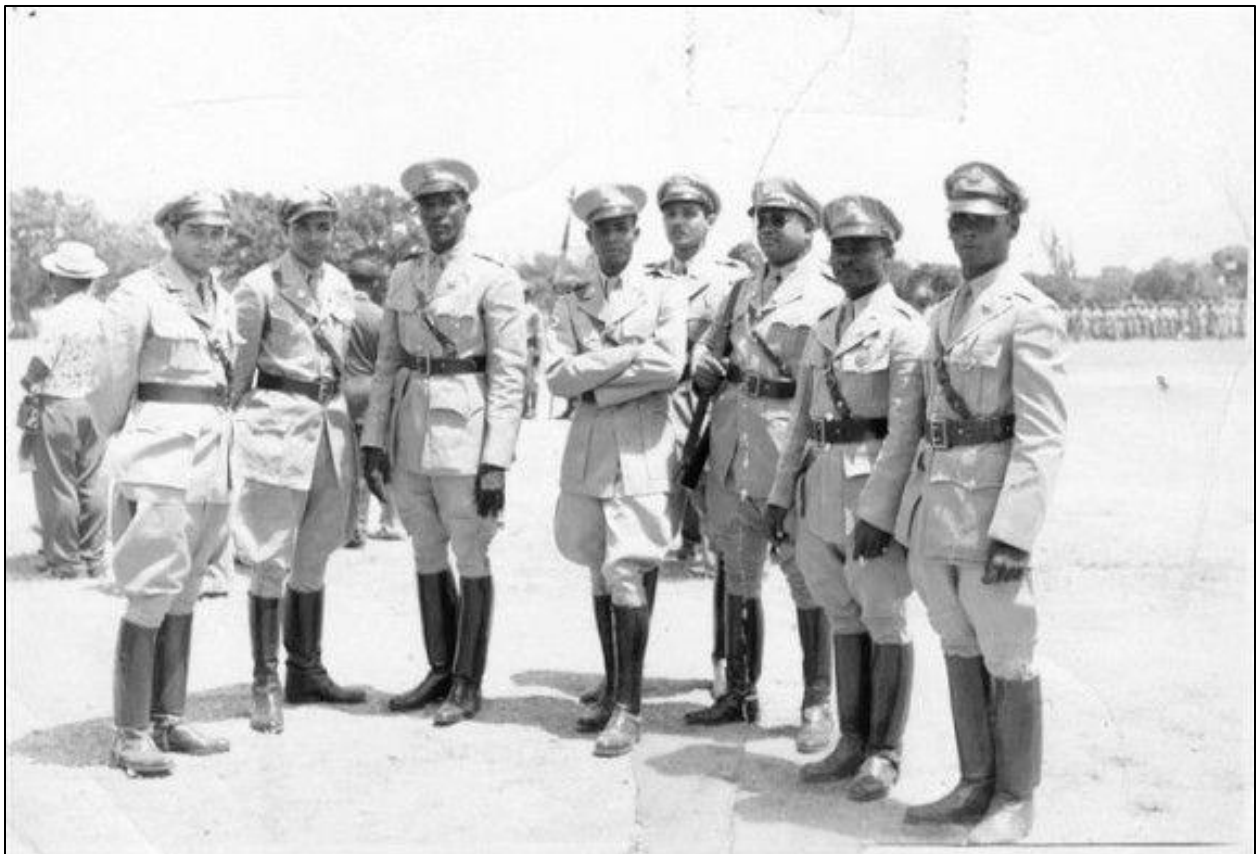
Protesters in St. Marc in early Spring 1957 protesting a seven-man executive council which ruled Haiti for a time, followed by a 3-man council, followed by the army.

²⁶ Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 541.

The Cantankerous Campaign of 1957

In 1957, for the first time in 153 years of independence, all Haitians over the age of twenty-one were eligible to vote. Universal suffrage created some never before seen electorate dynamics. Women could vote. The provinces outnumbered Port-au-Prince four-to-one; the capital city had never lost a national election. But the most altering powershift was that mulattoes only represented 10 percent of the voters; the 90 percent peasant population would have their say.

Two state of affairs continued uninterrupted during the nine-month transition—pandemonium ruled the streets, and the military exercised its clout to move key players in-and-out of power. But even the army was splitting into factions within the officer corps. In a farcical attempt to stage a coup d'état, the police chief's loyal forces swooped down in a DC-3 and dropped a bomb by the palace barracks that went unexploded. Nobody thought to light the fuse.



Army Officer Corps

Amidst the brokering, four candidates emerged from the pack with their sights set on the presidency.



The first was a moderate, middle-class *noir* economist from the Artibonite region, **Clément Jumelle**. He was educated at Fisk University and the University of Chicago, though qualified and capable, he was tainted with an enormous liability. Jumelle was the Minister of Finance under President Magloire. The exiled President left an empty treasury, debts unpaid, and a massive amount of funds misappropriated. On an ironic note, Jumelle sheltered François Duvalier and financially supported his family during his 1954 exile. Duvalier would return the generosity by murdering most of his family and forcing Clément into hiding.



The elites also had their candidate, **Louis Déjoie**, a wealthy *mulatto* planter from the South and dealer in essential oils. He was a snappy dresser who hosted weekly black-tie dinners at his home for American Embassy officials and other prominent guests. Déjoie felt the presidency was his birthright since his ancestry was from a long line of Haitian dignitaries including former President Fabre Nicolas Geffrard. He was a puppet of his advisors whose intent was to reestablish the old elite power.



The third candidate was a formidable opponent for Duvalier, **Daniel Figolé**, the fiery, erratic demagogue and deity-like figure to the Port-au-Prince mobs. For the past 15 years, his inflammatory rhetoric had destabilized every government and effort towards compromise. With a single oration violent mobs would ravage the streets and National Assembly halls. He was imprisoned by Estimé for 17 days and by Magloire for three months for oppositional activities. Figolé's principle liability was that he could not get along with anyone, outside of the poor capital masses. He was unknown and regarded with suspicion throughout the countryside and had no military alliances in the officer's corps.

And at last, returning to public life was the “people’s Papa Doc.”

The campaign of 1957 was cantankerous and baffling. Everyone underestimated the little man. Everyone felt he could be manipulated. Even some of his own

campaign staff, felt that they were the ones pulling the strings. “Duvalier would only smile his mysterious half-smile and say nothing.”²⁷ He was chameleonlike.

Figinolé’s campaign strategy sought to discredit Duvalier by ridiculing his intelligence, publicly scorning him as “a profoundly stupid little man,” and saying that he played no part in the 1946 revolution. Not an intelligent strategy and easily countered. Duvalier presented himself as the one who embodied the spirit of Estimé and his rightful heir. With the widow, Madame Estimé, campaigning by his side who could argue with his characterization. By promising to follow in his mentor’s footsteps, he was able to garner influential support. “Estimists would say: ‘*Duvalier is us.*’”²⁸

With his unpretentious wife, Simone, and diminutive father, Duval, accompanying him throughout the campaign, he connected with the rural masses and conveyed empathetic qualities: “absolute integrity and sincerity, no trace of arrogance, and the common touch that endeared him to hundreds of thousands of those whose buttocks he had once stabbed with yaws-killing penicillin.”²⁹ He promised them a fair deal.



Surmising that they could wield power over him, the military favored the little doctor. With them, he was diplomatic, flattering, deceptive, and dishonest. During one power crisis, a supporter donated \$46,000 in Duvalier’s name to the General Chief of Staff to pay the soldiers.

²⁷ Diederich and Burt, 15.

²⁸ Diederich and Burt, 81.

²⁹ Abbott, 64.

Figinolé Fiasco

The pathway to power was a process of elimination. In time, it appeared the only man Duvalier had to beat was Figinolé. He would be the first to exit.

After the failed coup attempt, the three *noir* candidates reluctantly compromised upon a political fix. They agreed that Figinolé would serve as a provisional president with a coalition cabinet, until the election, and General Antonio Kébreau would become the Chief of Staff. (*Kébreau was Duvalier's man.*) On May 26, Daniel Figinolé was inaugurated with a twenty-one-gun salute, but as it turned out, the shots would number more than the nineteen days of his presidency. He and his followers made two catastrophic strategic blunders. First, he audaciously continued to run for president, and his followers wanted to totally bypass the election and extend his provisional role to a permanent six-year term. Secondly, he outraged the military brass by mass transferring and commissioning his own henchmen without consulting them and by giving a 100 percent pay raise to all of the enlisted men. It was time for him to go.

On the night of June 14, the generals dispatched the Port-au-Prince garrison out for an evening to watch Western cowboy movies in the casernes. Then a group of officers led by Kébreau stormed the Palace Council Chambers while the cabinet was in session and marched Figinolé off before he could blurt out a word.



Figinolé and his wife escorted into exile; pro-Figinolé riot

Forcing him to sign a resignation letter, they drove him to a port where another group was waiting with his wife and seven children. In a manner reminiscent of Toussaint L'Ouverture, they were placed on a waiting cutter and sent into exile. The ship sped off to Mole Saint-Nicolas where the same DC-3 that had bombed the barracks took them to Miami and then to New York. Figolé would not see his homeland until 1986 and then die shortly thereafter.

All hell broke loose! Rumors flew! Déjoie's supporters circulated a tale that Figolé was being held captive in the infamous Fort Dimanche, in order to destabilize General Kébreau because he was considered too pro-Duvalier. And a provocatively odious telecommunication proclaimed that he had been secretly executed.

With a roar that sounded like a raging ocean and could be heard miles away, a torch-bearing horde of thousands from the Bel-Air and La Saline squalors poured into the streets to administer the "people's justice." They attacked Fort Dimanche in a futile effort to rescue their hero who was already in New York. Every part of the city in their wake was ravaged and set on fire.

Hurling rocks and sticks at the fort, the police answered back with machine guns. Hundreds went down. The rioters continued their hopeless assault, but the army moved in with tanks and half-tracks. Hundreds more went down. *Time* magazine correspondent Bernard Diederich left his home in the plush Pétionville suburb to witness the carnage. "After a pile of corpses had been created, the police counterattacked, moving into the slums, seemingly bent on eradicating once and for all Figolé's power base from the face of the earth. Pitched battles of an indescribable ferocity resulted."³⁰ Machine gun fire sprayed entire city streets and blocks of flimsy huts, sometimes unloading at point blank range. After the army gained control, ravenous dogs did their gruesome work. When order was restored, army units arrived in trucks and hauled the litter of corpses off to common graves. Then fire trucks hosed down the blood-soaked streets.

No one knows how many perished. "The official casualty list was 50 dead and 250 injured. In his book, Maurepas Auguste says over 500 died; in *Papa Doc*, Diederich and Burt put the carnage at 1000."³¹

General Kébreau established a new provisional military government, but the United States refused to recognize it. Advised to set general elections, the Ministry of Interior and National Defense announced elections for September 22, 1957. The next day, the US recognized his provisional government.

³⁰ Diederich and Burt, 97.

³¹ Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 547.

The Pathway Opens

The pathway to power was now wide open for Dr. François Duvalier to ascend to the palace. Jumelle succumbed next. His situation was hopeless. His reputation was in tatters by his association with Magloire and the army stacked the deck against him for Duvalier. Two days before the election, he quit. Déjoie campaigned hard, but with American backing and overwhelming support from the black electorate throughout the countryside for his opponent, he didn't stand a chance either.

Some 950,000 Haitians went to the polls for a vote that had been thoroughly organized by the army. In what Jean-Pierre Gingras called, 'the perfect peacefulness of fixed bayonets,' the election came off smoothly enough. Duvalier received 679,884 votes, Déjoie trailed with 266,992. Duvalier candidates made a clean sweep of the Senate and won two-thirds of the *deputés*. Only in Port-au-Prince, stronghold at once of the elite and Figolé's masses, was the little doctor decisively beaten. As the results came in, Duvalier told *New York Times* correspondent Peter Kihss that the biggest issue was honesty. For his part, Déjoie said, 'Eight-five percent of the election was crooked.'³²

Dr. François "Papa Doc" Duvalier with his savior complex could now impose his peculiar will on the nation.



Election Day

³² Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 548.

Chapter 4

A SHAKY START

The constitution is paper, bayonets are steel. –Haitian proverb





One of the foundational principles of democracy is “majority rules.” For it to work, once the electorate has spoken through free and open elections, the process of a peaceful transition to power must follow. Haiti has never known such a transition.

Inauguration of Terror

Before the ink had dried certifying Duvalier’s election, the opposition launched challenges, strikes, and terrorist acts. The defeated Déjoie refused to accept the election results and charged that the vote was rigged, except, of course, in the precincts that he had won. Clément Jumelle and his brothers went underground and began plotting to overthrow the new government. Figolé’s followers, still steaming from their messiah’s abduction and disappearance, were not ready to embrace a new leader in the National Palace.

Four days following the election, Déjoie loyalists called for a protest strike. General Kébreau, still the head of the government, enacted an obscure law that permitted police to reopen striking businesses and to redistribute the merchandise to “needy persons.” Duvalierists, who had concealed their weapons during the campaign season, now, appeared at shops with hoods, dark sunglasses, and pistols bulging under their jackets. They cut open shuttered corrugated steel gates and invited shoppers to take their pick, all with police support. Never again during Duvalier’s tenure would a strike be employed as a political weapon.



The National Palace of Haiti, Port-au-Prince (1912-2010)

One pre-inaugural terrorist act and savage reprisal set off international alarms and gave a preview of things to come. On a quiet night, Déjoie partisans approached an army sentry post in the mountain resort town of Kenscoff, nine miles above Port-au-Prince. To gain access, they asked for a curfew pass to take a woman in labor to a doctor. Suddenly, the terrorists murdered the sentry and three other soldiers asleep on their cots. Then they conspicuously placed the bodies on display to make a statement.



General Kébreau countered by declaring martial law with orders to arrest or shoot anyone they regarded with suspicion. The army officers were in a foul mood and retaliated within a matter of hours. Shibley Talamas, a Haitian-born US citizen, a well-known textile merchant, and Déjoie supporter, was arrested for violating the curfew. Talamas was on his way to get an obstetrician for his wife who was in labor. An argument erupted during the interrogation, and he was kept in custody until the next morning. Upon his release, he went to the hospital to see his newborn daughter and then to the residence of the US ambassador. Friends warned him that police were searching his house and seeking to re-arrest him, so the US Consul and Vice Consul personally escorted him to the police after receiving assurances that he would not be mistreated. During the police search of his house, the authorities claimed to find weapons like those used in the execution of sentries. Talamas was immediately transferred to the infamous Fort Dimanche where interrogators beat him to death on the day of his daughter's birth.

The United States was livid and formally protested his death. At first, authorities said the 300-pound Talamas died of a heart attack from an old heart lesion. Later, the official report stated that he was struck when he attempted to grab a machine gun during the interrogation. In response, the US suspended three technical aid programs. After three months of negotiations, a formal expression of regret was issued, two officers were suspended for ten days, and Talamas' widow was compensated with \$100,000.

All of this and more occurred before Duvalier could be administered the oath of office.

Robert and Nancy Heidl provide an astute observation about the Haiti that Papa Doc inherited.

By 1957 the modernized Haiti of two decades earlier seemed to have glimmered away like a mirage. Exports, mostly agricultural, had declined by 20 percent between 1946 and 1956 and were still going down. American-built bridges and roads had ceased to exist. (In 1934 one could drive from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel in less than two hours, in 1957 it took nine hours by jeep in good weather.) Communications had collapsed; the telephone system was dead. Ports were silted, unlighted, and obstructed by wrecks, docks had crumbled. Desperately ill patients lay on floors of stinking hospitals. Sanitation and electrification were in precarious decline. Political institutions and army were in shambles; races, classes, and regimes contended bitterly.

In the words of the new president-elect, Haiti, two decades after the occupation, was ‘rotting, hunger, nudity, sickness, and illiteracy.’

The Americans had modernized everything but Haiti and the Haitians. By 1957 Haiti had retrogressed to normal. These were the fruits of the second independence.”³³



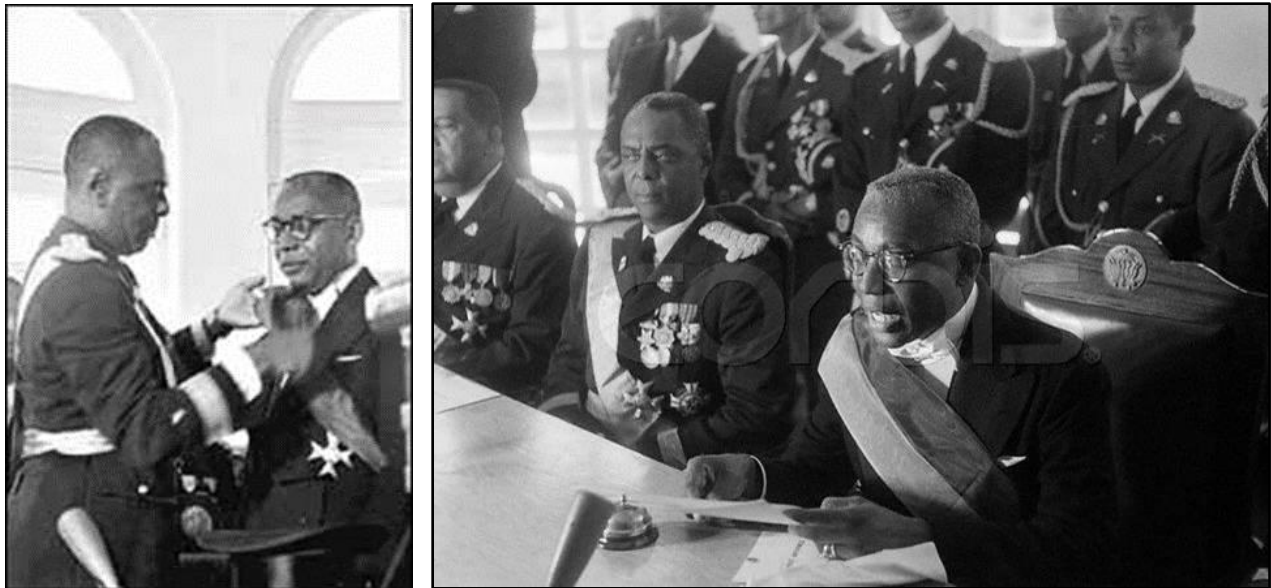
³³ Heidl, Heidl, and Heidl, 561.

Unleashing the Terror

At last, Inauguration Day arrived, October 22, 1957, exactly one month after his election. General Antonio Kébreau bestowed the official sash upon Dr. François Duvalier. He seated himself in the accursed Presidential Chair that had bewitched presidents for over a century. Haitians called this chair “rangé,” a Vodou term implying that an evil spell would doom the chair’s occupant. The betting odds were long that the soft-spoken country doctor would inhabit the “rangé” for an extended tenure, as plots continued to multiply on countless fronts.

In Duvalier’s first Presidential proclamation, he stated, “For a long time now the Haitian people have been associated with suffering. This is an image that must be destroyed.”³⁴ “My government will guarantee the exercise of liberty to all Haitians and will always give them the necessary protection in that exercise . . . My government of national unity will evenhandedly seek to reconcile the Nation with itself.”³⁵

At his first press conference, he stated, “I have no enemies except the enemies of the nation.”³⁶



General Antonio Kébreau and Dr. François Duvalier on Inauguration Day, October 22, 1957

³⁴ James Ferguson, *Papa Doc, Baby Doc: Haiti and the Duvaliers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) 38.

³⁵ Heigl, Heigl, and Heigl, 565.

³⁶ Heigl, Heigl, and Heigl, 565.

For François Duvalier's Presidency to survive, he would have to hit the ground running. He explained to his associates, ensuring power must precede implementing policy. His years of contemplation while in exile and the notorious conspirators he accumulated during the campaign equipped him to do much more than endure. Papa Doc would unleash a ferociously swift and incomprehensible reign of evil terror that would extinguish thousands of lives and leave a legacy that haunts Haiti to this day.

First, those who had the audacity to challenge Duvalier's election, real or simply perceived, were to be eliminated. He ordered the arrest of hundreds of opponents. "Sneak arrests and brutal interrogations often followed by death or permanent disappearance . . . were to mark his regime."³⁷

Award-winning Canadian author and historian Elizabeth Abbott lived in Haiti and through her intimate interviews with hundreds of people who spoke with great candor about their personal experiences, she has provided an up-close view of the Duvalier regime in her book, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and Their Legacy*.

Yvonne Hakime-Rimpel was the oldest sister of a diplomat who refused a post, a feminist who fought for women's rights through her magazine *L'Escale*, and an opponent on political issues.



On the night of January 5, 1958, armed, hooded *cagouards* ["hooded men"] smashed down her door and stormed upstairs where Yvonne, her husband, and eight children lay sleeping. Without a word, they grabbed two daughters sleeping in the same room, savagely beat them, then dragged them downstairs and pitched them outside on to the sidewalk. Yvonne, in slippers and nightgown, was pushed into a car and driven away.

In the rural suburbs of Delmas, Yvonne's abductors stopped at a deserted field. Despite great fear, she counted nine men. One was Haiti's President, François Duvalier, in the khaki uniform of the military he despised. . . . The *cagouards* stripped her and began one by one to rape her. When the last *cagouard* had withdrawn from her, they began to beat her. The beating was so brutal, Yvonne faded in and out of consciousness, but before she could die they kicked her naked body into a trench. 'Now finish her off said Duvalier in his unmistakable nasal voice, and Yvonne closed her eyes to die. . . . bullets

³⁷ Abbott, 78.

shattered the air and she felt them whiz beside her and tunnel harmlessly into the soft earth.

In the hole Yvonne lay silently until long after she heard the sound of their cars in the distance. Then she pulled herself up and crawled slowly along the ground until she found her torn nightgown and one slipper. Bloody and filthy, she limped through the blackness until she came to a small house. A peasant woman opened the door to her feeble knocking, but to her plea for refuge, “Zombie! Zombie!” and slammed the door in Yvonne’s face. The owner of the second house she reached also turned her away. “Go away!” he hissed. “You’re putting me in danger!”

A casual acquaintance found her lying on the sidewalk and, risking his life, carried her to his car, where she lay while he drove her home. But they could not stop because policemen surrounded Yvonne’s house, so they sped away to one of her relatives. The latter kept her until dawn, then drove her to the L’Asile Français Hospital, where she was registered under a false name and, for the three months she was hospitalized, was guarded night and day by her family.

Her brother-in-law, Antonio Rimpel, Duvalier’s Finance Minister, refused to help. “There is nothing I can do,” he told his relatives when they arrived at his house at 1 a.m. on the morning their mother was being tortured. Rimpel counseled silence, and in the terror of Duvalier’s new Haiti, the Bellande-Rimpel family maintained it.³⁸

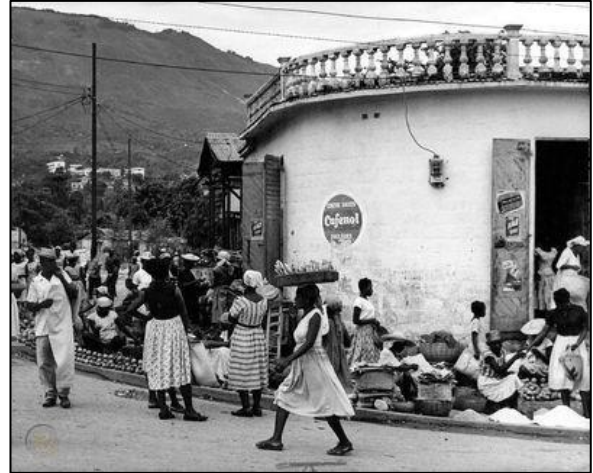
Yvonne Hakime-Rimple left the hospital a changed personality. Once robust and outgoing, she became a fearful woman, her marriage faltered, and she lived the rest of her days in poor health. But she maintained her terrified silence. Years later, she was taken to the palace and interrogated for hours. ‘Who was responsible for beating you that night? Was it the government? Do you think it was Duvalier?’ She could see a spectacled eye peering through a peephole in the wall. She replied that she didn’t know, but it certainly wasn’t Duvalier.³⁹

Next, Duvalier devised an abnormally sinister retribution against the troublesome masses who had supported Daniel Figolé and continued their opposition.

³⁸ Abbott, 79-80.

³⁹ Abbott, 88, 103-104.

Bel-Air is Port-au-Prince's oldest neighborhood, and one of the poorest and most crowded. It was also Fignole's territory and, after Duvalier became President, a hotbed of opposition. Duvalier, less than a mile away in the wonderful European-style National Palace, knew how to deal with the sullen, hostile throngs of foul-smelling Bel-Air.



Duvalier chose as the site of his operation the plain old cross at the corner of the Rue du Pueple and the Rue des Ramparts, where every week thousands worshipped at the foot of the cross and the bronze statue of a fighting cock. In March, less than five month in office, Duvalier sent a man to hack the cock away from its base. "Why?" demanded the curious crowd that immediately gathered. The man ignored them, put the cock under his arm, and drove off.

The people were wondering which fetishes and magic Duvalier needed their old bronze cock for when a backhoe groaned up a steep hill, followed by a large chauffeured car carrying a light-skinned man. Muttering, sensing danger, the crowd watched as the backhoe dug a hole so deep it seemed to disappear inside it. When the hole was about ten feet deep, the backhoe left. So did the mulatto, only to return shortly with a truckload of masons who mixed one wheelbarrelful of cement after another until they had walled in the huge pit. Then they left too.

That night policemen arrived in Bel-Air and stood sentinel, keeping the people away from the old shrine. Nobody could pass, and the people of Bel-Air, scarred by memories of last year's slaughter, retreated to their homes. By ten o'clock truckloads of soldiers reinforced the police, and the news spread instantly throughout the slum: venture outside and the men in olive green have orders to shoot to kill.

Albert Salas was inside, crouched with his friends René Sanon and Carlo Nan, on the gallery of Sanon's house just off Rue du Pueple. Motionless, the three young men watched.

Through the darkness two trucks lumbered up the hill, and Salas could clearly see the cargos: scores of men, women, and children, and several uniformed policemen, gagged with rags, their bodies immobilized with ropes. A few worked off the gags and cried out, terrifying shrieks that were quickly stifled.

The trucks backed up against the still drying cement pit. Men in civilian clothes jumped up and pushed the victims into it.

Another truck arrived, and its passengers too were pushed inside the pit, protesting wildly as they fell on each other, breaking legs, smothering piglets and chickens, defecating in fear.

As a civilian official paced up and down issuing instructions, workmen arrived and began to shovel the piles of earth back down into the hole, covering the moaning people and indignant animals until the pit was filled and silent. Then they mixed and poured cement, rolled and leveled it, and soon all that was left of the massacre was a pristine cement floor. Before the last worker left, the official walked up to the handiwork he had supervised, raised his arms as if to strike a mortal blow, and plunged something into the wet cement. Then he too left, and only soldiers remained guarding the tomb.

Salas woke before dawn and rushed back out to the gallery. Two soldiers remained as sentinels, and a crowd already stood staring uncomprehendingly at the old wooden cross that their President had had embedded in a platform of cement.

The people defiled it with human excrement when the soldiers left and never worshipped there. An Alsatian priest, Father Etienne Grienenberger, whom Duvalier later expelled, declared that the site was Satanic. The victims were never identified, but the people of Bel-Air understood Duvalier's message: no man, woman, or child was safe, and through magic and sacrifice, the President had harnessed great forces of evil to assist him in his quest for absolute power.⁴⁰

On the morning of March 12, 1958, cannons from the palace sounded a thirteen-gun salute. From a distance, Army Chief of Staff Kébreau heard the thunderous noise and suddenly stopped his car. His chauffeur made inquiries, and to his dismay, he discovered that he had been sacked. The cannons were announcing the installation of his replacement. Immediately, the general sought asylum in the Dominican Embassy. As a consolation prize, Duvalier offered him the ambassadorship to Italy which he hastily accepted and scurried off to safe refuge in Rome. Snip-by-snip, Papa Doc would neuter the army until they were impotent to pose any serious threat. He divided and conquered by turning officers against one another, demoting and shipping them out, or eliminating them entirely.

⁴⁰ Abbott, 80-81.

Invasion

The novice administration was nearly toppled just nine months into its term by a paramilitary invasion launched from the Florida Keys. The eight-man force was led by exiled Haitian Army **Captain Alix Pasquet**, the former commandant of the Casernes Dessalines. He was joined by two other Haitian military officers and five American soldiers of fortune, two of whom were Dade County Sheriff deputies. The amphibious attack was to be joined by 16 mercenaries flying from Miami to the Dominican Republic with armaments for 150. Their plan was relatively simple and depended upon two crucial components, surprise and obtaining immediate reinforcements from an oppressed populace.



Absurd mishaps, fatal mistakes, and implausible miscalculations doomed the plotters at every stage of the operation. US Customs Agents in Miami, acting on a tip, seized the Dominican bound plane and weapons before departure. Pasquet's troupe landed their 55-foot fishing boat and posed as tourists in the coastal resort town of Délugé, seventy-five kilometers from the palace. A suspicious peasant alerted authorities when he spotted them unloading armaments in the full moonlight. A three-man patrol was immediately dispatched from a nearby post and engaged the invaders in a gun battle. The patrol was killed, and Pasquet's men confiscated their jeep. Rattling undetected down the road the jeep broke down about an hour later. They commandeered a public *tap-tap* (a brightly painted pickup truck with a metal cover that serves as common taxis for peasant public transportation) to drive them to Port-au-Prince. Ironically, this one was colorfully painted with the banner "In spite of all, God is our master."

The little *tap-tap* drove right up to the Casernes Dessalines' gate. Dressed in khaki army uniforms, Captain Pasquet gained entry when he announced to the sentries that he was delivering five *blanc* prisoners. At once, the marauders secured the barracks by machine-gunning three guards and taking the entire garrison as prisoners while they slept in their bunks. The Presidential Palace was right in front of them and only a simple gate prevented their entry.

Now, blunders multiplied. The element of surprise was completely lost when Pasquet stopped moving towards seizing the palace so that he could telephone officers and friends and ask them to join him. He even phoned Duvalier in the palace and ordered him to surrender with a white flag. Unbeknownst to Pasquet, Duvalier had moved the barracks' munitions into the palace. The alerted officers sounded the alarm and ordered troops to move in.

The concealment of numbers was lost when one of the invaders got a sudden craving for his old brand of Haitian cigarettes, and just after dawn, sent one of the prisoners out to fetch two packs. Instead, the released prisoner smoked the cigarettes as he gabbed to officials. Soon everyone realized that they were only facing eight men, instead of the 300 they had surmised. By learning that the eight were comprised of three mulattoes and five white men, the hoped-for mob uprising would never transpire.



A panicked Duvalier had packed his bag and was preparing to flee with his family for the Colombian Embassy, but once the size of the force was revealed, he changed into his khaki military uniform with a steel helmet and pistol side-arm. He ordered radio broadcasts charging that the Magloirists and Dominicans had launched an invasion. The announcer implored the people, “Go to the palace and help your President!”

The counterattack to retake the barracks was almost as haphazard as the original raid. Civilians, soldiers, and *cagouards* rallied to the palace. Anyone who showed up was given a weapon, even shoeshine boys. It took four hours to organize the motley crew. Occasionally, some armed bands would muster the courage to make a run toward the barracks but dispersed at the first sound of gunfire. Some *cagouards* made a jester of valor by rushing across the parade grounds with only wooden sticks. The end came with a grenade attack. Pasquet’s head was blown off. Four other invaders were gunned down, one begging for his life. Three escaped the barracks but were soon discovered. Two of the raiders were shot, hacked to pieces by machetes, stripped naked, and their dismembered, mutilated corpses were dragged through the streets, and finally presented as trophies to Papa Doc in the palace.

The already frayed relationship with the United States worsened because of the involvement of five Americans. A Haitian minister demanded that US Ambassador Gerald Drew be recalled because “he is going too far in our internal affairs.”⁴¹ The State Department denied the charge but apologized for the US plotters.

⁴¹ Robert Corbett, “A Weird, Fatal Dash to Turbulent Haiti,” Bob Corbett’s Haitian History Page, Webster University, <http://faculty.webster.edu/corbette/haiti/history/duvaliers/duvalier-58-life.htm>.



Pasquet and the sheriffs



Protesters outside the US Embassy

Chapter 5

REIGN OF TERROR

Gratitude is cowardice. – François Duvalier

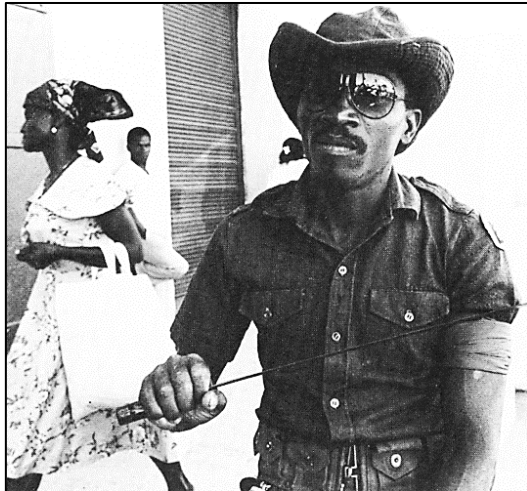


Instruments of Terror



The failed coup d'état reinforced a critical lesson Papa Doc had learned from Estimé's ouster; the military could not be trusted. Since the days of Dessalines, they had been involved in every political upheaval. His grip on power and personal survival depended upon neutralizing them.

Astutely, Duvalier took a page out of Adolf Hitler's playbook by creating an autonomous personal militia directly accountable only to him, in the manner of the infamous Brown Shirts. This feared secret police force became notoriously known as the **Tonton Macoutes**. "*Tonton Macoute*" literally means Uncle Knapsack in Creole, the antithesis to "*Tonton Noel*" (*Uncle Christmas*). Throughout superstitious Haiti, he was known as the mythical Haitian bogeyman who kidnaps bad children at night by stuffing them in his gunny sack and carrying them off to be consumed for breakfast.



Tonton Macoutes



The Tonton Macoutes were recruited from every corner of the state and strategically planted throughout the rural countryside with authorization to commit systematic brutality against any form of political opposition. This web of enforcers terrorized the populace with gruesome murders and rapes. Large numbers disappeared at night, never to be heard from again. On some occasions, victims' corpses were publicly burned alive or hung from trees to send a strong warning against any form of resistance. Family members who attempted to remove the bodies of their loved ones for burial often fell victim as well. Many powerful Macoutes had private cells in their own homes where men and women disappeared without a trace. They adopted a sinister uniform of dark glasses, dark denim clothes, homburg hats, red neckerchiefs, and a bulging pistol at their sides. Their ranks numbered in the

thousands. Every crevice of society was infiltrated and subject to this state-sponsored terrorism, from poor peasants to prominent businessmen, while the leadership of this gang of thugs personally enriched themselves through extortion and corruption.



Hitler's fanatical lieutenants—Himmler, Heydrich, Barbie, Eichmann—were names that induced unimaginable terror throughout Nazi occupied lands. They executed their Führer's schemes with machine-like precision. In identical fashion, Duvalier's devoted deputies—Barbot, Madame Max, Cambronne—conjured up unthinkable horror. Barbaric **Clément Barbot** piloted the Tonton Macoutes and quickly became the most feared man in Haiti. He handed out calling cards identifying himself as Chief of the Secret Police. "Whenever an opponent to the regime was arrested, Barbot did the interrogating and he was savagely efficient. Prisoners talked or died, sometimes both."⁴² The former elementary teacher brought organizational skills to Papa Doc's chaotic administration.



Sadistic **Madame Max Adolphe** (Rosalie Bosquet) was commandant of the infamous Fort Dimanche, the political prison whose very name was synonymous with death. Daily, she presided over horrors worthy of Buchenwald or the Gulag.⁴³ Thousands perished yearly in deaths and deprivations beyond description or human imagination. Corpses were hauled away daily in the carts used to deliver the food. The remains were buried in shallow graves, and at night packs of dogs would dig up the fresh meat. Once an officer posted there arrived at his general's headquarters and broke down in tears describing the horrors he saw daily. "Do something, General," the man begged.⁴⁴ "Madame Max indulged in

⁴² Diederich and Burt, 104.

⁴³ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 605.

⁴⁴ Abbott, 133-134.

real life the pornographic fantasies she loved to read about, torturing the genitals of naked prisoners, watching with sadistic delight as they writhed under her henchman's blows."⁴⁵



Fort Dimanche

As Papa Doc's team of thugs took the field striking terror on every segment of society, he was not one to sit in the bleachers. The diminutive doctor became an active participant and took enormous delight in watching various victims suffer excruciating forms of torture and death.

Haiti had become Papa Doc's personal prison. Even his splendid palace had a torture room, its walls painted rusty-brown to camouflage blood splattered from its victims. Duvalier took such personal interest in the actual torture session that he had peepholes drilled, enabling him to sit in discreet comfort in another room and monitor the proceedings. Standard procedure was to immobilize prisoners into the "jack" position, a technique inherited from French slave owners. They were bent over, feet and hands bound with a stick passing behind their knees, and at the top of their forearms. Then they were flayed with batons and rifle butts. For variety and special cases, the palace also offered the coffin-shaped iron maiden, reminiscent of instruments the medieval Church used to detect and correct heresy.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Abbott, 134.

⁴⁶ Abbott, 133.

The Spirit of Terror



In Haiti, Vodou is power. It was one of Papa Doc's most effective schemes to subdue and terrorize the populace. As an astute observer of Haitian life, after having lived and worked in the countryside, Duvalier knew the central role Vodou played in the lives of the common people and that their allegiance could be captured through its dark powers. He was skilled in its beliefs and practices and most likely a *houngan* (high priest) or *bocor* (wizard or sorcerer). Using Vodou's manipulative influences for devious political purposes and to elevate his aura as the savior of Haiti, he incorporated *houngans* and *bocors* into his intelligence network and the ranks of the Tonton Macoutes.

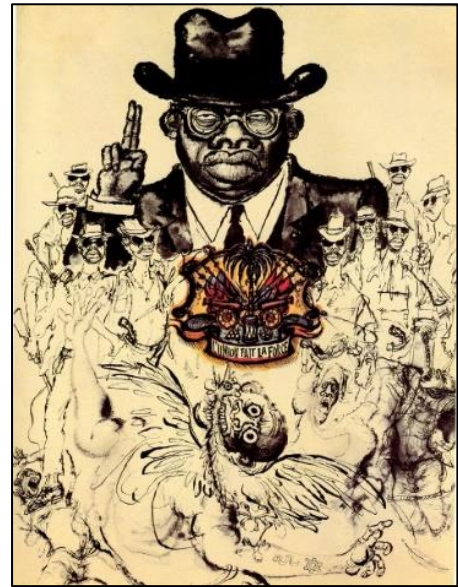
On one evening in 1959, as dusk was settling over the Cul-de-Sac and charcoal fires and kerosene lamps flickered in a thousand huts, truckloads of soldiers were deployed stealthily around Croix-des-Missions and Croix-des-Bouquets, [Vodou's] heartland. During the hours ahead, pouncing without warning, detachments picked up every *houngan* and *mambo* in the region, packed them into trucks at gunpoint, and drove them off into the night. The convoys converged in the inner courtyard of the Palais National. At midnight, herded up the darkened spiral backstairs of the palace into Salle des Bustes, *houngans* and *mambos* [priestesses] faced Francois Duvalier, standing alone and menacing in the blood-red robe of the *Secte Rouge*. 'Never forget,' he told

them, ‘that I am the supreme authority of the State. Henceforth, I, I alone. I am your only master’ Then, wordlessly, he dismissed.⁴⁷

On the night of Boukman’s dread anniversary in August 1962, the president had presided over a Cérémonie Bois Cayman at which, under his cold eye, the cabinet and leading macoutes gulped warm blood from a chalice to whose rim stiff hairs from the slaughtered pig’s throat still adhered.⁴⁸

Duvalier elevated the antiestablishment Vodou to normalized heights never before permitted in Haiti’s underground toleration of the religion. His eccentric, bizarre behaviors were lived out within the walls of the Presidential Palace as if it were his divine temple. Allies claimed that he studied goat entrails for guidance, sought counsel from the gods when sitting in the bathtub wearing his top hat, and spiritually communicated with Dessalines by sleeping on his tomb one night a year.⁴⁹ Gruesome stories emerged about his fascination with enemy corpses.

On the express orders of the president, Philogènes’ [former military captain] head of one unfortunate foe was chopped off with a machete, packed in a fast-melting bucket of ice, and flown back to the National Palace. Here, with spiritual counsel from *houngan* Dodo Nasar, Duvalier interrogated the spirit of Philogènes and conversed at length with the head.⁵⁰



Abbott tells the tale of former presidential rival Clément Jumelle’s emergence from hiding. He was deathly ill and died while seeking refuge inside the Cuban ambassador’s residence. Papa Doc demanded the corpse for Vodou rituals. As the body was being delivered to the Sacred Heart Cathedral for final rites, the Tonton Macoutes intercepted the hearse and abducted the casket into their van. As the widow shrieked, the body snatchers sped away. Jumelle’s cousin and others followed the van to the palace gates and whispered in disbelief, “Duvalier’s going to capture his loa . . . Duvalier’s going to use the body for magic.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 576.

⁴⁸ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 593.

⁴⁹ Diederich and Burt, 346.

⁵⁰ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 604.

⁵¹ Abbott, 93.

Word leaked out that Duvalier mounted the portly, swollen corpse and called upon its spirit, as a host of Macoutes stared in awe. To his great disappointment, the spirit had already departed.

The Macoutes returned the coffin to the family and ordered them to bury it immediately without inspection. At a later date, the family dug up the coffin and discovered a strange thin body inside.

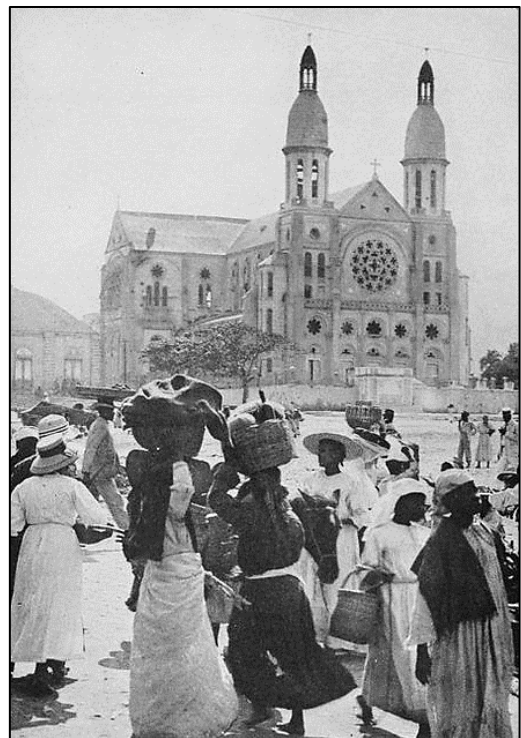
From the National Palace, Duvalier ordered Jumelle's sisters to be arrested, imprisoned in Fort Dimanche for six months, and to be beaten daily. This was their reward for sheltering him when he was fleeing Magloire and for feeding his destitute family.

The enhancement of Vodou to virtually official religious status deified Duvalier's position.

Terrorizing the Church

Voices from prominent clergy started to rise against the regime. Duvalier and Barbot had longstanding scores to settle with the Church. Like many Haitians, he perceived it to be an extension of French colonialism and racist because of its strong alignment with the elite. For centuries, the Church passively tolerated Vodou, but now, it intensely opposed the *Les Griots'* philosophies and politics of Estimé and Duvalier. Its plundering participation in Lescot's "anti-superstition campaign," as well as, the hierarchy's unanimous support Louis Dejoie. were still fresh sores.

Duvalier launched a full-scale attack. First, foreign-born archbishops, priests, and professors were expelled or imprisoned. Then the seminaries and universities were closed. The entire Canadian Jesuit Order was completely banished (This was the second time in two centuries that the Society of Jesus was expelled from the island. The first eviction was in 1763 because they were considered too sympathetic to the religious interests of the slaves. This expulsion was because they were considered a threat to the state.). They never returned during his reign.



As a thousand worshippers knelt in prayer during mass for the departing clergy in Port-au-Prince's cathedral, Clement Barbot and the Tonton Macoutes suddenly descended upon them. The Macoutes started cracking heads with their nightsticks, staining the basilica's aisles with blood, and demolishing sacred objects. Outside, they arrested sixty wounded supplicants. The official justification for the sacrilege was delivered by the Minister of Cults, psychiatrist Louis Mars: 'Christ himself took a scourge to expel the evildoers from the Temple.'⁵²

Papa Doc restocked parish positions with pistol-packing Macoute priests who would celebrate the mass, hear confessions, and report those that were perceived to be politically suspect. Protestant missionaries and their proliferating churches were not exempt from expulsions and infiltrations either.

The Vatican retaliated by excommunicating Duvalier, the second Latin American head of state to be anathematized since Juan Peron. After a few years, Pope Paul VI sought to mend fences and invited Haiti to enter into formal discussions. The eagerly inclined Papa Doc stipulated that a new concordat must be hammered out to replace the one signed in 1860 by President Fabre Nicolas Geffrard. He demanded a native Haitian Church hierarchy, the right to make all appointments, subject to papal approval, and the annulment of his excommunication. Duvalier proved to be a formidable negotiator. Eventually, Pope Paul VI acceded to Papa Doc's demands while the dictator conceded very little. Vodou also received official religious status. "Enemies of Duvalier would say the Church had been '*macoutisée*' or, worse, '*zombifiée*.'"⁵³

Pivotal Heart Attack

One-by-one, Duvalier subdued every enemy. He seemed invincible. But one power was beyond his reach and threatened to do what all the plots and invasions had failed to accomplish. Duvalier had always been physically delicate from a combination of chronic health problems. Since young adulthood, he had been afflicted with diabetes, heart disease, circulation problems, and degenerative arthritis. He relied on daily insulin shots and a mixture of pills for survival.

On May 24, 1959, Papa Doc suffered a massive heart attack. His personal physician was Dr. Jacques Fourcand, an American educated neurosurgeon. He misdiagnosed the coronary attack as a diabetic coma and administered a massive insulin injection. But

⁵² Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 583.

⁵³ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 611.

Duvalier remained comatose. Only the immediate intervention of Tonton Macoute Chief Clément Barbot saved his life. Another physician, Dr. Rosarion, suspected that Fourcand was trying to kill Duvalier and asserted that glucose would save him from an insulin overdose. He confided his suspicions to Simone who shared them with Barbot. Immediately, he bolted from the palace, broke into the first pharmacy he came to, and returned with glucose. The dosage awakened Duvalier, slightly. Barbot contacted American Ambassador Gerard Drew who dispatched two cardiologists from the Guantanamo Naval Base and two consulting doctors from New York. They attended to him around the clock for a month.

The president was incapacitated for four months during which Clément Barbot assumed absolute control of the government—presiding over cabinet meetings, issuing press releases, and delivering orders. Secrecy was ordered to be maintained though rampant rumors circulated. The Ministry of Information reported that the President had been confined to bed by the flu and exhaustion, as Haiti was in the midst of a flu epidemic. Slowly and painfully, Duvalier’s life returned, and Barbot obediently relinquished power back.



The heart attack marked a pivotal change in Duvalier and his malevolent manifestations. The despot was transformed. His state of mind, not the state of his body, shocked everyone. He had been comatose for nine hours and incorrectly medicated. The oxygen deprivation to his brain caused irreversible neurological damage. Close palace intimates noted frightening lapses in his sanity; like Hitler, he would

abruptly rant and rave and foam at the mouth, horrifying all bystanders. Barbot told people, “Duvalier is a madman.”⁵⁴ Thus, the son of a mad mother became a madman.

His vengeful designs intensified. “Before that, he had repressed and murdered, but so had his opponents, and most Haitian presidents before him. After 1959 he smashed, crushed, and slaughtered and committed crimes so unpardonable.”⁵⁵ Jean Dominique, a member of *Komite Pa Bliye (Do Not Forget Committee)*, summarized Duvalier’s ruthless logic of terror, “If an individual man decided to fight against Duvalier, Duvalier would say, ‘if you fight against me, your entire bloodline will disappear.’ So,

⁵⁴ Abbott, 97-98.

⁵⁵ Abbott, 98.

in addition to the destruction that the dictatorship carried out, it established a rule of terrorism, a domino effect that would exterminate entire families, entire bloodlines.”⁵⁶

Those closest to Duvalier were the most vulnerable to his paranoid strikes. No one was closer than Clément Barbot, the president’s most devoted confidant, administrator, and executioner. Their wives were like sisters, their children played together, and they had shared homes. Duvalier grew distrustful of Bardot’s ambitions after the heart attack.

One evening, Bardot was returning home from a Bastille Day party at the French Embassy when without warning the Presidential Guard intercepted him. He was interrogated and tortured in the same manner that he had inflicted on others. A large stash of cash was discovered in his house, and he was grilled about the money from his other projects such as the international casino franchise. Bardot had made the grave mistake of not cutting the president in on all his dealings. Duvalier shipped him off to Fort Dimanche to rot in a rancid cell.

After eighteen months, Papa Doc received word that Bardot had become repentant and devoutly religious. He released him and presented him with a brand-new British luxury car but kept his house under constant surveillance. Bardot would only leave to attend mass or prayer retreats at the Jesuit house.

Massacre

But after laying low for a couple of years, Bardot went underground and launched his pent-up revenge. His first strike was calculated to hurt Duvalier where he was most vulnerable and to force his abdication by kidnapping his children. What was not calculated was the savage bloodbath of reprisals and the international firestorm that would be unleashed. On the morning of April 26, 1963, Papa Doc’s eleven-year-old son, Jean-Claude, and fourteen-year-old daughter, Simone, were being chauffeured to school. Suddenly, shots



⁵⁶ Katrina Martin, “Duvalierism, With and Without Duvalier: Radio Haiti Commemorates the Massacres of April 26, 1963 and 1986,” Duke University Libraries, April 26, 2016, <https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/04/26/duvalierism-without-duvalier-radio-haiti-commemorates-massacres-april-26-1963-1986/>.

rang out killing the driver and three bodyguards. Quickly, a teacher whisked the children to safety and the assassins escaped.

Duvalier's rage was insanely fearsome. Dr. Fourcand feared a fatal heart attack was imminent. He fixated on the notion that former army officers were responsible and that only a trained marksman was capable of such precision. His imagined culprit was Lieutenant François Benoît, the country's sharpshooting champion.

That afternoon, a sadistic massacre commenced. Duvalier's orders were comprehensive and sinister. Exterminate Benoît and his entire family. Shoot to kill all former army officers. The bloodthirsty Tonton Macoutes went about their murderous work with wantonness. Arriving at Benoît's house, they machine-gunned his aged father and mother, visitors and servants, and the family dogs. The bloody bodies were thrown into the street. Fire was set to the house with the infant son still in his crib. Next, they murdered his brother and his wife's entire family.

"Former journalist Michèle Montas still vividly remembers the bullet-ridden bodies lying on the sidewalk near her home . . . She was seventeen years old. . . . Montas recalls 'the smell of rotting bodies for days, but also the gripping smell of fear. It had become the norm, whole families guilty by bloodline, condemned, executed.'"⁵⁷

At least seventy-four people were killed or disappeared that day. Many were military officers; many others were relatives of military officers (including small children), household workers employed by targeted families, or people who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. An elderly lawyer named Benoît Armand was murdered merely because his first name was Benoît. Since Duvalier had his supporters given carte blanche to carry out these killings, the rampage was both opportunistic and indiscriminate. That arbitrariness was not incidental. On the contrary: it was a fundamental part of the Duvalierist machine, essential to creating a climate of fear and exerting political and social control.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Edwidge Danticat, "Memories of a Duvalier Massacre, 50 Years," Progressive.org, April 25, 2013, Later <https://progressive.org/dispatches/memories-duvalier-massacre-50-years-later-danticat-130425/>.

⁵⁸ Martin.

Hundreds arrested that day were taken directly to the palace or Fort Dimanche. It is not clear what happened to them. Most just disappeared. It has never been confirmed whether they were quickly executed and dumped into common graves at Fort Dimanche or kept in prison and liquidated whenever Duvalier was seized with the urge to kill someone. For years, relatives of the missing men . . . held out hope that in some far-off isolated jail they might be alive. But Duvalier later crushed these hopes by saying again, 'I have no political prisoners.'⁵⁹



Unrestrained Tonton Macoute arrests

It was impossible for François Benoît to have fired on Duvalier's children. Two days earlier, he escaped from the Tonton Macoutes and sought asylum in the Dominican Embassy residence. Jacqueline, his wife, was eight-months pregnant. Just in time, she was warned and fled to refuge in the Ecuadorean Embassy.

⁵⁹ Diederich and Burt, 205-206.

International Pariah

The unrestrained savagery aroused worldwide repercussions. But to Duvalier, international implications be damned. The Presidential Guard established a machine gun perimeter around the Dominican Embassy and attacked. They ransacked the premises and roughed up a secretary, unaware that Benoît and twenty-two other fugitives were hiding in the diplomatic residence. An assault of the residence was driven back by chargé d'affaires. This was Haiti's first violation of a sovereign consulate since 1915 and the mutilation of Guillaume Sam. The fugitives feared the same fate awaited them.

Three international reactions followed. First, President Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic mobilized their superior Armed Forces into war mode—amassing troops across the border, sending the navy into strategic positions, and issuing an ultimatum to immediately withdraw from their embassy (he also suggested sending in a psychiatrist). Secondly, the US Atlantic Fleet and Marine Expeditionary Force were deployed into the Gulf of Gonâve. Thirdly, the Organization of American States (OAS) sent an investigating team with ambassadors from five Latin American countries.

Duvalier was not fazed. He dissolved diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic and welcomed Trujillo's former secret police to Port-au-Prince.

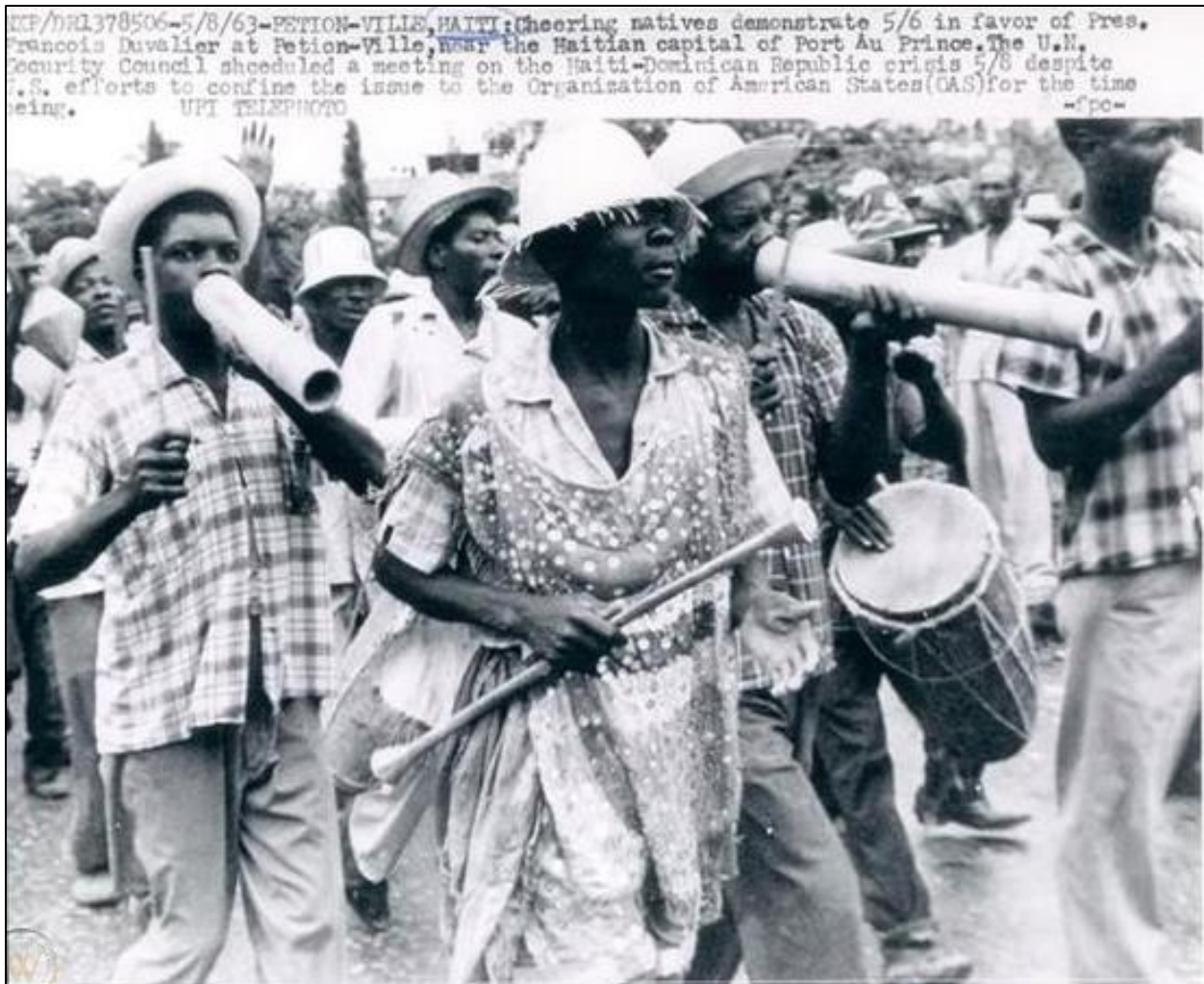


Dominican Ambassador Arturo Calventi addresses the OAS; OAS delegation arrives

No diplomatic training could have prepared the OAS delegation for the freakishly bizarre encounters prepared for their arrival. Papa Doc proclaimed an out-of-season Carnaval that brought a throbbing peasant mob of 150,000 to the palace grounds. Fueled by rum, they wildly chanted and danced to the sounds of ceremonial drums.

Pistol-packing Dr. Fourcand delivered Haiti's brusque response, beginning with the United States. In words not soon forgotten, he labeled the US a democracy of sluts who raped black women and unleashed mad dogs in Alabama. Next, he directed terse threats to the OAS ambassadors.

Blood will flow in Haiti like a river. The land will burn from the North to the South, from the East to the West. There will be no sunrise and sunset, just one great flame licking the sky. There will be a Himalaya of corpses, the dead will be buried under a mountain of ashes. It will be the greatest slaughter in history.⁶⁰



Demonstrators for President François Duvalier

⁶⁰ Heidl, Heidl, and Heidl, 598.

The delegation was ushered into the president's office where a Tonton Macoute with a loaded firearm stood directly behind each representative. Duvalier metamorphosed into *Baron Samedi* and sat immobile and otherworldly for a quarter of an hour. Then he addressed them one-by-one cursing at each in the foulest Creole that they were unable to understand. When they replied in French, he retorted in Creole. Next, they were herded onto the palace balcony to face the pulsating masses chanting "Duvalier or death."

Standing before the throng, he transformed again into another-worldly figure, apoplectic. Then with explosive anger, he addressed them alternating between French and Creole using vulgarities that even shocked his audience while insulting his guests' lineages.

Listen carefully, people of Haiti. . . . I am the personification of the Haitian fatherland. Those who wish to destroy Duvalier wish to destroy the fatherland. I am and I symbolize a historic moment in your history as a free and independent people. God and the people are the source of all power. . . . Those who shot at my children, shot at me. They know that bullets and machine guns capable of frightening Duvalier do not exit. They know they cannot touch me . . . Haitian people, raise your souls to the height of the spirit of your ancestors, prove that you are men . . . put a little marrow in your bones, and allow the blood of Dessalines flow in your veins. . . . I take no orders or dictates from anybody, no matter where they come from. . . . As President of Haiti, I am here to continue the tradition of Dessalines and of Toussaint Louverture . . . I am already an immaterial being.⁶¹

The throng roared their delirious approval and pounded the sacred drums more vigorously. After fifty-six hours, the delegation was released.

As war hung in the balance, a cat and mouse game of international intrigue ensued. Duvalier toyed with every consular maneuver thrown at him without blinking or budging. Gradually, momentum and opportunity waned and shifted away from them to him.

Only inaugurated two months prior, Dominican President Juan Bosch was contending with powerful enemies on his home front. The zeal for armed action was not matched by his generals. The Trujillo military was distrustful of their new democratically elected leftist commander. On September 25, 1963, Bosch was overthrown in a coup.

⁶¹ Diederich and Burt, 214-215.

As the OAS was exercising diplomatic restraint, Duvalier went around them and took his case directly to the United Nations. His ambassador appealed for African votes by saying that Haiti was defending the cause of black people everywhere. Duvalier taunted them further, ““If the OAS claims the right to intervene because of repressive internal conditions, why don’t they land troops in Birmingham?””⁶²

The Mad Marionettist and the United States

Duvalier’s relationship with the United States always hinged on one thing—money. The Haitian Treasury was empty when his fragile administration came to power, and it had exceeded the limit to service its loans. He promised to clean up the mess. But the “mad marionettist” cleverly pulled Washington’s levers for bountiful outlays of monetary aid. Skillfully using the region’s instability to his advantage, he delivered unconditional demands and deceptively misappropriated the resources. Duvalier’s stalwart position was always that no strings should be attached, anything less would be a violation of Haiti’s sovereignty and an affront to its dignity.

In 1958, the United States presented Duvalier with a Christmas present by establishing a permanent Marine Corps mission in Haiti to equip and train the reorganized Haitian military. As time passed, it became evident that they were really arming and preparing the Tonton Macoutes and militia to terrorize the populace.

Fidel Castro’s overthrow of Cuban dictator Batista on New Year’s Eve 1958 sent shockwaves throughout the hemisphere. Both Duvalier and Trujillo were jittery as exiles from their dictatorships flocked to Cuba and prepared to launch rebel incursions into their native lands. Former political rivals, Déjoie, Jumelle, and Figolé, formed the United Opposition to undermine Haiti’s government. A guerrilla training camp was established outside of Havana with the assistance of Che Guevara.

Duvalier kept his relationship with communists ambivalent to cleverly exasperate the State Department. The United States’ dilemma was unmistakable. Should they turn a blind eye to the murder, torture, and disappearances and continue to deliver monetary support to a mad tyrannical regime, or should they risk the potential loss of another Caribbean territory to communism while Soviet and revolutionary guerilla forces mobilized? On June 25, 1960, at a dedication ceremony in the seaside city of Jacmel, Duvalier delivered an ominous speech known as the “Jacmel Outcry.” He threatened that unless substantial increases in US money was delivered, he would be forced to look elsewhere for help. “Haiti has to choose between the two great poles

⁶² Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 632.

of attraction in the world today to realize her needs.”⁶³ Information Minister Paul Blanchet hinted that \$150 million would be sufficient.

The US was stung but got the message loud and clear. At an OAS meeting in Uruguay, the US proposed economic sanctions against Cuba. A two-thirds majority was necessary, and four nations were already on record against the measures. Holding the swing vote, Haiti’s Foreign Minister, René Chalmers, reminded Dean Rusk, the head of the American delegation, that Haiti was poor and reliant on US aid, and that such assistance would determine their vote. The blackmail worked; the United States opened its checkbook and financed the construction of Port-au-Prince’s new international airport. “Secretary Rusk’s expense account on the trip read: Breakfast- \$2.25, Lunch with the Haitian Foreign Minister- \$2,800,000.00.”⁶⁴

The United States’ economic expenditures were well-intentioned and abundant but lacked fiscal oversight. In a four-year period, \$40.4 million was dispatched, corresponding to two-fifths of all US aid given during the preceding twenty-five years.⁶⁵ In 1959, Washington presented Haiti a \$7 million two-year cash gift. Duvalier plundered through it in seven months transferring much of it to unbudgeted accounts for private purposes, usually repressive. A May 28, 1961 *New York Times* article reported that the price for Haitian support in the hemisphere was approximately \$12.5 million annually and the continuation of the military mission. The *Christian Science Monitor* stated that Duvalier’s government had received more than \$116 million in grants, loans, and other types of foreign assistance, most of it from the US, whose yearly grants averaged over half the nation’s annual budget. US officials estimated that eighty percent of the money was wasted through mismanagement and corruption.⁶⁶

By 1962, the Kennedy administration had had enough. Washington publicly condemned and censured Duvalier. In late April, they sent a letter repudiating a speech Duvalier had delivered characterizing the US aid as their endorsement of his government. They also stated that the United States did not recognize the 1961 election to be legitimate, and therefore, considered his constitutional term to expire on May 15, 1963. The State Department initiated a series of confrontations to force Duvalier out of office.

⁶³ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 588.

⁶⁴ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 589.

⁶⁵ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 587.

⁶⁶ Diederich and Burt, 136-138, 171, 182.



On July 20, **Colonel Robert Heinl**, Marine Corps Mission Commander (*a frequent source cited in this document*), delivered a blunt letter of assessment to Haitian Army Chief of Staff General Jean-René Boucicaut denouncing the militia's impact on Haiti's Army. Heinl characterized the militia as superfluous with the explosive potential to keep Duvalier in power. He pressed for its separation from the military. Duvalier erupted. He rejected the report outright and sabotaged the following diplomatic

negotiations. He commanded Boucicaut to publicly renounce and refute the memorandum. Instead, Boucicaut and his family fled to asylum in the Venezuelan embassy. Duvalier ordered the removal of the US Military Mission and the US ambassador. Adding a final insult, he would not permit the ambassador to retrieve his personal belongings before departure. In a twist of Papa Doc irony, when the Cuban missile crisis erupted three months later, Duvalier volunteered the militia as Haiti's official fighting force alongside the Marines against Cuba.

In August of 1963, the United States terminated aid to Haiti.

Papa Doc had sold himself to the nation as a simple country physician and their compassionate caretaker, but callously, he turned his back on their suffering. "Duvalier rejected aid altogether, a policy that seemingly preferred to let Haitians starve rather than deprive Duvalierists of the privilege of stealing."⁶⁷ He denied transport of donated relief aid by US charitable organizations to thousands of starving peasants in the northwest region. Tons of food spoiled on the docks of Port-au-Prince as customs agents sought to extract exorbitant fees, and Haitian consuls abroad refused to issue documents for humanitarian provisions. As one Haitian remarked, "Duvalier has performed an economic miracle. He has taught us to live without money and eat without food."⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Diederich and Burt, 188.

⁶⁸ Heinl, Heinl, and Heinl, 594.

Indignant that Kennedy would not let him spend the US money without restraint, he vowed to 'bring Kennedy to his knees.' Dressing in his *houngan* vestments, Papa Doc conducted a Vodou death ceremony in the National Palace placing a curse on his adversary. When the news of Kennedy's assassination reached Duvalier, he rejoiced and served champagne. A few months later,



Duvalier dispatched an envoy to Arlington National Cemetery to bring back particles of dirt from each corner of Kennedy's grave, shredded fragments of funeral flowers, and a vial of gravesite air. In a new ritual, Duvalier hoped to capture JFK's soul and render it subject to his will, thereby controlling US-Haiti relations.⁶⁹

The Darkest Days

Papa Doc made Haiti his personal torture chamber as the fragile nation descended into its darkest days. Duvalier had instructed Barbot and his Macoutes to kill three hundred people each year. In the dark years of 1963-1964, they exceeded that number every month. Women and children were no longer exempted from his death lists. While most murders were delegated to his death squads, whenever enough rage overpowered him, he would grab his revolver in his aching hand and personally dispose of his enemies. Courageous opponents would launch a new series of invasions and guerilla insurgencies, and each one would set off a greater succession of heinous reprisals. The overthrow of Batista and the murder of Trujillo were forceful reminders that few Caribbean leaders exit on their own terms.

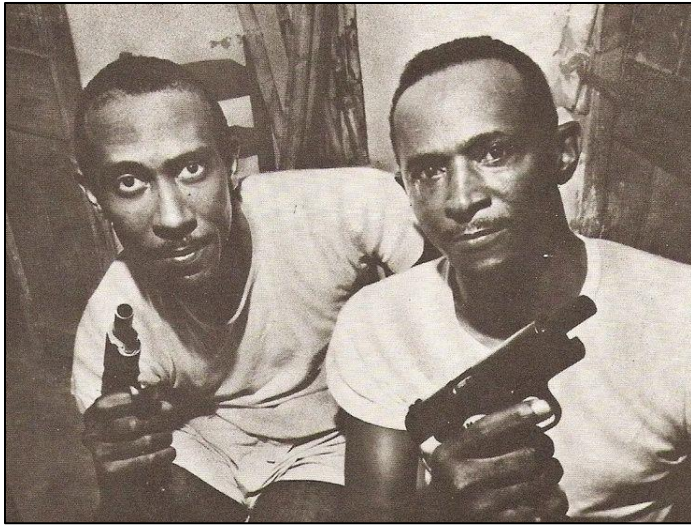
⁶⁹ As previously noted, Duvalier devoutly adhered to the spiritualism of *onomancie*, a magical Haitian numerology from which divinations would confer upon him sinister powers. His number was 22. His election to the presidency was on September 22, his inauguration day was October 22, and other important events were set on the twenty-second. Now, he claimed credit for Kennedy's death on November 22, 1963.



Duvalier's most formidable foe was one he intimately knew. . . and one who intimately knew him. With his family safely secured in the Argentinian Embassy, Clément Barbot and his conspirators announced themselves as the perpetrators of unsuccessful kidnapping attempt upon the Duvalier children. In rapid-fire movements, they launched a stealthy commando campaign that ambushed and killed dozens of Tonton Macoutes and militiamen in Port-au-Prince's alleys and dark streets. One day, Barbot spread the rumor that he was hiding in Pétienville. The Macoutes swarmed the suburb and waited to spring their trap. Instead, Barbot and his band slipped into Fort Dimanche and stole the arsenal. Duvalier placed a \$10,000 price on Barbot's head.

Once, believing they had him trapped in a house, the Macoutes sprayed it with gunfire until they were convinced that nothing inside could survive. When they opened the door, a black dog ran out. In superstitious Haiti, many were convinced that Barbot possessed the power to change himself into a black dog at will. Duvalier ordered all black dogs shot on sight. It was later said that it was months before any black dog felt safe in Port-au-Prince.

Knowing the inside mysteries of the palace and Duvalier's peculiar habits, Barbot taunted his former chief by telephoning him on his private line and teasing that his coffee was poisoned. Duvalier replied, 'Clément, you will bring me your head.' Another morning, his secretary found a note that Barbot had placed on his desk with the threat to kill him.



On May 22, as Duvalier celebrated the anniversary of his second term, Barbot sat for an interview and photographs with Jerry O'Leary of the *Washington Star*. For two hours, he chatted about his struggles, the madness of Duvalier, and a recent narrow escape.

Harry and Clément Barbot

Two months later, it came to an end. A local peasant told authorities that a man matching Barbot's description was hiding in Cazeau. Troops descended on the neighborhood. Barbot and his brother, Harry, took refuge in a sugarcane field. The Macoutes set the field ablaze, and as Clément and Harry stumbled out choking, they were machine-gunned. Duvalier posted photos of the bullet mutilated corpses around town.

The river dividing Haiti from the Dominican Republic has a well-earned name—the Massacre River. Masses of Haitians flooded across the Dominican border seeking sanctuary. Many former army officers who had been removed by Duvalier's volatile purges formed an exile military force. Duvalier realized that their large numbers posed a serious threat, so he moved ruthlessly to halt the exodus. Along the 129-mile-long border, in a scorched earth scheme, his militia and Tonton Macoutes cleared a protective "no man's land" three miles deep. They burned the peasants' primitive thatch-roofed huts and crops and stole their livestock. Then they were herded into the interior to fend for themselves. Anyone caught trespassing in this "war zone" was shot on sight. The open space allowed the Macoutes to set up a lucrative black-market business across the border.



Haiti – Dominican Republic border today at the Massacre River in Dajabon, DR

Barbot's heroics inspired new groups of Haitian exiles residing in the Dominican Republic to take up arms. Arriving in Santo Domingo from exile in New York was former General Léon Cantave who had distinguished himself during the 1957 national election crisis. With covert CIA and Dominican military support, Cantave organized officers that he had formerly commanded and trained inexperienced recruits, mostly illiterate peasants. Their invasion plan was to cross the border from the northern town of Dajabon and to proceed to Cap-Haitien while picking up additional support and recruits along the way. They assumed that the appearance of an invading force would spark a general uprising and that resistance from loyal government forces would be nominal and easily overcome.

The plan and execution were often farcical. From August 5 - September 24, 1963, the "liberators" waded across the Massacre River and launched three offensives. Each time, they retreated back across the river. The unskilled and undisciplined soldiers were newly outfitted with khaki uniforms and boots, something the barefooted peasants had trouble adapting to. Some of the weapons had been given by Fidel Castro to Dominican exiles who had invaded from Cuba in 1959. These either had the wrong ammunition or jammed in battle.

The planned sneak attacks were not a secret at all. All northern Haiti and Duvalier had been warned that they were coming, so they waited. Each time, any element of surprise was lost when a jittery raw soldier unnecessarily fired his weapon and prematurely sounded the alarm. When General Cantave telephoned the Ouanaminthe army barracks commander to demand his pre-assured surrender, he was shocked when it was refused. Duvalier knew and placed the captain under Tonton Macoute guard. The commander, his soldiers, and hundreds of townspeople were shipped off to Fort Dimanche. Later, the commander was returned to Ouanaminthe for a public execution.

Yet, the CIA was encouraged that the mission might have a chance to take down Duvalier as Cantave's army continued to grow to over 200 men. The US parachuted crates with heavy arms to the rebels.

The lack of a clear battle plan and inept confusion doomed their final incursion. Soldiers wandered aimlessly all night. The second-in-command, Colonel René Léon, who was wounded in the buttocks when his own man mishandled a grenade during the first offensive, collapsed of a heart attack and was left behind. When the exhausted rebels reached the outskirts of Ouanaminthe, laborers entering the fields for work told them that the town was waiting for them. Duvalier had it reinforced. A battle raged into the next day, but the raiders failed to take any of their objectives. Retreat was ordered.

When they staggered back into Dajabon, Dominican soldiers recognized the contraband value of the weapons and seized the invaders' armaments. Haitian border guards indiscriminately fired machine guns across the river and struck the Dominican Customs House and a school. The Bosch government alerted the OAS and the UN that they were under bombardment from Haiti.

Safely in Dajabon, General Cantave slipped out of his blood-soaked uniform and into a light blue business suit. He met the investigating newsmen as if nothing had happened. He was detained for a time, but eventually, he returned to New York. The remnants of his small army disbanded to fend for themselves.

A classified US State Department memo stated that failure of the invasion “served to make President Duvalier appear in complete control of the situation and more firmly entrenched in power. . . . The principal significance of the invasion for United States policy is that any move at this juncture which could be construed as seeking a rapprochement with Duvalier would be interpreted by both the Haitian opposition and pro-Government forces as evidence that the United States had now given up hope that Duvalier can be forced out and is prepared to do business indefinitely with his regime.”⁷⁰

There were repercussions in the Dominican Republic as well. Two days later, the Dominican military leaders used the event to depose President Juan Bosch in a coup d'état. They had always feared his leftist democratic values and wanted to maintain the same privileges that they enjoyed under Trujillo's dictatorship.

Jérémie was a charming old French colonial city rich in history and unique to the rest of the country. The capital city of the Grand'-Anse Department is relatively isolated from the rest of Haiti on its western tip. In 1793, it was the landing point for Great Britain's invasion from Jamaica. After Haiti's independence, it became an important



⁷⁰ Benjamin H. Read. “Memorandum from the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Read) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy).” United States Department of State, data file. Foreign Relations of The United States, 1961–1963, Volume XII, Document 390, American Republics. August 14, 1963. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d390>.

trading port and market for various produce like coffee, cacao, mangoes, bananas, and sugarcane obtained from the fertile countryside areas. The inhabitants grew rich and wore the latest French fashions and sent their children to be educated in Paris.



It was called the “City of Poets” in honor of the numerous writers, poets, and historians born there. Three of its most famous sons were Thomas-Alexandre Dumas, the French Revolution general and the father of Alexandre Dumas, author of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*, and the poets Émile Roumer and Etzer Vilaire.

Historically, Jérémie was inhabited by many mixed-race families, the mulatto elite, and some of Jewish descent. In the early 2000s, archaeologists discovered an ancient Crypto-Jewish synagogue, the only known one on the island. A societal apartheid structure deeply divided the city which prevented racial and social mingling.

Duvalier long despised the city and its people. His final political rival in the 1957 campaign, Louis Déjoie, was from Jérémie. Duvalier would unleash his anger upon them in a horrifying measure of reckoning.

The “guerilla epic” of the time is how Heintz depicts the **Jeune Haïti** campaign. If so, then the **Jérémie Vespers**, Duvalier’s retribution, was the “odyssey” of the era because it went far beyond any commensurate measure and reverberates to this day.

After every conventional coup attempt went down in flames, some felt it that it was time to give the younger generation their shot. Catholic Priest Father Jean-Baptiste Georges, who concealed Duvalier during the Magloire administration and was his first Minister of Education before being sacked, went about South America and the US raising funds for an invasion force and announcing it to the world.

Jeune Haïti (Young Haiti) was a US-based resistance group and it represented everything Duvalier feared and despised—young, mulatto and elite, educated abroad, and military trained. Some had served in the US Air Force. Some had family members who were tortured and killed by the Tonton Macoutes. Some were fascinated by the success of Castro’s landing in Cuba and hoped to recreate the same scenario in Haiti. With the backing of the CIA, thirteen young men were sent to North Carolina for special forces training in clandestine operations. Their objective was to raise a revolutionary force from the southern peninsula by seizing Jérémie and recruiting

peasants from the surrounding area. They were counting on more than 150 followers in Haiti and promises of several CIA agents to accomplish their goal.

On August 5, 1964, Jeune Haïti landed at Cap Dame Marie on the western side of the southern peninsula approximately thirty miles from Jérémie. Over the next eighty-three days, they staged the most hard-fought guerilla campaign since the days of the *Cacos* during the US occupation. Marching over 200 miles through the crags and forests of some of Haiti's most difficult terrains, they ambushed government forces in at least ten serious engagements inflicting heavy losses. They even survived Hurricane Cleo which ravaged the peninsula.

A worried Duvalier cautioned, "We mustn't forget that Castro began with little forays too. . . . These things start small and end up out of control. Above all, we must guard against groups like these getting new recruits among the people."⁷¹ He personally supervised every detail of the operation and named himself Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Every available resource was thrown into the engagement to secure a decisive victory and to inflict maximum terror—the Army and Air Force, local Tonton Macoutes and militia, as well as his most vicious lieutenants.

Each encounter exacted an expensive toll on the young commandos. During a fierce rearguard action, Captain Yvan Laraque was the first to perish. A furious Duvalier ordered his bullet-ridden body flown back to Port-au-Prince. Clad only in his underwear and a torn army shirt, Laraque's stinking, bloated, fly-infested corpse was set on a garden chair and conspicuously placed at a major downtown intersection across from the international airport with a sign reading "Welcome to Haiti." The rotting cadaver was guarded by the Tonton Macoutes for ten days. Only after the Liberian Ambassador protested the spectacle as a disgrace to men of African descent was the family permitted to bury the body. Laraque's family, including his ten-year-old son, was arrested and thrown into Fort Dimanche.

The Jeune Haïtiens failed to take Jérémie and the peasants, skeptical of invaders with shoes, never mobilized. Starving and demoralized, their numbers were being reduced one-by-one. They fought bravely to the end. Two were captured. The final three refused to surrender and in a last valiant effort, fought off the soldiers with rocks when their ammunition ran out. Their heads were shipped back to the palace. To declare his total victory, Duvalier photographed their heads and published the morbid pictures in the leading newspaper.

In the final tragic chapter of the Jeune Haïtiens' saga, the two captured men, Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin were tried, convicted, and sentenced to execution.

⁷¹ Abbott, 122.

Duvalier was so intrigued that he interviewed both for hours in the palace where they respectfully debated political and socialist theories. Afterward, Numa and Drouin were returned to Fort Dimanche.

On the morning of November 12, Numa and Drouin were taken from their cells, bathed, groomed, dressed in clean clothing, and transported to the national cemetery. When they arrived, a throng of thousands was waiting. For his declaration of victory celebration, Duvalier had delivered truckloads of peasants and school children from the countryside as eyewitnesses to the final scene. Businesses and schools were ordered closed as television and radio crews prepared to broadcast the execution throughout the nation. To add to the drama, printed programs with Papa Doc's epistle were distributed and read aloud by the literate. His message: "Dr. François Duvalier will fulfill his sacrosanct mission. He has crushed and will always crush all anti-patriotic efforts. . . . The Duvalier revolution will triumph. It will trample the bodies of traitors and renegades and those who sell out."⁷²

As the young men were tied to stakes, the microphones transmitted their final curses against Duvalier. Then a nine-man firing squad delivered the terminal barrage.

The nation's newspaper supplied a vivid description:

And this morning one should have seen this huge crowd, this feverish crowd, communicating in a mutual patriotic exaltation; this crowd who had only one heart, one soul to curse adventurism and brigandage; this crowd, it was made up of people, they were workers, functionaries, and employees of the government, businessmen, all the forces of the nation standing, manifesting their total adhesion to the politics of peace of the Duvalier government.⁷³

The execution was broadcast national television for weeks.

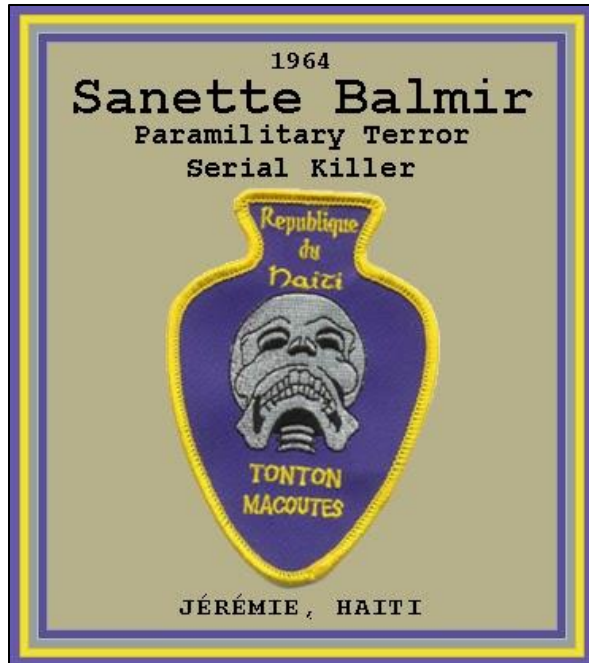
⁷² Abbott, 131.

⁷³ Diederich and Burt, 306.



Public execution of Jeune Haïtiens Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin

The **Jérémie Vespers** was the other half of the Jeune Haïti equation. Duvalier deeply hated Jérémie with its elite mulatto community. He connected the city with the invaders and used the incursion as his excuse to savagely exterminate the mulatto population like his hero Dessalines had done in 1804. The atrocity was a slaughter of innocents—men, women, children, infants, and grandparents—entire families.



Duvalier's adjutants were a matchless triad to execute his formal orders for a swift and merciless genocide without restraints. Lieutenant José "Sonny" Borges was Clément Barbot's disciple and had become legendary in the performance of brutal cruelties. With Barbot disposed of, he was eager to justify Duvalier's confidence. Sanette Balmir was the local Tonton Macoute Commandant. She was a convicted thief, prostitute, and lesbian. Sanette had a long-standing score to settle with the residents of Jérémie who had mocked her when she did forced convict labor in the city streets. Another local Macoute chief with a deep hatred for the mulattos was

Saint-Ange Bontemps. He was a drunkard with a history of murdering and licking his victims' blood. Since 1959, they had prepared a list of victims for when the right opportunity presented itself.

The prominent residents were pulled from their homes, thrown into jails, forced to strip bare, interrogated, and severely beaten and tortured before being hauled off into the night for their execution and burial in mass graves or ditches. Night after night, the Macoutes and militia prowled.

Pierre Sansaricq was unjustly suspected of having a son in the rebellion. Duvalier ordered rigorous action to be taken against the family. His entire household was rounded up, stripped naked, and paraded through the streets of Jérémie before a taunting mob. They were promised a reprieve if he opened his store; they watched the Macoutes steal everything they could lay their hands on. Next, the family was thrown into trucks and driven away as they sang "Nearer My God to Thee."

To make extra sport during such activities, the Macoute custom was to kill the women and children first while the man watched to provoke his anger. Thirteen family members perished before Pierre's eyes, including a paralyzed grandmother, his wife, and two babies. One aunt was buried alive.

A civilian witness pleaded for the life of the two-year-old Reginé Sansaricq saying that he would adopt the little girl. The Macoute retorted that a Duvalierist must be bloodthirsty as he drove his knife into Reginé's heart.

As his mother was being shot, four-year-old Stephane Sansaricq cried with tears in his eyes that he had to go pee-pee. Borges said that he would dry his tears and did so

with the lighted end of his cigarette. As Stephane writhed, another Macoute tossed the boy into the air and rammed his knife into the boy's stomach.

Later that night, a telegram arrived, "Do not execute the Sansaricq family. Duvalier."

Some Macoutes were having second thoughts and openly protested that they were going too far, shedding too much blood, as they tried to remind everyone that they were from the same town. But when Sanette and Bontemps sought Duvalier's permission to exterminate more people, he readily agreed. He also nationalized their properties saying they lost the right to citizenship and died a "civil death." The Macoutes had a field day looting and burning.

Hundreds were massacred according to Peter Benenson, the founder of Amnesty International. Virtually all of Jérémie's mulatto population of around 400 were exterminated, leaving the city politically and economically isolated. The massacre was called the "vespers" because many of the executed families were remembered as the families who took "vespers," picnic excursions. Jérémie went into a steep decline afterward when Duvalier ordered the closure of its port.



Jérémie families

Elizabeth Abbott says the Jérémie Vespers “touches the quick of the Haitian soul.” Today, films like Roland Chassagne’s “Disposable Souls” keeps the memory of the Jeune Haïtiens alive, and the song “Haiti” by Arcade Fire’s Regine Chassagne honors her late relatives who were killed during the massacre.

Haiti, mon pays
 Wounded mother I'll never see . . .
 Mes cousins jamais nés
 Hantent les nuits de Duvalier . . .
 Unmarked graves where flowers grow
 Hear the soldiers angry yelling
 In the river we will go
 Tous les morts-nés forment une armée . . .
 In those days their blood was still warm⁷⁴



Fifty Year Memorial to Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin (1964 – 2014)

⁷⁴ William Butler, Win Butler, Regine Chassagne, Tim Kingsbury, Richard R Parry, “Haiti,” Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, 2005.

Chapter 6

FOR LIFE

“Impossible to darken that night.” – Graham Greene, The Comedians



I have mastered the country. I have mastered power. I am the New Haiti. To seek to destroy me is to seek to destroy Haiti herself . . . No earthly power can prevent me from accomplishing my historic mission because it is God and Destiny who have chosen me. – Dr. François Duvalier⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Heinl, Heinl, and Heinl, 575-576.

The Imperial Cult



At a point in time, the ancient Romans could no longer honor their Emperors without declaring them to be divinely sanctioned authorities (*divus*) of the Roman State. Known as the Imperial Cult, it regarded emperors and their family members as gods. Temples were erected in honor of Julius Caesar after his death and to Augustus during his lifetime. It was developed as a unifying practice throughout the Empire as a way to express genuine gratitude for the benefits brought by State. The Imperial Cult became essential to Rome's survival. Domitian took the title “lord and god” and ordered subjects to confess he was “lord and god” as a test of their loyalty. Refusing to perform certain outward rituals became a treasonous offense, as many Jews and Christians would suffer.

Dr. François Duvalier’s messianic complex concocted his own Imperial Cult. Haiti would bend their knees and pledge fidelity to their *divus*.

While extinguishing unending plots, uprisings, and invasions, Papa Doc produced a farcical and preposterous sham of a political maneuver that was impossible to foresee. The 1957 Constitution and election provided the president only one six-year non-successive term in office. On April 8, 1961, he dissolved the bicameral legislature and ordered new elections in three weeks for a single chamber. No one was quite sure who or what they were voting for. A weekly state newspaper provided a slight hint when it noted that the people would vote as much to elect their representatives as to approve the policies of Duvalier.

Printed prominently at the top every ballot was “Dr. François Duvalier, President of the Republic” while the names of Duvalierist legislative candidates appeared below. The overall voter turnout was sparse, except in Cap-Haitien, where every government employee, prisoner in jail, and foreign resident were ordered and marched to the polls.

The next morning, to everyone’s complete surprise, Haiti discovered that they had re-elected Duvalier to a second six-year term. The Census Committee announced that the vote was 1,320,748 to 0 out of an estimated one million eligible voters. An oblivious Duvalier replied, “My enemies can reproach me of only one crime—of loving my people too much. As a revolutionary I have no right to disregard the voice of the people.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 586.

The *New York Times* caustically commented, “Latin America has witnessed many fraudulent elections throughout its history, but none has been more outrageous than the one which has just taken place in Haiti.”⁷⁷

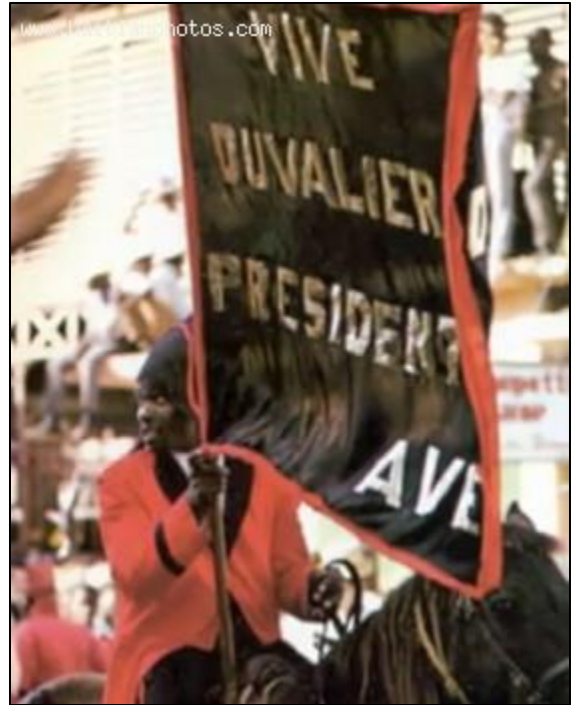
The Caesars never had to concern themselves with general elections nor a capricious electorate. Duvalier was determined that he would never have to concern himself with another one either, while he had clearly demonstrated not the slightest concern for his electorate.

By 1964, Duvalier’s power was more secure than at any previous period. Most of the opposition was in exile, prison, or dead while international tensions had moved to other troubled hotspots. In his *Memoirs of a Third World Leader*, he claimed to have heard for the first time the cries of the fanatical mob during the OAS demonstrations imploring him, “Duvalier, President-for-Life, Duvalier, President forever.”

“Yes, that is your desire, that is your will . . . I am ready to reply to the wish of the nation,” was his response.⁷⁸

A massive new propaganda campaign of adulation commenced. A continual parade of delegations from throughout the provinces were herded into the palace to pay homage to Duvalier by delivering specially prepared speeches of veneration and to implore him to remain as their leader for life. During Carnival, the street bands added songs and dances to their repertoires celebrating “Papa Doc for Life.”

On April 1, as the carnival revelers celebrated in the streets, an army officer delegation led by Chief of Staff General Gérard Constant marched into the palace and swore an absolute oath of allegiance to President Duvalier for life. Replying in an empathetic voice, he told the throng and officers that he understood their feelings and further embellished himself by proclaiming:

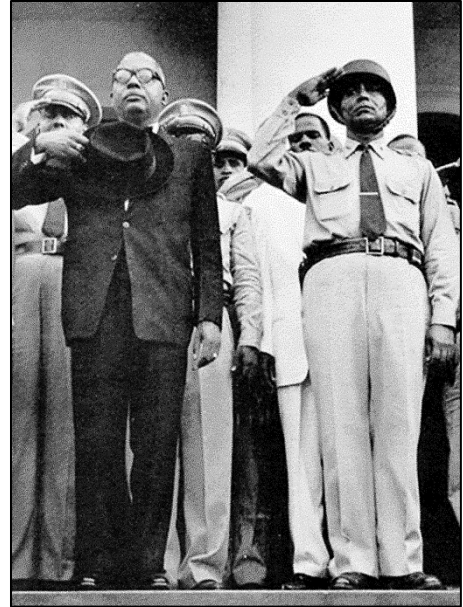


⁷⁷ Abbott, 102.

⁷⁸ Abbott, 118.

I am happy that you understand that it is necessary to join the revolutionary crowd and come here this morning to render homage to the constitutional chief of the armed forces in a new oath of allegiance. . . . Should I disappear in flames I must maintain the power which the people entrusted to the man in whom it has full confidence. My dear friends, it is not easy to find a man having full confidence in himself, in his country, such as I. It is not possible to find easily a revolutionist. You will find him every fifty or every seventy-five years, but I who am speaking to you now . . . I have full confidence and I sympathize the aspirations and I concretize, at this moment when I am speaking to you, the aspirations of the motherland and of the nation that we all love. I know where I can go because I am a revolutionist. . . . When you will see that the man has the necessary power, you will equally know what is reserved for you. . . . I want to go always higher to meet the thought of Toussaint L'Ouverture who in article three of the Constitution of 1801 said that in the present state in which the colony of Saint Dominique was he could not hand over the constitutional power. He had to keep it.⁷⁹

Seizing governance for life was not without precedent in Haiti's history. Toussaint L'Ouverture installed himself as Governor-General for Life, much to Napoleon's dismay. Dessalines crowned himself emperor, and Christophe and Soulouque christened themselves as kings. Pétion, Boyer, Geffrard, and Salnave assumed lifetime titles, as well. Only a rare few left office on their own terms. Salnave's term ended by a firing squad two years later.



⁷⁹ Diederich and Burt, 268-269.

The National Assembly drafted a new constitution designating Duvalier President-for-Life with absolute power and the authority to appoint his successor. A rubberstamp referendum was placed before the electorate on June 14 to institute the new constitution and to grant Dr. François Duvalier Presidency for Life. The ballot only contained space for an “oui” vote. His margin of victory was 2,800,00 to 3,324. Most of the “non” voters were arrested on charges of defacing the ballot.

Duvalier received his new title and a plethora of others—*The Apostle of National Unity, Worthy Heir to the Founders of the Haitian Nation, Uncontestable Leader of the Revolution, Renovator of the Fatherland*, at the June 22 inauguration.



To the congregation in the streets and the ceaseless procession of deifying delegations, he delivered an odd collection of self-dialogue acceptance speeches. At times, he would terminate his sentences unfinished, at other moments he would lapse into vulgarity, or he would meander into obscure directions.

Bernard Diederich, *Time Magazine* Caribbean correspondent, documented these narcissistic babbles:

As for myself I am a realist, I can listen to very beautiful speeches, but I remain a doctrinaire and a realist which means I will never permit myself to be intoxicated. I remain equal to myself. While I listen to speeches, I talk to myself . . . I am at a new phase in my political life. . . . President-for-Life means something . . . I know what I am doing.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Diederich and Burt, 274.

To another delegation he described himself as, “this giant capable of eclipsing the sun because the people have already consecrated me for life.”⁸¹ To another group, he declared himself a Bible-lover but that his true god was the African mother that had made it possible for him to ascend and assault.

Nobody is capable of stopping me from fulfilling my sacrosanct mission. . . . The leader of the Haitian revolution has the right to do with Haiti what he wants to do for the welfare of the country. . . . After this political act there will never again be an election to elect a chief of state on the soil of Haiti. . . . I shall be lord and master. . . . I have always talked with the wild energy that characterizes me; with all the savagery which characterizes me. . . . The revolution is the revolution. . . . You know that Dr. Francois Duvalier even under cannon fire will not backdown. I have already said it. If my militia is afraid, it just has to look at my face. If the Duvalierist cohort feels a tinge of fear, they will have to look at my face. My face stays just like you have known it in 1956. The man will remain equal to himself.⁸²

Duvalier’s megalomania was without boundaries. The national state newspaper published an image with Christ’s hand on Papa Doc’s shoulder with the caption, “*He is My chosen one.*” Official palace degrees replaced personal pronouns with “*Sovereign.*” To safeguard his veneration by the nation, Duvalier’s name replaced the Holy Trinity in standard Roman Catholic rituals of litanies, hymns, prayers, and doctrine.

Le Catéchisme de la Révolution

Question: Who are Dessalines, Toussaint, Christophe, Pétion, and Estimé?
 Answer: Dessalines, Toussaint, Christophe, Pétion, and Estimé are five distinct Chiefs of State who are substantiated in and form only one and the same President in the person of François Duvalier.⁸³

In place of the Lord’s Prayer, children were instructed to recite in school,

Our Doc, who art in the National Palace for life, hallowed by Thy name by present and future generations. They will be done in Port-au-Prince as it is in the provinces. Give us this day our new Haiti and forgive not the trespasses of those

⁸¹ Diederich and Burt, 275.

⁸² Diederich and Burt, 275-276.

⁸³ 9. Robert Corbett, “The Lord’s Prayer According to Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier,” Bob Corbett’s Haitian History Page, Webster University, <http://faculty.webster.edu/corbetre/haiti/history/duvaliers/lordsprayer.htm>.

anti-patriots who daily spit upon our country; lead them into temptation, and poisoned by their own venom, deliver them from no evil . . .⁸⁴

“The year Duvalier came to power his men stenciled on the walls of the old Finance Ministry: ‘Man talks without acting. God acts without talking. Duvalier is God.’”⁸⁵

In a symbolic and unmistakable connection to the revolution and racial dominance, Duvalier changed Haiti’s flag. For 158 years, the horizontal red and blue with a white square bearing the coat of arms had been a unifying symbol to the nation. It was introduced by President Alexandre Pétion in 1806 after the assassination of Jean Jacques Dessalines. Duvalier returned to Dessalines’ original flag which was a vertical black and red. The black next to the staff symbolized *noir* superiority over the *mulattoes*, and the vertical repositioning signified opposition to occult forces. Outside the palace at night, large neon lights would flash, “I am the Haitian flag, One and Indivisible, François Duvalier.”



Duvalier’s newly elevated status did not deter his craving for carnage. He commanded Madame Max Adolphe to select twenty-one political prisoners detained at Fort Dimanche for a special purpose. She assumed he was planning to grant them amnesty to commemorate his inauguration as President-for-Life. She selected several of her imprisoned friends and waited for the reprieve. Instead, he ordered her to execute them. What was his special purpose? To send a sinister warning to the American Embassy about aiding anti-Duvalierist rebels.

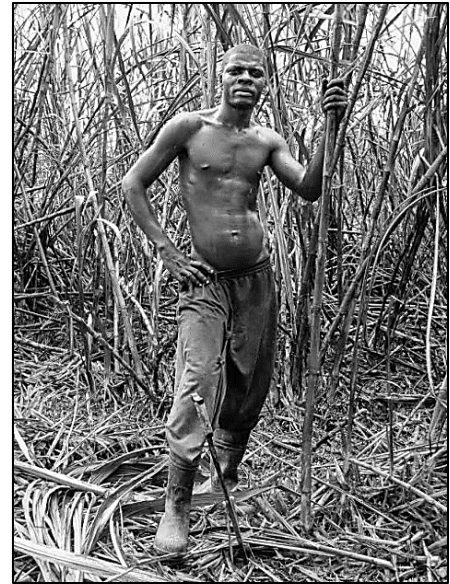
⁸⁴ Corbett.

⁸⁵ Diederich and Burt, 349.

Kleptomania

Absolute and arcane power was an impetus for Duvalier to further fleece the people's pockets. Numerous novel schemes were cooked up to fill his coffers. A pension program appeared to be a progressive, promising package to pay workers after twenty years of labor at age sixty-five. The government deducted three percent from salaried employees' income, but the life expectancy in Haiti was only forty years. He removed \$15 from every civil servant's salary and rewarded them with a copy of his second volume of *Essential Works*.

One program received international human rights condemnation for subjecting laborers to slave-like conditions. In November of 1966, Duvalier signed a secret contract with President Joaquín Balaguer of the Dominican Republic to annually supply 12,000 seasonal sugarcane cutters to state-controlled fields and US-owned plantations. In exchange, Papa Doc would personally receive \$1 million annually, \$10 for each hireling, and \$49 from each laborer's wage. An estimated 30,000 Haitians, even children, toiled in the Dominican fields and promised wages were often withheld.⁸⁶



But the grandest state corruption project was the massive extortion scheme to build a permanent memorial to the megalomaniac. Admiring Brazil's innovative new capital city, Brasília, with its modernist architecture and uniquely artistic urban planning, Duvalier dreamed up **Duvalierville**. He appropriated the pleasant village of Cabaret located 30 miles north of Port-au-Prince. His fanatical deputy, Luckner Cambronne, was handed a license to steal. Reminiscent of Nazism, Cambronne once remarked the legislature that "a good Duvalierist is ready to kill his children, or children to kill their parents."⁸⁷

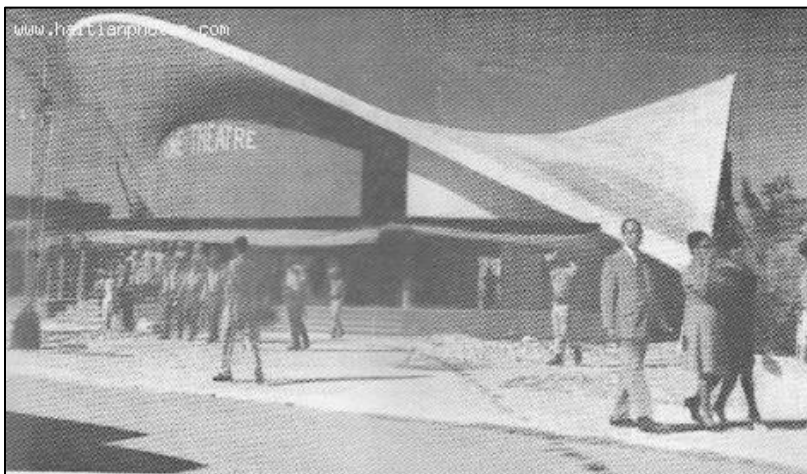
Cambronne created an extensive and substantial blackmail racket called the *Mouvement de Rénovation Nationale* (MRN) which levied monthly contributions from businessmen, government employees, the military, the legislature, and even schoolchildren. The initial solicitations were \$5000 in the capital and \$1000 in the provinces. The Tonton Macoutes set up roadblocks on the road to Cabaret to hustle travelers. The most ridiculous scheme was charging telephone subscribers a

⁸⁶ Various sources list a variety of similar figures.

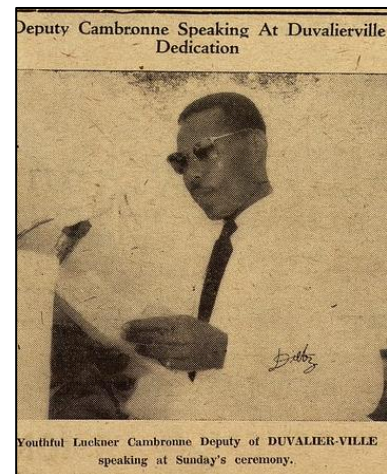
⁸⁷ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 578.

backdated surcharge of a few hundred dollars for non-existent service that had not functioned in decades with the promise that it would be restored when everyone paid up. (It was finally restored in 1972 a year after François died.) The donations by the MRN were not declared in the state budget. (One contributor found his check endorsed over to Cambronne’s mistress.)

Refusal or reluctance to pay resulted in one’s premises being looted or destroyed while the recusants were tortured, imprisoned, or murdered. Laborers who complained about their delinquent wages often disappeared inside Fort Dimanche. Even foreign nationals were not spared from maltreatment by the MRN; they protested to their embassies. Blunt British Ambassador Gerald Corley-Smith was selected as the diplomatic corps’ spokesman. He took the grievances to Foreign Minister René Chalmers and leveled a charge of harassment by creating a climate of fear. Chalmers was insulted, and when Corley-Smith uttered an unmentionable phrase— “Tonton Macoute,” he was expelled from the country. It would be over thirty years before Britain would send another ambassador to Haiti.



Duvalierville and Luckner Cambronne

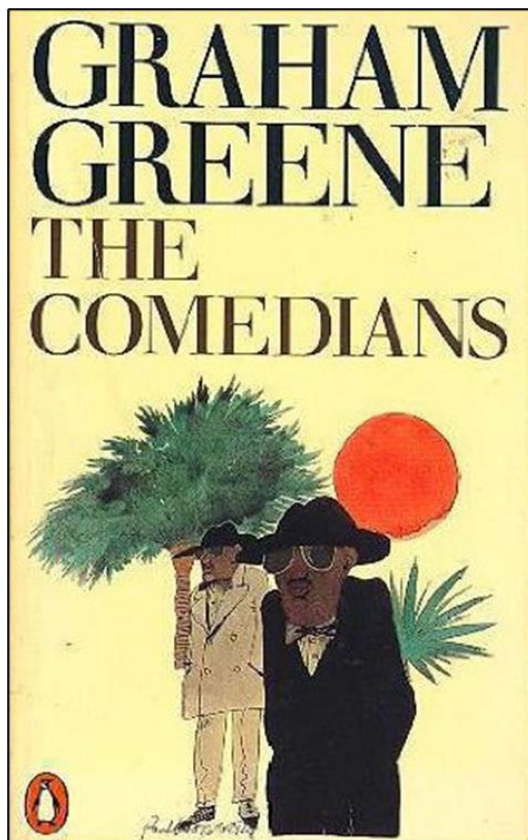


Duvalierville stands as a disgraceful monument to shameless corruption. It was never completed. The construction never matched the extortions. Duvalierville was an eyesore with a few one-room white concrete boxes, a concrete playground, an odd, unused cinema, and an enormous cockfighting arena. It never became the promised “flower city” that would attract a swarm of tourists or deliver an economic boom to the masses.

Duvalier plundered every government account and foreign aid program at his fingertips. One bizarre public works agency funded by state monopolies furnished him an estimated \$10 million annually. He rarely left the confines of the palace, and he never traveled outside of Haiti's provinces during his term in office. But his wife and four children acquired expensive tastes especially for high fashion and traveled abroad frequently. They lived life on a grand scale with Swiss bank accounts, numerous real estate holdings, and fine jewelry.

While Papa Doc enriched himself, Haiti grew poorer. An alarming 1967 United Nations Report disclosed that Haiti was the only country in the world to experience no economic growth for most of the 1950s and 1960s. "At the end of 1966, the Alliance for Progress reported that Haiti had the lowest life expectancy (forty years) in the hemisphere, lowest per capita intake of calories (1780), lowest per capita income (\$73), lowest literacy, and lowest percentage (six percent) of children in school."⁸⁸

Foreign Affaire



The pen can be mightier than the sword. Voices within were silenced, but voices from without were intensifying.

There was a time when Haiti was the "in" place for the wealthy jet-set. Writers, artists, and actors such as Noel Coward, Truman Capote, Irving Berlin, Paulette Goddard, Katherine Dunham, and others vacationed there during the care-free days of the Magloire administration. English novelist **Graham Greene** was one of those who immersed himself in the culture and lounged with the celebrities at the famed Oloffson Hotel.

Haiti's wanton terror and brutality jarred Greene when he returned to the island in 1963 during the darkest days of the dictatorship. Warned not to leave his hotel, he authored a stunning novel so accurate in detail that it sent shockwaves throughout the world and into the

⁸⁸ Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 634.

national palace. *The Comedians* exposed the appalling truth about Duvalier's Haiti to millions.

In his foreword, Greene laments, "Poor Haiti itself and the character of Doctor Duvalier's rule are not invented, the latter not even blackened for dramatic effect. Impossible to deepen that night."⁸⁹ The cloaked characters, setting, and plot were based upon authentic persons and events being lived in the moment. Greene's characters were so precise that they were instantly recognizable to every Haitian fearing their reprisals. The vicious assassin Franck Romain and the corrupt, bombastic Luckner Cambronne were uncovered for the world to scorn. The plot revealed the sadism of the Tonton Macoutes, the theft of Clément Jumelle's corpse for Vodou rites (page 48), the public execution of Drouin and Numa with all of the school children required to witness, and the idealistic guerillas invading from the Dominican Republic.

Of course, Papa Doc loathed it and banned its sale in the country. The Foreign Affairs Ministry attempted to discredit Greene's character and counter the facts by producing a glossy publication for international press distribution entitled *Graham Greene Démasqué (Finally Exposed)*, but it was met with complete skepticism and ridicule. A year later, the film starring Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor was released.

Greene, who never returned to Haiti, was pleased. "*The Comedians*, I am glad to say, touched him on the raw. . . . Was it possible that I had disturbed his dreams as he had disturbed mine? . . . A writer is not so powerless as he usually feels, and a pen, as well as a silver bullet, can draw blood."⁹⁰

François Duvalier's relationship with the world beyond his borders was as odd and awkward as the man. He never held a diplomatic dinner during his tenure, he was always sparring with the ambassadorial corps, and he expelled more foreign diplomats than had been expelled in Haiti's entire history. In *Haiti, The Politics of Power*, Robert Rotberg stated, "He managed both to display enmity toward foreign benefactors and shamelessly to take advantage of their generosity."⁹¹

He would intentionally annoy visiting envoys by making them wait for hours before receiving them. At the important outdoor border summit with Rafael Trujillo, the Dominican Republic dictator, Duvalier arrived two and a half hours late while Trujillo's pancake makeup melted in the sweltering humid heat.

⁸⁹ Graham Greene, *The Comedians* (Aylesbury, UK: Penguin Books, 1966), ii.

⁹⁰ Abbott, 140.

⁹¹ Heinl, Heinl, and Heinl, 609.



François Duvalier at a border summit with Rafael Trujillo, 1958

No foreign heads of state visited Haiti during the Duvalier regime, except one, Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie in the course of a 1966 Caribbean tour. Duvalier made elaborate preparations by repaving the streets along their itinerary, whitewashing the palace, distributing 10,000 miniature flags, and renaming a major thoroughfare Haile Selassie Avenue. The President-for-Life ordered that only black luxury automobiles be used for the occasion, but since the government did not have enough, they requisitioned them from residents. It was a grand national event with ceremonies, speeches, and eulogizing. He presented Selassie with the Necklace of the Order of Jean-Jacques Dessalines while Duvalier was adorned with the Great Necklace of the Order of the Queen of Sheba. But to Duvalier's great disappointment, the Emperor cut short his visit and only stayed one day. Putting a good face on it, he invited the foreign press to the palace and urged Haitians on foreign soils to return home and help put Haiti on its feet. Duvalier described the event in his memoirs as "an enormous success in the domain of diplomacy."



Duvalier with Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie, 1966

“Don’t rock the boat” characterized the new course of US policy under the Lyndon Johnson administration following the Kennedy assassination. Duvalier frequently referred to Johnson as “his great colleague.”

The change in tone was personalized by the arrival of a new envoy, in January 1964. Three previous US ambassadors had been shown the door before Papa Doc finally got one who would bend to his whims. The fourth, Benson Timmons III was “timorous,” according to Greene. Duvalier kept Timmons in a state of limbo for five weeks before coldly receiving his credentials. When he arrived at the palace, Duvalier belabored him with a lecture on how an ambassador should behave and the failures of previous ambassadors while defaming Kennedy. The State Department noted that it was not a pleasant experience. Greene commented that he took the lecture to heart. Sensing faintness, Duvalier renewed his petitions for increased aid and tourism support.

During the annual May 22 celebrations commemorating Duvalier's second inauguration, former US Ambassador Robert Newbegin had initiated a custom of being conspicuously absent during the ceremonies in Port-au-Prince as a symbolic gesture of denunciation. His two successors observed the remonstrance. Timmons was visibly present at the 1964 observances. A photograph of the Ambassador shaking hands, smiling, and bowing deeply to Duvalier was circulated by the international press. The *New York Times* noted with sadness the shift in US policy of affirming the tyrant and encouraging investments, "A policy characterized as 'normal relations' with the government of President Francois Duvalier and the form in which it is carried out by the American Embassy appears to have placed American prestige here at its lowest point in many years."⁹²

Nothing signaled a change in US policy toward Haiti more than the arrival of Nelson Rockefeller on July 1, 1969. Newly elected President Richard Nixon sent Rockefeller on a Latin America fact-finding tour. It was a disaster. Some countries would not accept his visit while others turned out in mass demonstrations. Haiti was the exception. Duvalier rolled out a circus by ordering happy peasants into the streets. Rockefeller was stunned. He presented Duvalier with a letter from President Nixon; Duvalier smiled and congratulated the new President. He invited Rockefeller to join him on the balcony before 35,000 wildly cheering masses. Duvalier was so feeble that Rockefeller had to cradle him. It was a magnificent propaganda coup for Duvalier, but the trip drew sharp criticism from the international community and Washington.

Once again, frozen loans and aid started flowing again. As usual, they flowed into private bank accounts.

⁹² Diederich and Burt, 307.



Nelson Rockefeller and the American delegation with Duvalier, 1969

On August 15, 1963, the Commission of Jurists, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, issued a press release on the state of Haiti. The respected organization dedicated to peace through law delivered a powerful indictment against the regime in direct and uncompromising language. The statement revealed the political, social, and economic conditions in Duvalier's Haiti. The Tonton Macoutes were directly cited, some victims were named, extortion and blackmail practices were investigated, and the methods of interrogation were revealed.

For over a year the International Commission of Jurists has been collecting testimony and first-hand documentation on the political and social situation. . . . What emerged showed that human rights and fundamental liberties are totally disregarded by the government of François Duvalier. . . . The rule of law has been replaced by a reign of terror [Haiti] has become the poorest country in Latin America as a result of the incompetence, inertia, and corruption of its government. . . . The reprehensible dictatorship of François Duvalier has a unique character. In today's world there are many authoritarian regimes. Generally speaking, they are the reflection of some ideology. The tyranny that oppresses Haiti does not even have that excuse; its only object is to place the

country under tribute in order to ensure the future affluence of those in power.⁹³

Four years later, the Commission issued a ten-year evaluation.

It is difficult to describe the present state of affairs with any accuracy. The systematic violation of every single article and paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights seems to be the only policy which is respected and assiduously pursued in the Caribbean Republic. The rule of law was long ago displaced by a reign of terror and the personal will of the dictator, who has awarded himself the title of Life President of the Republic and appears to be more concerned with the suppression of real or imaginary attempts against his life than with governing the country. He is leading his nation not in the direction of prosperity but towards the final disaster that can be seen in its political, social, and economic collapse.⁹⁴

The report also documented that the total amount of capital to sustain the Tonton Macoutes, the militia, and the palace guard was approximately fifteen million dollars per year. The cost of this police state amounted to more than half of the nation's annual budget of approximately twenty-eight million dollars.

A visiting African diplomat lamented to the *New York Times*, “If in fifty years my country is in a condition like this, I would wish we had never won our independence.”⁹⁵

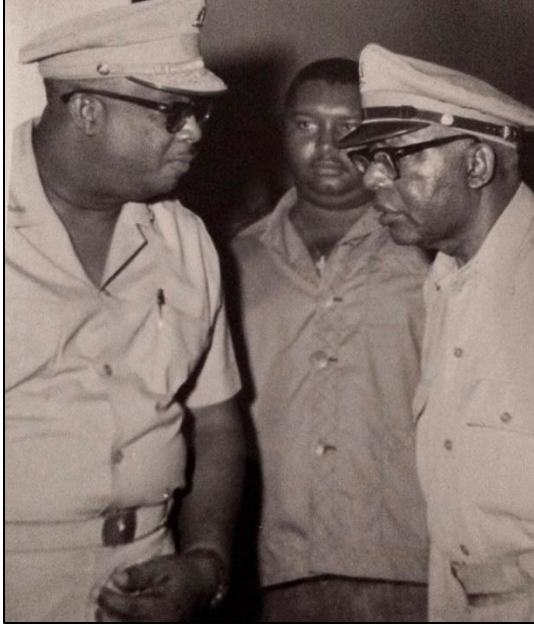
Mortal

Brigadier General Gérard Constant was appointed Army Chief of Staff in August of 1962, Duvalier's fifth commander. Within a few months, he was presented with a perplexing proposition. Author Elizabeth Abbott conducted a series of in-depth interviews with Constant where he revealed that US Marine Colonel Heintz and the embassy's CIA chief offered to help him stage a coup d'état against Duvalier, whom Kennedy had vowed to destroy. They promised that as soon as it commenced, the US Marines would land in the Port-au-Prince Harbor just as they did in 1915. With the shame of the last invasion and occupation still seared into every Haitian's conscience, he replied, “I'd rather have my arm chopped off.” Simultaneously, another serious

⁹³ “The Socio-Political Situation in Haiti,” International Commission of Jurists, press release, August 5, 1963, <http://faculty.webster.edu/corbetre/haiti-archive/msg02934.html>.

⁹⁴ Abbott, 142.

⁹⁵ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 611.



plot was being hatched by the Army colonels with arms supplied by the US Embassy. They beseeched him to join them, but the cost of treason was too high.

But Constant had a more compelling reason to refuse these cabals, Duvalier's health. He was convinced the dictator would die at any moment. Duvalier's personal physician, Dr. Jacques Fourcand, confided, "He can't last much longer."

Duvalier was a barely breathing corpse. After thirty years of acute diabetes, his health was rapidly deteriorating. His joints were so swollen that he shuffled across the palace in meandering lines, rarely getting out of his nightgown and slippers. His face was bloated, and his dark skin was tinted gray. He was unable to deliver his 1969 May Day speech, so he handed the text over to Minister of Information, Paul Blanchet. A few days later, he could barely breathe, and his chest felt like a heavy rock was crushing down on it. He suffered a second heart attack. On May 20, 1969, he underwent an excruciating and debilitating prostate surgery. Rumors of his declining health swirled around Haiti and abroad. A year later, he could no longer chew his food without the assistance of Simone massaging his jaw. On November 12, 1970, he suffered a stroke. It was evident that he would not last much longer.

Duvalier had declared himself an immortal, immaterial being as he cast an aura of fear over the populace; now, he knew he was not as his mortality starkly confronted him.

But who would succeed him? Haiti had no experience in peaceful transitions. Would the army take over its traditional role and seize power? Likely not, Duvalier had castrated it. Could a Duvalier succeed Duvalier? It had never happened in Haiti's 168 years. The most logical choice was his favorite, Marie-Denise, the strong-willed, eldest daughter who had quietly assumed the reins of power after his surgery. But advisors warned him that no woman could ascend to the seat of authority in Haiti. By default, this left his uninspiring eighteen-year-old son, Jean-Claude. No one was more ill-equipped.

With every ounce of remaining energy, François set out to make his selection legitimate in the eyes of Haiti and the world and to secure his family's future. First, any potential coup by the military had to be neutralized. Resistant top-ranked officials had to be removed. He abruptly sacked General Constant and installed his

tenacious godson, Colonel Claude Raymond, as his sixth Army Chief of the Staff. He surrounded Jean-Claude with a group of loyal lackeys and enforcers.

Next, the corpulent son needed to be presented to the nation as his chosen successor. On Armed Forces Day, November 18, 1970, Jean-Claude Duvalier stood at stoic attention beside his father on the palace balcony reviewing the parading troops and assisted with the pinning of decorations on dutiful devotees. On Ancestry Day, François delivered a short speech saying that he would step aside for youth and promised Haiti a young leader to continue his revolution. *Le Nouveau Monde* noted that one day a Duvalier may succeed a Duvalier to no one's alarm. François reminded skeptics that Augustus became Caesar at age nineteen and ushered in the Century of Augustus.

To make matters legal, the constitution had to be amended to allow an eighteen-year-old to become President-for-Life. A plebiscite was placed before the people, and in true Papa Doc fashion, the ballot only read: "Jean-Claude has been chosen to succeed his father. Does this choice answer your aspirations? Do you ratify it? Yes." The official count was 2,391,916 to 0.



"I have chosen him."

Finally, in an eerily reminiscent maneuver of the earlier newspaper image with Christ's hand on Papa Doc's shoulder and the caption "**He is My chosen one,**" a nationwide poster campaign was launched with a photograph of the decrepit Papa Doc's hand on Jean-Claude's massive shoulder and the caption, "**I have chosen him.**"

On April 14, 1971, Papa Doc turned sixty-four. He was too infirmed to leave his bed and address the gathered well-wishers. Seven days later, with family members at his bedside, they strained to decipher his last unintelligible words. At last, François Duvalier breathed his last.

A houngan was called to administer the last Vodou rites.

Now came the time of the hougans. In the hounfords of the Cul-de-Sac it was whispered that to Edner Day fell the task of performing the last rite called Déssounin. First tracing on the floor a large cross in maize flour the length and breadth of the body, then climbing past the silent doctors and nurses, under the dead president's sheet and astride the frail and wasted little corpse, the houngan now implored Duvalier's loa, the Maite Tete who had so often driven away the Gros Bon Ange, to retire and leave the dead in peace. Only then could the soul be shriven and the Maite Tete transferred to the head of Jean-Claude, standing mute and awed by the light of the candle at the foot of his father's bed. When the body seemed to shudder ever so slightly, some thought it tried to rise and shake its head: they knew the Maite Tete had departed. Papa Doc had gone to Guinée.⁹⁶

As if François had ordained the day, Jean-Claude was sworn into office on the 22nd day of April 1971.

The family summoned US Ambassador Clinton Knox, who had endeared himself to Papa Doc more than any of the previous four envoys. He extended condolences to the family, viewed the body, and asked how he could help. They requested that the United States secure the coastline from insurgents and exiles, especially from Cuba. This marked the restoration of the US Embassy being consulted in matters of importance for the first time since Duvalier assumed power. At the funeral, Knox wore a François and Jean-Claude lapel pin and made it unambiguous where his sympathies were positioned.

⁹⁶ Heintl, Heintl, and Heintl, 624-625.



The next day, François Duvalier lay in state with his remains encased in a refrigerated glass box with fluorescent lights. His glasses were carefully arranged on his closed eyes, and on his left side was a gold cross and his beloved autobiography, *Memoirs of a Third World Leader*. Thousands upon thousands of weeping mourners filed past in a steady stream to stare in disbelief. Twenty-two soldiers and twenty-two Tonton Macoutes formed the honor guard.

François Duvalier was laid to rest on April 24, 1971, the Day of Baron Samedi. The heat was overpoweringly hot for April; the peasants said it was because the doors of hell were opening wide.

A six-hour funeral service was conducted in the Palace Hall of Busts and broadcast to the masses in the streets. The Haitian bishops sang the solemn requiem mass. Internationally renowned Haitian tenor Guy Derosier was flown in from Paris to sing “*Francois, we thank Thee for loving us so much. Thy star will be shining in the firmament*” to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. A Supreme Court Justice proclaimed in

the funeral oration, “*This man was the Messiah.*” Every church bell tolled, and 101 cannons punctuated the air for a final royal salute. Jean-Claude sat stoically throughout. The body was sealed in a bronze casket and marched past the congregation of costumed dignitaries, denim-clad Macoutes, and ladies in chic miniskirts. He was placed in a black Cadillac hearse for his final departure from the Presidential Palace.

The casket was paraded past the Champs de Mars and the towering statues of Haiti’s past heroes—Toussaint L’Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Alexander Pétion, and Henri Christophe. Preceding the hearse, a legion of officers each carrying a scarlet cushion displayed Duvalier’s numerous decorations. The long procession wound through flower-strewn streets past the dense throngs.



Outside the palace along the procession route, François Duvalier performed his grand finale. Suddenly out of nowhere, an immense, dusty whirlwind kicked up from the ground a howling cloud that obscured the sun. The multitude shrieked in horror and hysteria erupted. Musicians dropped their instruments, Tonton Macoutes haphazardly fired their weapons, and mourners trampled over one another to escape the phenomenon. After two hours, at the cemetery gate, the sentry post of Baron Samedi, the wind twisted out to sea. The masses cried out, “Duvalier has burst the grave and is loosed upon the earth. There is no hiding place.”

The interpretation of the paranormal was evident to every Haitian, François’ escaping spirit now resided in Jean-Claude. After Duvalier, Duvalier!

Unknown to most, the Duvalier family secretly buried Papa Doc’s body leaving behind an empty vault. Years earlier, enemies using customary Vodou retaliation rituals had stolen his father’s corpse, cut out the heart, and defiled the cadaver and tomb with human feces.



Chapter 7

REVERBERATIONS

“Whenever an old man dies, a library has burned down.” – African proverb



“If you kill me, I’ll still be in the palace.”⁹⁷ – Francois Duvalier

⁹⁷ Abbott, 160.



François “Papa Doc” Duvalier’s tyrannical fourteen-year reign endured longer than any previous ruler in Haitian history. Of the thirty-six presidents who preceded him, twenty-three were either killed or overthrown. He survived eleven invasions and coup attempts and outmaneuvered every foreign power, including the United States and the Vatican. Though the exact numbers can never be accurately determined, it is estimated that his regime murdered between 30,000 and 60,000 Haitians. By the time of his death in 1971, he had so thoroughly annihilated his opposition that he could securely hand over the presidency to his incompetent son. Duvalier’s legacy continues to reverberate to this day.

In 2010, I attended an international missions conference in Dallas, Texas. During a coffee break, I chatted with two Haitian pastors. Somewhere during our conversation, the name Duvalier came up. One pastor remarked, “I don’t think things were so bad back then.”

Aghast, we almost choked on our coffee. After the other pastor composed himself, he retorted, “That’s not how I remember it.”

Memories are short in Haiti. Regrettably, so many do not have an accurate remembrance of this era even though it still impacts their lives. Duvalier’s reign of terror did not die with François “Papa Doc” Duvalier. Duvalierism lived on in his son and has been perpetuated by their collaborators.

In January 2011, one year after the devastating earthquake killed over 300,000, Jean-Claude Duvalier arrived unannounced in Haiti following twenty-five years of exile in France. For over two years, he moved freely around Port-au-Prince, met with old friends, dined at the best restaurants, and attended government events. His presence was a shock to many Haitians who had suffered imprisonment or torture or had been forced into exile by the Duvalier regimes. A group of plaintiffs pressed for a trial against Jean-Claude for crimes against humanity under international laws. He appeared before the court on February 28, 2013 and pleaded not guilty to charges of corruption and human rights abuse. But October 4, 2014, his death by heart attack robbed many of a just reckoning. Haiti’s President at the time, Michel Martelly, established the tone of the government’s sympathies by stating, “Despite our quarrels and differences, let us salute the departure of an authentic son of Haiti.”⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Laurent Dubois, “How Will Haiti Reckon with the Duvalier Years?” *The New Yorker*, October 6, 2014, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/will-haiti-reckon-duvalier-years>.

The Duvalier legacy reverberates into contemporary times. Two outcomes that are worthy of a deeper examination are the scope of a **Haitian diaspora** and the nature of the **Haitian economy**.

First, the Duvalier regimes purged Haiti of its valuable human resources, especially professionals who could have made a significant contribution toward lifting Haiti out of its misery. Duvalierism set off a massive exodus that included all classes of Haitian society. A vast number of refugees were eradicated from the population by economic, political, and oppressive conditions. A new diaspora was created throughout the world, especially in North America. Heintz documents:

The measure of the exodus was that, in 1976, 150,000 Haitians were in New York City alone, with large colonies in Montreal, Chicago, and Washington. Robert Rotberg said that, by the mid-1960s, 80 percent of Haiti's qualified professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and public administrators) were in the United States, Canada, or Africa. By the same year, 1963, over a thousand Haitian professionals were in the Congo. . . . Of 70 schoolteachers trained by US AID, none of whom Duvalier would hire, 38 went to the Congo—to fight illiteracy. In Ghana an exiled Haitian Episcopal priest had risen to an Anglican bishopric. By 1963, over 300 Haitian professionals were working in Guinea. Joseph Déjean became counselor in Sekou Touré's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1975 Ulrich Joseph received one of Togo's highest awards for brilliant successes over eight years in combatting illiteracy. Over 300 Haitian specialists—primarily doctors, teachers, nurses, public health nurses, engineers, and even judges—had been hired by or through the United Nations for jobs in the Congo, Dahomey, Guinea, Togo, Rwanda, and Burundi. With the lowest per capita income and literacy rate in the Western hemisphere, Haiti nonetheless was contributing more technicians to the UN Technical Assistance Program than any other Latin America nation. . . . By 1970, there were more Haitian physicians in either Montreal or New York than Haiti. Montreal had ten times more Haitian psychiatrists than Port-au-Prince. Of 246 medical school graduates from 1959 to 1969 from the University of Haiti, only three could be found in practice the country in 1969. Some 50 public-health nurses, trained by the United States, were lost to Africa. The Organization of American States and the U.N. had more Haitian economists on their payrolls than the government of Haiti. The creation of this new diaspora of Haitians was ultimately to have significant consequences both economic and political for Haiti and the United States.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Heintz, Heintz, and Heintz, 612.

“Remittances are the primary source of foreign exchange, equivalent to more than a quarter of GDP, and nearly double the combined value of Haitian exports and foreign direct investment.”¹⁰⁰

Secondly, when Papa Doc assumed power in 1957, he inherited an already poor nation, but he sank it deeper into unimaginable poverty and misery. Haiti became the poorest nation in the Americas by every measurable standard through his unrestrained kleptomania. Elizabeth Abbott has proposed an original and persuasive thesis in *The Duvalier's and Their Legacy*. She theorizes that **the true Haitian economy under the Duvaliers was “poverty,” and that his sycophants have perpetuated it to this day.**

Economic indicators regard agriculture as Haiti's primary resource. Two-fifths of all Haitians are dependent upon the agricultural sector, mainly through small-scale subsistence farming. This sector is highly problematic due to the vulnerability of natural disasters, corruption, and poverty. Today, Haiti imports more than fifty percent of its population's food needs and eighty percent of its staple item, rice. **Poverty has become Haiti's national product—the economy of misery.**

According to Abbott, “Duvalier left behind Duvalierism, a system of government too profoundly entrenched to truly eradicate . . . By the time he [Jean-Claude] was forced to flee in 1986 under US pressure amid uprisings throughout Haiti, Jean-Claude's Duvalierism had bankrupted the Haitian state and enshrined corruption and incompetence in the government and civil service.”¹⁰¹ Misery was the dominant policy of Duvalierist politics and it has remained the central characteristic of the Haitian economy.

Why? Poverty sells. The plight of the Haitian masses is sold to foreign governments and religious and humanitarian organizations so that they will pour hundreds of millions of dollars into Haitian development and relief. Foreign aid has become the primary source of national income, but little of the donated money ever gets to the projects for which they are earmarked. The Duvaliers and their descendants stole the overwhelming portion of this money and became exceedingly rich. The Duvalierist system—the economy of misery—is still firmly in place.

¹⁰⁰ “The World Factbook: Haiti,” Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) data file, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Kurczy, “5 Reasons Why Haiti's Jean-Claude Duvalier Is Infamous: Legacy of Duvalierism,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 20, 2011, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2011/0120/5-reasons-why-Haiti-s-Jean-Claude-Duvalier-is-infamous/Legacy-of-Duvalierism>.

In 1963 during the middle of the Papa Doc regime, the *New York Times* reported that since 1946, the United States had poured approximately \$100 million in economic aid into Haiti without much to show for the money.

By 1970 [François' last year in office], foreign assistance constituted 70 percent of Haiti's national treasury revenues, aid levels rose to \$35.5 million in 1975. Large-scale corruption meant that this aid never reached the Haitian people and the economic situation remained largely unchanged. . . . The volatility of official foreign aid to the Haitian government during the latter half of the twentieth century decimated an already weak public sector. To date, the Haitian government has few resources and little revenue. In 2002, the government resources (for a country of almost ten million) were roughly equivalent to the town of Cambridge, Massachusetts (population 100,000). In 2008, the net foreign assistance to Haiti was \$92.30 per capita. . . . In FY (fiscal year) 2010, it increased from \$93.6 million to \$225 million. . . .

Ironically, [François] Duvalier aptly summarized the Haitian system of government: 'Our governments never cared about the national inheritance and never attempted to stop social grievances. They talked a lot about liberty, only to fool the free world instead of using it fairly as a domestic policy. The Country is split into two groups: the exploiters—restless and foolhardy minority—monopolize the administrative power and paralyze the progress of the masses; the exploited—the great majority—[are] victims of a wrongful and cruel system.'¹⁰²

Rampant economic corruption has endured beyond the Duvaliers into the present age. An analysis by World Bank revealed: "Haiti has dysfunctional budgetary, financial or procurement systems, making financial and aid management impossible."¹⁰³ On the 2010 International Transparency Corruption Perceptions Index, Haiti was ranked 142 out of 178 nations, a slight improvement from placing 177 out of 180 two years earlier.

The most recent and egregious example of such corruption is the PetroCaribe scandal which sparked the nationwide riots, famine, and severe fuel shortages in late 2019 and has been the subject of an Organization of American States investigation and audit. PetroCaribe is a strategic oil alliance signed in 2006 between Venezuela

¹⁰² Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz. "Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone?" Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, CGD Policy Paper 004, May 2012. <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1426185>. (Quote from 1957, shortly after Papa Doc took office. Source: Buss and Gardner, *Haiti in the Balance*, 46.)

¹⁰³ Kurczy.

and eighteen developing Caribbean countries. Venezuela gave these countries development loans to fund social programs, except it loaned oil instead of cash. Haiti borrowed fuel from its oil-rich neighbor and deferred the payments for up to twenty-five years on forty percent of what they bought. With global oil prices at record levels in the early years of the program, the other recipient governments sold their oil for a lot of cash and used the proceeds to pay for their social programs. But in Haiti, at least \$2 billion (the equivalent of almost a quarter of Haiti's total economy for 2017) has gone missing, and Haitians saw very few of the promised benefits. Haitian taxpayers are still on the hook to Venezuela for billions of dollars in borrowed oil.

The continuous and blatant abuse of basic human rights and the pilfering of well-intentioned humanitarian projects has resulted in two consequences for the Duvaliers and subsequent governments. First, **governments terminated or reduced their financial support**, as was the case with the Kennedy Administration in 1963.¹⁰⁴

Secondly, though less obvious, **the Haitian government has been excluded or marginalized from matters of internal financial governance**. A quasi-private state has developed in Haiti.

Haiti has been labeled “the Republic of NGOs.” In recent years, NGOs financed by international donors have risen to prominence and paid little to the Haitian state, marginalizing it and avoiding most interactions with it. NGOs and private contractors have become the main conduit for foreign assistance. Studies show that less than one percent of the revenues going into the nation has gone to the Haitian government. So, who are the primary beneficiaries? Humanitarian agencies, NGOs, private contractors, and other non-state service providers are the primary intermediate recipients of this assistance for relief and reconstruction receiving ninety-nine percent of the humanitarian aid for relief funding, immediate work, and recovery funding, long-term reconstruction and development.¹⁰⁵

As a result, aid ceases to be a partnership; it is not a relationship of equals. The lack of cooperation has undermined a coordinated economic development.

The international community, both state and private, deserves a significant amount of scrutiny for its role in managing resources on the island. Financial institutions have failed wretchedly to lift Haiti out of its poverty, and in some cases, their programs have perpetuated the misery.

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix D: Foreign Assistance to Haiti, chart.

¹⁰⁵ Ramachandran and Walz.

The Clinton Administration sought to mold Haiti's economic future around manufacturing and trade. The US imposed an agricultural policy on Haiti pressuring it to reduce their tariffs on imported crops, so the United States could ship their surplus crops into Haiti's ports as "food aid." Haitian farmers could not compete with all the artificially cheap rice and



other imported crops from abroad. The strategy was to create another market for American farmers while pushing Haiti's labor force out of the fields and into factories. Massive surpluses of crops, such as rice, resulted in thousands upon thousands of farmers losing their land while the industrialization never replaced their livelihoods.

Years later, Bill Clinton would acknowledge how his policy failed the Haitians. "The United States has followed a policy . . . that we rich countries that produce a lot of food should sell it to poor countries and relieve them of the burden of producing their own food, so, thank goodness, they can leap directly into the industrial era," he told Congress in 2010. "It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked . . . I have to live every day with the consequences of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people."¹⁰⁶ By the time the earthquake struck, in 2010, a nation that in the 1970s grew enough rice to feed itself was now importing eighty percent of it from abroad.

"Artibonite [one of Haiti's agriculturally rich region] used to be rich, but now it's poor. We produce rice, but it doesn't sell," explained rice farmer Denis Jesu-car.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Jacob Kushner, "Haiti and the Failed Promise of US Aid," *The Guardian*, October 6, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/11/haiti-and-the-failed-promise-of-us-aid>.

¹⁰⁷ Kushner.

Every person who cares deeply about the Haitian people and desires significant and enduring change in Haiti must never forget the tragedy and travesty of the post-earthquake reconstruction with its unfulfilled promises. When the magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck near the capital city of Port-au-Prince destroying or critically damaging an estimated eighty to ninety percent of the buildings; it killed over 300,000, injured another 300,000, and rendered 1.3 million homeless. The world opened its hearts and wallets. More than half of American adults gave money as part of the \$16.3 billion in pledges.



Jonathan Katz, the only American correspondent present in Haiti at the time of the quake, has written a sharp critique of the appalling failure of the international relief efforts and how good intentions went wrong in his award-winning book, *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*.

Even by the most generous estimates, only about half of the pledged money was ever delivered to Haiti. Creative accounting accounts for much of the sum. Countries wrote off debts that Haiti was never going to repay or brought forward aid donations that they had already planned to deliver. A significant percentage of the money never reached the afflicted masses on the ground. Most of the basic promises—to build safer housing for the homeless, alleviate severe poverty, and strengthen Haiti to face future disasters—went unfulfilled.

A large portion went to operational costs. In January 2019, nine years after the earthquake, US Aid had spent \$2.3 billion in Haiti, but most of it was given to American companies and hardly any passed through Haitian hands. Less than three percent of that spending went directly to Haitian organizations or firms, according to research by CEPR. By contrast, fifty-five percent of the money went to American companies located in and around Washington DC. According to the research, the majority of what US Aid allegedly spent on Haiti's recovery went right back to the US.

The largest piece of real estate for the post-earthquake reconstruction was not built for poor Haitians at all, but wealthy ones and foreigners. The new Marriott hotel in Port-au-Prince was financed by a multi-national telecom corporation whose chairman was a friend of the Clinton Foundation which brokered the deal.¹⁰⁸

Despite billions of dollars being pledged, little has changed in Haiti. According to Human Rights Watch, as of May 2018, nearly 38,000 people, 70 percent of them women and children, lived in displacement camps formed after the earthquake. Assistance to resettle them or return them to their places of origin has not been provided by authorities.

It is imperative that all entities who desire to make a significant and enduring difference in Haiti seriously consider how their financial assistance impacts the Haitian economy and culture. Despite billions of dollars having been delivered, little has changed; Haiti remains poor and miserable. One must always ask, does the good we desire to do help or hurt?

¹⁰⁸ Kushner.

APPENDIX B:
“LES SANGLOTS D’UM EXILÉ” (“AN EXILE’S LAMENT”)
FRANÇOIS DUVALIER

I then remembered the route crossed by my ancestors of distant Africa –
The sons of the jungle
Whose bones during the ‘centuries of starry silence’
Have helped to build the pyramids.
And I continued on my way,
Now with heavy heart,
In the night.
I walked on and on and on
Straight ahead.
And the black of my ebony skin was lost
In the shadows of the night.

James Ferguson, *Papa Doc, Baby Doc: Haiti and the Duvaliers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) 34.

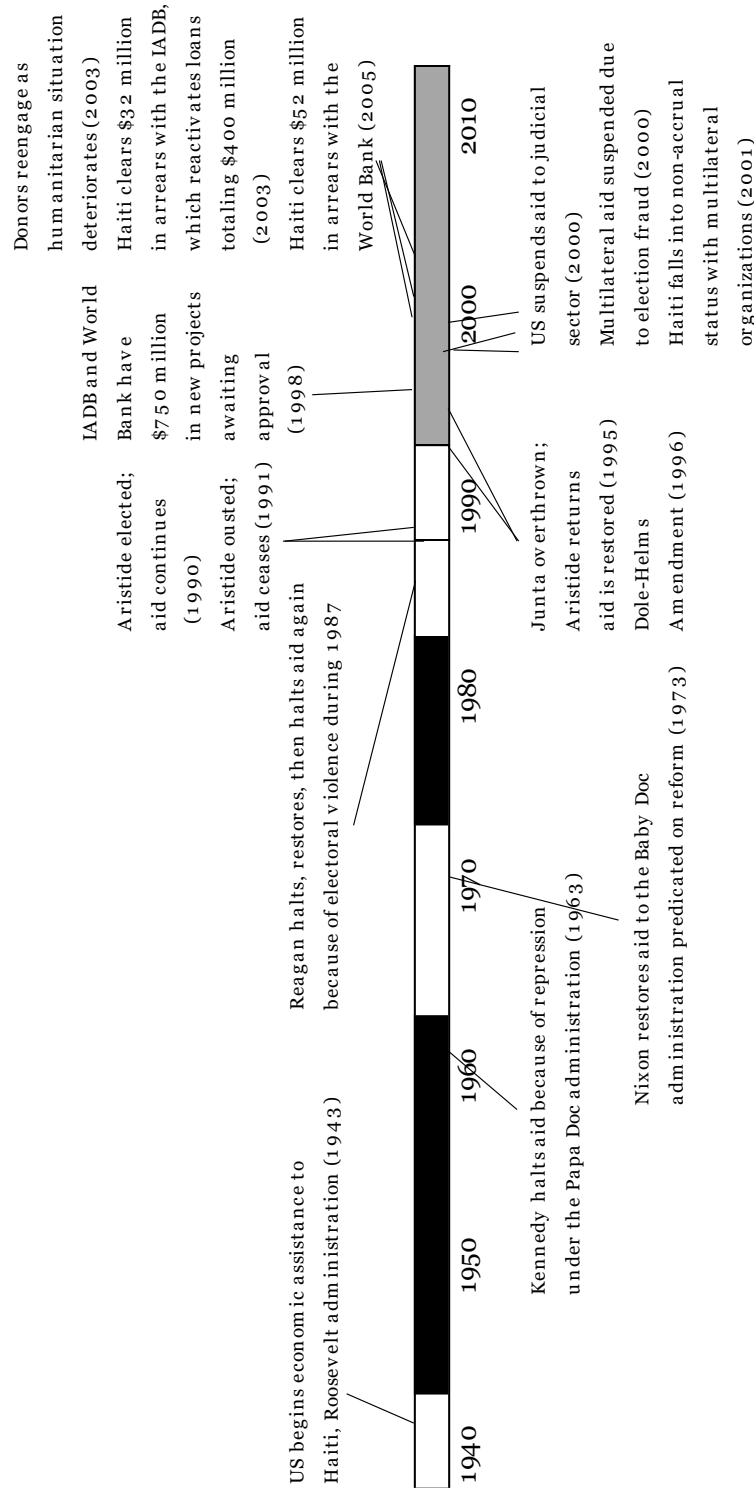
APPENDIX C:
LIST OF PLOTS, UPRISINGS, INVASIONS,
AND MASSACRES

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	RESULT
1957	Sep Shibley Talamas Incident	Kenscoff-Port-au-Prince	international incident
	Bel-Air Desecration	Bel-Air	unknown number buried alive
1958	July Miami-Dade Sheriff's Invasion	Presidential Palace barracks	all invaders killed
1959	Aug Cuban Invasion	Cap des Irois, Les Cayes	crushed- US assistance
1960	Nov Student Strike	Port-au-Prince	universities closed
1961	Aug Biamby Assasination Plot	Port-au-Prince	executions & exiles
1963	Mar Benoit-Dominican Incident	Port-au-Prince	massacre; threatened invasion; OAS
	Mar- Clément Barbot	Port-au-Prince	killed
	July Campaign		
	Apr Army Colonels Plot	Port-au-Prince	torture, executions, exiles
	May Garrido Invasion	Dajabon DR	thwarted
	July Hector Riobé Guerrilla Attacks	Port-au-Prince	all killed in a cave
	Aug- General Léon Cantave Invasion	Dominican Republic - Nord-Est Department	3 failed invasions
1964	June - Camoquin Invasion	Ouest, Sud-Est Departments	failed attempts
	Aug		
	June - FARH (Forces Armées Révolutionnaires d'Haïti) Invasion	Sud-Est Department	peasant massacre in Mapou (300-600)
	Aug		
	July Execution of 100 people	Fort-Dimanche	supervised by François Duvalier
	Aug- Jeune Haïti Invasion	Grand'-Anse Department	all invaders killed
	Oct		2 publicly executed Jérémie Vespers
1967	June 19 military officers and high-ranking officers	Fort-Dimanche	executed by firing squad directed by François Duvalier

1968	May	Propaganda leaflet air bombing	Port-au-Prince	unsuccessful
	May	Cap-Haitien Invasion Attempt	Cap-Haitien	unsuccessful, mass executions at Fort Dimanche
1969	Apr	Casale Massacre	Casale, village southeast of Port-au-Prince (Polish- Haitian community)	Macoutes killed dozens of peasant families, 80 disappeared, 82 houses torched; largest forced disappearance
	Apr	Haitian Communist Party executions	Fort-Dimache	30 members executed n
	June	Incendiary bombings	Port-au-Prince	panic
	July	Ganthier Executions	Ganthier, village northeast of Port-au-Prince	mass executions, mass graves
1970	Jan	Fred Baptiste Invasion	from DR	unsuccessful
	Apr	Navy mutiny- National Palace bombed	Port-au-Prince Bay	off target, escaped

APPENDIX D: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO HAITI

Source: Buss and Gardner, *Haiti in the Balance*, 70



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AUTHOR

“The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt.”

-Frederick Buechner

Michael VanHook is the founder and Executive Director International Strategic Alliances (ISA), a mission outreach to Haiti, and the MSV Educational Network, an English language and cultural institute in Brazil. ISA exists to make a significant and enduring difference in the lives of the Haitian people by helping them to rise above their present circumstances, reach the highest potential of their intended design, and become catalysts for change in their spheres of influence. ISA accomplishes this by strategically and collaboratively aligning themselves with leaders and groups to mutually design and implement sustainable humanitarian, educational, and leadership initiatives. He is also the founder and Executive Director of the MSV Educational Network, an English language and cultural institute in Brazil.

Michael has worn many hats throughout his life—educator, businessman, pastor, and advocate. His personal journey has been a passionate pursuit to discover how his life, transformed by God’s grace, can make a difference in the lives of others. Any success that he has achieved, he attributes to the faithful support of family and friends. Michael holds degrees from Northern Kentucky University, Asbury Seminary, and Morehead State University.

His improbable journey with Hispaniola has transformed his life as much as theirs—“I can’t explain why or how, but their love has profoundly changed me.” The spark was lit when he made a trip to Haiti as an 18-year-old high school senior. His deep, abiding love for the Haitian people motivated him to found the International Strategic Alliances as a response to their stated dreams and needs. He considers the greatest compliment that he has ever received, was when a Haitian man told him, “I consider you a Haitian because you treat us as equals.”

Michael and his wife Luciana live in the Greater Cincinnati area. He has three adult daughters and two granddaughters.

