

10

The Case of Haiti

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Few countries in modern times have received so bad a press from foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly (and painfully) for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned upon their masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. Yet far too little scholarship has been invested in delineating the national and international forces that have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward; nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of its neighbors in the region.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from one another, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long

remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, as we have seen, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. Native Americans, where they were able to survive, were largely assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, were never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a reconstituted peasantry whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influence, in new cultural constellations.

Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such historical processes. The crops Haitian peasants cultivate include the maize, sweet potato, and manioc of the indigenous native American (Taino) people, and other cultigens which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America, such as papaya and the avocado; items from Oceania, such as taro and mangoes; sesame and sugarcane, which originated in the Middle East and India; and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well

adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or Native American. Each trait—crop, tool, practice—confronts one with the diverse and entangled culture history of the Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The religion of Haiti is at once two religions: Catholicism and voodoo. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Much the same is true of creole terminology; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different traditions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths, and change by losing and "gaining" traits and by combining and recombining their substance in new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and has only recently been synthesized. An additional distinction of the Caribbean area derives from the persistently colonial character of the islands and the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the Caribbean islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Native American was soon swamped by the

cultures of Africa. The European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is it more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What part of the African past the Haitian people could keep alive was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to submit to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the peasant way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation in 1915, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the Hemisphere. (In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the same century in which Haiti withdrew from it.) The peasantry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was therefore able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

However, a high price has been paid for this traditionalism. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people today than obtained a hundred years earlier. The rural masses, though consisting overwhelmingly of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimuli. But also important in hampering economic growth is the national institutional system, which took on its characteristic shape after 1804,

and under which the rural masses still live. The system is controlled by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the peasantry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of this elite needs much more study, though from the information already available it seems clear that the elite is by no means a single, solidary class embracing all but the peasantry. Whatever its structure, however, the relationship between the peasants on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The peasant is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent on it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the peasantry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the peasantry, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and peasantry, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti, as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the peasantry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the peasantry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its effect on national political decisions may narrow rather than widen, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever the growth of industry and trade is unaccompanied by parallel growth in peasant productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

That the separateness of peasantry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of that nation's history. But the traditional preponderance of light skins at the top of the structure and of dark skins at the base is less important than the domination of the entire structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered; its physical appearance has been a historically derived expression of that power. A balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse powerholders is common, perhaps particularly so in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain distinctive characteristics. Thus Haiti's special nature is not

simply a consequence of its being a peasant society in which a small group dominates the masses. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each of these regards its particularity needs to be asserted.

The Rural Sector

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000, except for the capital, Port-au-Prince, and Cap Haïtien, but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are in large part of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates all the economic, political, and social activities of the Republic. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger coastal towns, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with one another (and to some extent with the capital) by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. During the occupation, the growth of inland transport strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has enfeebled both the inland and the coastal towns; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. The few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g., Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the Republic run from Les Cayes in the south to the capital, and from Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport simply symbolizes the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all other national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a small fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to cut off most of the rural folk

The Case of Haiti

from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it only represented the interests of the provincial towns as opposed to the capital, never the interests of the mass of country people.

The local military and judicial officials possess the formal authority vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable. Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the devices for appeal against arbitrary exercises of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a peasant—is subject to some restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire (1955: 620-24) has argued that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in matters requiring decision by local authorities; more recent writers (Lahav 1973) are less persuaded. In any case, such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The peasantry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that demonstrates the political impotence of the peasantry.

Haitian Agriculture

Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by characterizing it as a rural and peasant country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as that term is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from a land shortage, inasmuch as too little land worked at too low a level of productivity must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. Although most land is held in small plots and without clear title, persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer in Haiti than in any other Caribbean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America.

Haitian agriculture, with the exception of a very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots on hilly land which are worked with intensive labor and few tools.

Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The peasantry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to make changes unless these entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized from them are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus 1952: 20-26). Peasants cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible.

The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in peasant societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and the acquisition of access to land through revolution, has perhaps given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

The history of land acquisition by the peasants after 1804 is particularly striking. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breakup of large estates and the creation of a class of small handholders—is practically irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's peasantry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the

peasants contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes, there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except in the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments, not causes, of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy.

The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand, and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these activities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countryman farmers and their marketing wives apparently differ to some extent even in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some writers have attributed this division of labor to the West African tradition, since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African societies: Leyburn has pointed out (1941) that the militarism and political unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men do in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity since, for most of them, the scale of enterprise is so modest and the available economic opportunities so restricted.

Craft Technology

Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is underindustrialized by any of the usual measures. But Haitians do produce by

traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside many persons are engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industries that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone, carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles, and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabras from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for domestic use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes; until recently, *vitièlo*, derived from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers, was a colloquial term for shoe.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft tradition has been its relative stability since the Revolution. It was under slavery that Haitian crafts first became "westernized," employing what were then standard French practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features from the African past. It was before the Revolution that the Haitian people stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside have remained sub-

stantially unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

At the same time, however, major events since the Revolution have left their imprint on Haiti's crafts. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an oil piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, operates irregularly. There is but one flour mill, and that is also foreign-owned. One or two textile mills, and sugar factories, established with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established during and after the 1950s. These industries, scanty as they are, are of great importance to Haiti, since they represent substantial investment, hold out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contribute to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involve only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many of its people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

Haitian Sovereignty

More important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth of the kind that has occurred in the nations of Western

Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The exceptional nature of its absence becomes, perhaps, especially clear if Haiti is compared with such neighbors as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. These countries—one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained substantial increments from the investment activities of outsiders. Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere (though very many have, indeed, migrated since the late 1950s, especially to New York City); its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has had limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. Some of the “development projects” foisted in more recent years on the people of a presumably sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to maintain that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price was isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that gave the lie to Haitian sovereignty, and to the invincibility of its people. The Haitian “bandits,” variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines.

The occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a “legitimate” government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing was done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure created by the occupation had begun to decay. The major effect of North American tenure seems to have been to make possible a more effective centralization of political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

Haiti's Quasi-Capitalism

Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to confine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is, to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they may be involved in commercial activities that go beyond the limits of the communities in which they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be called a “quasi-capitalistic” society. To put it another way, small-scale peasants of the Haitian sort do not seek to change or expand their production, so much as to conserve a way of life set by tradition. This ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is a major obstacle to development; yet it would be rash to damn it without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure on the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The peasantry has been given no assurance that an intensified effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are unprepared to make such an effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the expense of

coffee production, for the peasant knows that he can at least be sure of eating and selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the entire nation quite literally depends on such production in order to progress.

The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is perfectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the connection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him. Nor do his efforts to produce more and better cash crops translate themselves directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting their price. Under the circumstances, it is naive to suppose that "education" alone can make the peasant's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition of rural people to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in an expansion of goods and services, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one example of that disposition. Consequently, economic change depends partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worth of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of peasant cultivation in Haiti, rural economic conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage a battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

The term *quasi-capitalistic* has much less force, of course, when applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a curiously static quality as compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours,

The Case of Haiti

gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Traditionally, elite families have consisted largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, the importation of consumer goods, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a coloney, or a tour agency are likely to be lucrative investments; but few indeed are the Haitians who will take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of nerve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of adequate roads, communications facilities, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that exceptional intrepidity is required to establish such enterprises. In striking contrast, foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations and exploit Haitian defenselessness.

Background to the Present

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it reasonable to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years provided a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, recent Haitian history demonstrates that United States aid—which averaged 12½ million dollars yearly over more than a decade—has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It further demonstrates that, shockingly poor as the country is, Haiti emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, for instance, the regime

in power was operating on a monthly budget of \$1,800,000, only \$400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves. The peasantry, living at a near-subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great—but there is as yet no reason to suppose that a regime of the Haitian sort will be destroyed (or improved) by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman—and no people in Latin America lives more poorly—the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, it bears noting that the Duvalier regime precipitated a massive exodus of middle-class, elite, and professional people to Africa, Canada, the United States, and Europe, and that this outward flow has continued for more than fifteen years. Moreover, it seems quite certain that the overwhelming majority of these emigrants do not have (or no longer have) any intention of returning to Haiti. The accession of Jean-Claude Duvalier to the presidency, accompanied by declarations of welcome to potential returnees, has as yet produced no substantial change in disposition on the part of the thousands of doctors, dentists, army officers, journalists, businessmen, and functionaries who left Haiti, and who still see little advantage in reestablishing themselves there, homesick though they may be. The new regime has undoubtedly opened up some "room at the top," though doubtless less than that represented by the exodus of the emigrants.

Second, it is significant that we lack any truly persuasive study or report on the replacement of lighter-skinned by darker-skinned Haitians in the upper sectors, even though many observers seem convinced that such a process was an important feature of the Duvalier epoch. On the one hand, it may be possible to argue that Duvalierist politics led to a significant average "darkening" of the upper sectors. But on the other, such an assertion does not rule out the very good possibility that mulatto and near-white members of the elite are still very important in the Haitian social system. That

this may, indeed, be the case can seem more persuasive when it is remembered that North Americans inevitably interpret any event relating to "race" in Haiti in North American terms. Thus, for instance, a recent monograph on Haiti repeatedly refers to the late President Duvalier and his politics in terms of black power—terminology which wholly misrepresents the Haitian situation. To suppose that Duvalierism sought or achieved a gross elimination of persons of one shade in order to replace them with persons of another shade is to turn on its head the whole apparatus of power that has typified Haitian society since the Revolution. The linkage between color and power in Haitian history is real and specific; but color means *perceived* color, and perception of "race" in a society such as Haiti's is profoundly influenced by factors (such as class, education, one's own perceived color, and speech) that do not logically precede the perception of color but accompany it. Color, in other words, is not salient in Haiti in the way it is in a truly racist society like the United States. So important is this difference that we must set aside for the moment our discussion of the present character of the elite in order to note how some of Haiti's most intelligent observers have viewed its past.

In 1941, James Leyburn's immensely influential *The Haitian People* set forth in considerable detail the separation of masses and elite in Haiti. The book's central thesis was that Haitian society was sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure had maintained that division without significant alteration throughout the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society was the rural agricultural sector, making up as much as 95 percent of the population; at the top was the elite, which dominated the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differed, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values, attitudes, and so on. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the Revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, Leyburn revealed both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed to perpetuate it. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated peasantry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather

than classes. Members of the elite earned their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engaged in manual labor of any sort. They were predominantly urban in residence; their sons attended private lower schools, and then went on to higher education, usually abroad. The elite were French-speaking, although they also spoke Creole, Haiti's national language. Their religion was Catholicism; their forms of marriage and domestic organization were "legitimate" and "Western." The members of the elite viewed themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and felt little commonality with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the peasantry was rural, poor, worked the land, was illiterate, spoke Creole only, believed in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually practiced common-law marriages and was sometimes polygamous, and remained substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally, and importantly—though the significance of this factor was already changing—the elite differed from the rural sector in that the countryman was predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite were prevalently lighter-skinned.

Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the peasantry from the elite. For instance, he called attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way, Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* had to deal. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, Haiti's presidents were almost all dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who seized power

by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors. Michel Oreste, who ruled for nine months in 1913-14, was the first civilian president in Haiti's history; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915-22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned.

Hence, in describing the separation between the elite and the yeomanry, Leyburn found it essential to take note of the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration been extended, it would have been considerably larger. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat distinct from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

The financing of the many revolutions was usually provided by foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would grant them special concessions (Manro 1964: 326-31). The United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes, and by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite from the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation was consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with his analysis.

In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean Price-Mars (1942: 1-50), questioned the applicability of the term *casé* to the social groupings of Haitian society. He noted that Haitian law after the Revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike such societies as that of the United States—that, in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpre-

tation was vitiated by the fact that the elite and the rural masses were not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there were many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualified as members of the elite on all other counts were very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti was viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, had important implications for the way social barriers had operated in that country.

In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" (*sic*) makes a person a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term *caste* would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people, even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than to the peoples of Latin America. This distinction is, of course, particularly important in assessing the Duvalierist political philosophy and its impact on present-day Haitian society, if one is to avoid a simplistic racist explanation of a phenomenon far more subtle and complex than it seems.

Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the elite and the peasantry. For instance, he called attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines and

whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In contributing to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, the occupation may have resulted in some bridging of the gap between peasantry and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Economic and political developments in Haiti through the period 1941–57 contributed grounds for the modification of Leyburn's interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-elite presidents" (1941: 101), subsequent events soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure; a junta facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verrettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti) who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet, and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's membership in the elite was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and thereby assist indirectly the territorial expansion of a still weak United States), had vanished. The time when a Péion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simon Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, while remaining en-

thrilled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haiti's scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program was launched to end illiteracy through education in Creole. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component of Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was “truly Haitian,” and Haiti itself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. These developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s, young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian, but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that dovetailed with hemispheric and international realities. At that time, French intellectual currents also figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles were inspired by Haitian history and inter-ested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their “Gallo-African” cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. Some continued to embrace French culture and to reject “Africanism,” deploring only the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an “inside”—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other “colonial” countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its peoples.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of an importance proportionate to the national cultural renaissance. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity in the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of this group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring. The members of this new group enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and

harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons certainly did not belong to the elite, and their behavior (as, for instance, their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely the urban poor. The significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons were to lapse into poverty, their ideology would continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since it gave some encouragement to labor unions at first, and it undertook the construction of urban low-cost housing. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that, according to Leyburn's analysis, characterized the Haitian social structure.

In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. Paul Magloire came to power, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Magloire moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956-57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

The Rise of Duvalier

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army. Magloire was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier were complicated by the rival claims of

The Case of Haiti

four presidential aspirants. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as Estimé's ideological descendant. Duvalier appears to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.

The Duvalier regime, which endured until the president's death and has been perpetuated in the person of his son, added something qualitatively different to the Haitian political scene. North American interpretations of the regime's character and significance have probably exaggerated and misread the significance of the factor of color, as we suggested earlier, and have tended to reflect the sharp shifts in official North American policy toward Duvalier that have marked the past fifteen years. Thus, for instance, it was fashionable—particularly during the period of official North American disenchantment between the withdrawal of the United States Marine Corps mission and the death of Duvalier *père*—to assume that there was no popular support for the regime in Haiti. Yet such an assumption is probably wrong or, at best, unproved.

In an admittedly unrepresentative "survey" conducted secretly in Haiti around 1969-70, sixteen informants out of fifty claimed to be better-off than they had been five or ten years before; when asked how they would react if outside invaders of Haiti came near their communities, twenty-one said they would do nothing, twenty-seven said they would oppose the invaders, and no one said he would support them (Roberg and Clague 1971). Though the authors honestly admit the extreme tentativeness of their survey, conducted under very difficult conditions, they do not seem to grasp that the results, however qualified, in no sense constitute an indictment of the Duvalier regime. In fact, one can at best only argue that Haiti's peasantry has been largely *irrelevant* to national political decisions (which has almost always been true since the Revolution)—but this is not the same as arguing that the Duvalier regime is unpopular with most of the peasantry. For many Haitians, Duval-

ier's political philosophy—or at least its expression in public statements—shared much with that of Dumarsais Estimé. That opposition groups were united in their dislike of the regime and in their attacks upon its excesses does not prove that it was unpopular with the Haitian masses.

At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalierists to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in a century. Such excesses, moreover, run counter to certain local traditions of political behavior—for instance, the willingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is carried out, the distaste for violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, was the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government played more creatively on inconsistencies in United States policy than had any preceding regime. While using United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, it employed a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for internal sources of political support. It capitalized most strikingly on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic" regime. That Duvalier was able to stay in power in spite of internal disaffection, sometimes hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill-health, and other woes indicates that he made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's potentialities for domination, but also of the contradictoriness of United States policy, a contradictoriness that had been revealed with special clarity during the occupation.

The United States occupation had brought about no lasting changes in Haitian society in spite of nineteen years of continuous and autocratic rule. Many rather small-scale benefits were provided, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of *corvée* labor on the roads led to serious abuses and stimulated sanguinary guerrilla warfare). But most significant, the United States institutionalized the army and the police. It dissolved the

ragged bands of political mercenaries and transformed the officer-ridden army into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. This force's eventual firm control of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would affect significantly the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime took full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders were able to observe the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present, including the period following Duvalier's demise.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador in order to consolidate his power. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoié's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign groups. Among the families of these leaders were Swiss, German, and French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who held United States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. The clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—also exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun (or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo") and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the president understood the strength of such groups as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political effectiveness could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier, apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it seems to have reassured the business community; and it reduced, rather than increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army.

Members of the Duvalier security police wore no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats were affected). They carried out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals, and seriously weakened the policing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put their operating costs at as high as one-third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the security police were distributed throughout the country, the central administration stayed in the capital; urban units were dispatched to the countryside if any show of internal political resistance was sensed. This paramilitary, secret-police organization proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community.

Little is known of the antecedents of its members. While it was customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them were literate, had some education, vaunted a "trash" ideology—a kind of nationalist-negritude mystique, with strong fascistic elements—and differed dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the lieutenants of the security police were a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity; a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more importantly, of the United States occupation itself. Since the 1960s this paramilitary force has begun to lose its importance.

With regard to the army, Duvalier followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was

(probably unwittingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years, he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off-balance but allowed the president to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions.

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy was one of increasing antagonism. At times, members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest church resistance was tolerated. The low point in Duvalier-church relations was the interruption of a Mass by an armed TTM (Tonton Macoute—literally, "Uncle [with the] Basket"—i.e., the bogeyman, in folktales) unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; later, leading members of the hierarchy were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. As the regime consolidated itself, church power waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside. Duvalier was not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the church, but sought instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. He succeeded admirably.

Except among the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole do not differentiate what is "really Catholic" from what is not Catholic in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen resemble folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church's policy in the so-called Indian countries of Latin America—the church failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology proved superior, and was consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

Finally, the Duvalier regime invaded such institutions as the National University and the trade unions, and maintains close surveillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loyalty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer exists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it

should be clear from our description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not so much the key to Duvalier power as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Duvalier power is to be found in the structure of Haitian society, in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier was as radical as he could be; but he was no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for the sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle of St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employed considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and fell out of favor was still considered "reliable" at the time of his death.

Labeling Duvalierism "pathological" or "paranoid" contributes nothing to our understanding. The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available. In fact, the tendency to employ a complex theoretical terminology in describing societies of the Haitian sort, and to interpret political events in such societies as pathological variants upon an otherwise humdrum theme, has become a substitute for serious research into the history, economy, and social structure of such societies. Haiti is not, in fact, enigmatic; but our ignorance—created by the reference to "enigmas"—is not reduced by speaking of a black Honduras, a New World Liberia, a Caribbean Madagascarcar, or an Emperor Jones writ large. Haiti's enigmas, if any, will be solved by those who patiently acquire enough knowledge of its past and present to make sense of what has been happening there, not by those who substitute neologisms and bad imagery for research.

The "Enigma" of the Peasantry

We have stressed throughout that our present inability to "explain" Haiti originates in good measure in our ignorance of the character and attitudes of the Haitian peasantry, who make up perhaps eight-tenths or more of the national population. Seemingly mute and invisible, apparently powerless, the peasantry of Haiti remind one of Marx's famous dictum that peasants possess organization only in the sense that the potatoes in a sack of potatoes are organized. Clearly, the Haitian peasantry plays little, if any, role in contemporary Haitian politics—though it is also clear that a century ago the national government was responsive to the peasantry in ways that it has not been since, and that peasant political resistance did, in fact, once manifest itself, even though it no longer does.

We are not in a position to explain fully how, and why, peasant political activity ended; but we are able to hypothesize that the North American occupation precluded, perhaps forever, the possibility of armed revolt in the countryside. It was, in fact, a series of such revolts, the fear of foreign (German) intervention, the defaulting on loans to North American banks, and "excesses" of violence in Port-au-Prince that led to United States intervention in 1915. The reform of the army, the weakening of port cities, the growth of the national bureaucracy, and the improvement of internal transportation during the occupation probably contributed to a reduction of peasant potential for political action. At the same time, the failure of the North Americans to develop industry or enterprise along modern (in this case, imperialistic) lines limited the growth of a proletariat, either urban or rural, and slowed political developments of the sort that followed United States meddling in other Caribbean islands, such as Cuba. Thus North American hegemony, typified by imperialistic maneuvers that were carried out almost absentmindedly, may have played a bigger role than has generally been recognized in the isolation of the Haitian peasantry from national decision-making.

The relationship between the peasantry and the national government is, in any case, mediated through only the skimpiest of institutional arrangements. The peasantry is economically under the

thumb of large-scale export merchants, many of them foreign, as well as subordinate to the lowest-level politico-military officials, the *chefs de section*. But the main source of peasant "apathy"—a word which conceals more than it describes—is the lack within the peasant substructure itself of institutional development around which political response could be organized. It would not be justified to assume that this has always been the case in Haiti; on at least three important occasions in the last century, peasant unrest produced serious political repercussions (Moral 1961), and the national government seems to have become more rather than less remote from such unrest since North American influence began to be directly expressed in Haitian politics. In this connection, it bears noting that the North Americans provided what was probably the first truly effective and complete military occupation at rifle-point in Haitian history, an occupation which lasted nearly two decades. The shoring up of elite power in the capital, the strengthening of bureaucratic control, the establishment of effective communications and transportation, and the institutionalization of the army under the occupation—all easily justified as positive developmental undertakings—may have had as their corollary effect the final decline of peasant political expression, even on the level of jacqueries. At any rate, we have no evidence that the peasantry has made its voice heard in any significant fashion since the start of the North American occupation in 1915.

And yet the occupation did too little to create other kinds of social groupings that might have played a role in Haitian political development. We have seen that it changed the urban class structure in some ways. But the very limited plantation and industrial development that accompanied North American influence has not led to the appearance of either a rural (plantation) proletariat or of other socioeconomic groups that might have supplied political leadership. The class structure of Haiti reflects the country's history—perhaps too well. Even North American imperialism has failed to produce response groupings that could effect structural changes in the society, which remains very much a rural peasant world, overseen by city bureaucrats. Assertions that the Haitian people are not politically reactive because their child training ill-fits them to resist; because they are "accustomed to adjusting their

expectations downward as their capabilities decline" (Rorberg and Clague 1971); or because they are "so inured to misery that even prolonged decline across the subsistence threshold does not usually occasion the violence inherent in a society with stable or improving conditions" (ibid.) reflect our ignorance of what Haitians actually feel and think. Such pessimistic assertions also reflect a lack of knowledge of the Haitian past. In fact, all assertions, pessimistic and otherwise, about peasant inclinations and capacities in Haiti make little sense in view of the paucity of serious studies of the Haitian masses. Until such studies can be made, Haiti's apparent enigmas will remain just that, no matter how many terms are invented to "explain" them.

Since we are seeking here to describe an Afro-Caribbean nation, at least a brief final word on race and culture is called for. Throughout this work, we have argued that the Afro-Caribbean world must be defined in terms of culture, rather than physical type—since physical type, like all else, has always been interpreted according to culturally defined modes of perception. Nowhere in the Caribbean do the categories "white" and "nonwhite" exist with the same rigidity of definition as in North America, not even in those Caribbean societies in which "race" is still psychologically and politically significant, and in which its perception is accompanied by considerable consciousness of difference. Rather, each Afro-Caribbean society has its own conceptions of where lines should be (or can be) drawn, its own code of social relations, its own system of group assortment—each derived from the distinctive social history of the society in question. Haiti is assuredly no exception; North American ideas about what "color" someone is are far more hindrance than help in understanding Haiti. Moreover, Haiti is not—and cannot be—racist in the United States fashion, in part because its genetic composition requires a very different drawing of lines.

Culturally, we know, Haiti has drawn heavily on the African past, as it has on the European (particularly the French) past. The dividedness of its traditions was dramatized during the American occupation, and we have seen how this conflict was expressed in the social, aesthetic, and intellectual life of the Haitian upper classes. The fact that the North American occupying forces reflected accurately (and perhaps exaggeratedly) the racist tone of North

American life (Schmidt 1971) only intensified the intellectual polarization of Haitian intellectuals. Hershkovits (1937) and, following him, Bourguignon (1952, 1969) and Bastide (1969) conceptualized this conflict as "socialized ambivalence," the expression in some very fundamental fashion of the schism of origin that is ever, can be useful only if its differential expression in different segments of Haitian society is clearly understood.

Though it can be argued that there is a high degree of cultural homogeneity of *some kind* throughout the class structure of Haitian society (expressed, it seems to this observer, in such cultural items as the universal use of Creole, certain foods, and dance forms, and in a number of common values, often subtly disguised), the cultural differences that divide the society are at least as important as its common cultural qualities. It is simply not possible at this time to establish scientifically the degree of coherence or noncoherence of a total society along these lines—though one may hazard the assertion that Haiti is, in many ways, a more integrated society *culturally* than is, say, Jamaica or Trinidad. If one makes reference to the social structure rather than to cultural forms, then Haiti reveals itself to be deeply divided—though doubtless not so sharply as Leyburn contended thirty-five years ago. The dividedness of Haiti expresses itself, we have argued here, more in the lack of any institutional framework uniting the peasantry with other social sectors than in the importance of perceived differences in color or culture. At its most extreme, the Haitian variant on Africanism in culture, represented by the Price-Mars and Roumain "movements" of three decades ago, neither sought to deny nor ignored the European, Amerindian, and other civilizational components in the Haitian past. One might even argue to the contrary—for the problem of Haitian cultural identity was far more one of reassessing the European contributions to Haitian civilization than of replacing them with African contributions which were commonly recognized to have functioned at least as importantly in Haitian life.

The role of the African past in Haiti's culture remains highly significant, but that past is rarely perceived consciously as such. That is, unlike most Afro-Caribbean peoples, Haitians are *at home with their own culture*; the ideological overtones that accompany being

black, of African origin, with a glorious revolutionary past and a rather somber present, only reveal themselves fully in Haiti to those who are *not* Haitian. On some highly significant ideological and symbolic level, every Haitian—sired by the New World's second and bloodiest revolution, specter of a world to come long before Marx put pen to paper—has a special meaning for nonwhite peoples everywhere. But it is immensely important to keep in mind that few Haitians are likely to perceive themselves in this way. Everyday life has a way of becoming prosaic, no matter how glorious the historic past. Surely it is this difference in perspective which explains some of the rather surrealistic discussions that have taken place between Haitians and Afro-American militants in recent years. It is difficult to explain effectively, to those who have not enjoyed the experience, how *relating* it is to be black in your own country, when your own country has been (at least nominally) free for a century, and when your own country is yours, largely because hardly anyone in it is white. However much weight one assigns color differences within Haiti, the fact remains that those differences express themselves primarily in terms of class, and do not normally transcend class considerations. In other words, the line that divides Haitians most is *not* a color line.

Thus, Haiti, the New World's second nation and the world's first "black republic" (as many observers delight in calling it), is far more saliently black in the eyes of outsiders (of any complexion) than in its own. Its lack of national coherence, moreover, cannot fairly be attributed to matters of color, important though these are. Instead, as we have suggested here, Haiti still lacks—or has come to lack—the unifying institutional forms through which class and other conflicts could be mediated, settled, or fought out; and this lack is related both to the nation's isolation during the first century of its existence and to the effects of North American colonial rule not long thereafter. It is not enough to bemoan the feebleness of institutional forms, or to indulge in sanctimonious discussions of the dreary succession of petty tyrannies that have plagued the Haitian people. The will of the people is not heard and, given Haiti's present structure, need not be heard by those who are content to rule. This is the real problem of Haiti.