

The City and the State: Construction and the Politics of Dictatorship in Haiti  
(1957-1986)

by

Claire Antone Payton

Department of History  
Duke University

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurent Dubois, Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Jenson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joshua Nadel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jocelyn Olcott

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Piot

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in the Department of  
History in the Graduate School  
of Duke University

2018

ABSTRACT

The City and the State: Construction and the Politics of Dictatorship in Haiti  
(1957-1986)

by

Claire Antone Payton

Department of History  
Duke University

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurent Dubois, Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Jenson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joshua Nadel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jocelyn Olcott

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Piot

An abstract of a dissertation submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of  
History in the Graduate School of  
Duke University

2018

Copyright by  
Claire Antone Payton  
2018

## **Abstract**

“The City and the State: Construction and the Politics of Dictatorship in Haiti (1957-1986)” charts a new history of place-making in the Caribbean. It analyzes construction practices in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince—ranging from slum clearance, transportation infrastructure, to the political economy of cement—to reveal the multifaceted relationship between the Duvalier dictatorship and rapid urban transformation in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It argues that through the patterns and practices of building Port-au-Prince, the social, political and economic dimensions of the Duvalier regime became embedded in material space of the city. At the same time, the nature of these spatial and material changes informed the regime’s tumultuous internal dynamics. This thesis also situates these intertwined themes within a broader context of uneven geographies of power produced through the country’s long transition from slavery to freedom.

## Dedication

To Tony Payton, *anba dlo*

# Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Acknowledgements.....	xi
Introduction.....	1
1. "Judging Their Locality": The Haitian City and Legal Landscapes of Power.....	23
The Rural Codes.....	28
Rural Codes as a Framework for New Oppression.....	39
Communes and the Centralization of Power.....	46
The State in the City.....	52
Conclusion.....	60
2. "Wart on the Face of the Capital": Slum Clearance, Displacement, and Political Consolidation.....	63
The symbolic burden of Port-au-Prince.....	69
La Saline and Low-Income Neighborhoods.....	74
Early Slum Clearance and Urban Planning.....	80
The Election of 1957.....	83
The Weaponization of Urban Planning.....	92
The Haitian American Meat and Provision Company.....	106
Conclusion.....	118
3. " <i>Men jet-la!</i> ": François Duvalier International Airport as a Cold War Crossroads.....	122

Building Runways in Port-au-Prince.....	126
The First Inauguration of Construction .....	133
The Runway as a Cold War Lynchpin .....	136
The Dirksen Amendment.....	145
The 1962 OAS meeting at Punte del Este.....	150
Conflicting U.S. Positions.....	157
The Cuban Missile Crisis.....	163
Breaking Ground on the Airport.....	172
Inauguration of François Duvalier Airport .....	177
Conclusion.....	181
4. “And We will be Devoured”: Urbanization and the Consumption of Resources.....	186
Albert Mangonès and Urban Marronage.....	187
The 1976 Port-au-Prince Urban Master Plan .....	193
The Construction Boom.....	203
Factors Motivating the Boom.....	208
Pétionville and Delmas.....	211
Environmental Issues: Erosion and Water Supply.....	217
The Flood .....	222
Conclusion.....	227
5. “The Price of Power”: Urbanization and Infrastructures of Corruption .....	231
The Régie du Tabac et Allumettes .....	233
Ciment d’Haiti .....	241

Liberalization and Compromise.....	247
A New Image for the Regime .....	255
Nationalization of Ciment d’Haiti .....	263
Infrastructures of Corruption in Transition.....	267
Conclusion .....	277
6. Conclusion .....	280
Appendix A: Archives Consulted .....	287
Appendix B: 1965-1987 Map of Key Sites in Port-au-Prince .....	289
Bibliography .....	291
Biography .....	300

## List of Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of Socioeconomic Groups, 1976.....	201
Table 2: Consumption of Resources by Socioeconomic Group, 1976.....	201
Table 3: Cement Production and Taxes Collected by the Régie.....	240

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Downtown Port-au-Prince on OpenStreetMaps (2018) .....	6
Figure 2: 1800 map showing the city's defenses and Ft. National. ....	24
Figure 3: Map showing administrative boundaries from department to rural section....	27
Figure 4 Croix-des-Bossales vendors, 1930s.....	78
Figure 5: Photo of 19 <sup>th</sup> century municipal abattoir.....	80
Figure 6: 1968 Map showing Cité Simone in relationship to La Saline .....	104
Figure 7: The HAMPCO Plant, 1961 .....	110
Figure 8: Aerial photo of Port-au-Prince, 1932. ....	127
Figure 9: Undated Photo from the runway's construction .....	175
Figure 10 Photo of Raven (center) and Cambronne (right) at inauguration .....	179
Figure 11: Inauguration of Terminal Building .....	182
Figure 12 1971 Haitian 25g coin .....	183
Figure 13: Map of land occupation in Port-au-Prince by socio-economic group. ....	208
Figure 14: Pierre Petit explaining the environmental consequences of urbanization.....	225

## Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge a tremendous debt of gratitude to those in Haiti who over the years have offered friendship, guidance, and insight. It would never have been possible to get to know Port-au-Prince without the generosity and patience of Lewis Clorméus and Sandra Sterlin, who welcomed a stranger into their home. Nor without the men and women who shared their stories with me as part of the Haiti Memory Project. In sharing their stories, they testified to the profound impact that transformations to urban space can have on inhabitants. My relationship to Port-au-Prince is inseparable from my relationships Stanley and Valérie Michaud and Rose, Billy, and Twenty. It is also inseparable from Evens Mary and Evens Sanon, as well as Evens Bruno, who passed away while during the course of this research. In opening their lives and their city to me, they made it possible to think and ask the questions that now drive me. *Mèsi anpil.*

The present iteration of this dissertation took shape at Duke University. I am fortunate to enjoy the mentorship of Laurent Dubois, who models a symbiotic relationship between kindness and intelligence. My career there has also been nurtured by Jocelyn Olcott, Deborah Jenson, Charlie Piot, and Phil Stern. At the Haiti Lab, Laurent, Deborah, and Jacques Pierre created a unique and exciting nexus for Haiti nerds. The Haiti crew turned Durham into a home, and I am lucky to have shared years here with Josh Nadel, Jen Garçon, Joshua Clough, Laura Wagner, Vincent Joos, Dasha

Chapman, Marlene Daut, Mary Caton Lingold, Marina Magloire, Christina Davidson, and Eric Barstow. Many thanks to friends who made the life of the mind less lonely, especially Farren and Phil Yero, Ashley Young, Ashley Elrod, David Romine, Cole Rizki, Anna Holms, Mandy Cooper, Tom Cinq-Mars, Rebecca Mendelson, Mari Joerstad, and Amanda Sterling-Gould. I am thankful to have found a friend and intellectual fellow traveler in Alisha Hines, whose companionship grounds and inspires me.

I am delighted to be embedded in a vast and vibrant constellation of friends and colleagues. Chelsea Steiber and Anne Eller are comrades in the trenches of scholarship. I have been sustained by friendships with Paul Clammer, Sophonie Joseph, Hadassah St. Hubert, Erin Zavitz, Julia Gaffield, Irene Brisson, Scott Freeman, David Smith, and Adam Silvia. My first years of graduate school at NYU were formative thanks to the mentorship of Herrick Chapman and Ada Ferrer, and memorable thanks to Christy Thornton, Stuart Schrader, Josh Fren-String, and Julia Leikin. Mark Schuller has been a vital example of what engaged scholarship can look like. Jeremy Popkin has been a friend and mentor for more than a decade.

This research is enriched by the support of those whose lives have been caught up, one way or another, in the politics of place at the center of this project. My understanding of Port-au-Prince grew exponentially through in every conversation I had with Robert Denizé. Daniel Supplice has been an invaluable interlocutor, opening many doors to me that I did know existed otherwise. Simon Fass has read drafts of

several chapters and offered insightful feedback. Sidney Mintz graciously met with me at his retirement home to talk about Haiti in what would sadly be the last weeks of his life. Pierre Buteau, Gaétan Mentor, and Jean Casimir have been invaluable interlocutors in Port-au-Prince.

All research of this kind depends on the professionalism and goodwill of a transnational corps of archivists and librarians. Several merit special thanks in the context of this dissertation. The librarians and archivists at Duke, especially Holly Ackerman and Carson Holloway, are powerhouse of knowledge production and have helped fuel this project. At CIDIHCA, Frantz Voltaire stewards an incredible collection of historical resources and has provided invaluable guidance on many occasions. In Haiti, Antoine Césaire and Joseph Jerome from Archives Nationales and staff of St. Louis de Gonzague were generous with their time and expertise. Cheikh Ndiaye at the United Nations archive and Carmen Hendershott at the New School both provided help at key moments.

The research presented here has been made possible with funding from the Fulbright Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad program. It received substantial support from Duke's Department of History, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the PhD Lab in Digital Knowledge. It was also supported by a McCracken Fellowship at New York University. I appreciate the institutions whose resources made this dissertation possible.

My mother, Teresa, has been unfailingly supportive friend. If my father Tony were alive, I like to think he would be proud. By far the most transformative part of this long journey has been meeting Jonathan Katz and joining my life with his. Our friendship, which began in Port-au-Prince, has become the foundation of an immensely joyful shared life. His love and encouragement, personal integrity, and ferocious intelligence have buttressed this work and sustained me through the years of the research behind it. I'm grateful to have been welcomed into his family by his parents, Barbara and David. I offer this book with love to my family.

## Introduction

Comment peut-on parler  
De bons et de mauvais matériaux  
Quand la maison  
Est bâtie sur le sable,  
Sinon constater avec amertume  
Que son existence  
Constitue purement et simplement  
Un danger permanent.

L.C. Thomas

How can we speak  
Of good and of bad materials  
When the house  
Is built on sand,  
Without noticing with bitterness  
That its existence  
Purely and simply constitutes  
A permanent danger.

L.C. Thomas<sup>1</sup>

There are many ways to approach Port-au-Prince by air. Depending on the weather, a flight might arrive in from the north, sailing over the pleated ridges that occupy Haiti's interior. These crests give the country its name: the island's original occupants—the native Taino people—called it "Ayiti," meaning "mountainous land." Another path cuts eastward directly into the large mouth of the Gulf of La Gonâve. On this route, a plane descends across the waters and flies low over dense brown coils of houses and shacks folded around the shore. Planes also approach from the west, swooping over the Dominican Republic, the country that shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. From this angle, light shimmers across the surface of the large inland lakes of Étang Saumâtre and Lago Enriquillo.

---

<sup>1</sup> Louis Thomas, *Section Rurale ou Section Communale: subdivision géographique typiquement haïtienne* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1988).

The capital of Haiti appears, at this height, a beige woven textile stretched unevenly across the landscape. The fabric is the built environment: the expansive ensemble of structures and roads that, taken together, stitch a city. This urban tissue drapes across the low ring of mountains that encircle the southern side, and is pulled taut along the shore line. It stretches out flat to the north and east, thinning and fraying along the edges. It gathers more tightly in sites with names such as La Saline, Carrefour, Pétionville, Delmas. It knots at a patch along the waterfront. Today, this site is called Centre Ville, or downtown.<sup>2</sup> When Port-au-Prince was founded by the French in 1749, this small tangle was the entire city, a colonial administrative capital enclosed within fortifications. It was the center from which the French government (first as a monarchy, then a republic, then an empire) tried to command the surrounding territory. It staked claim to the western part of the island, naming it Saint-Domingue, and kidnapped people from Africa to work to death in cane fields planted on island's plains. Today, this point is a node in a much larger and more sophisticated tapestry. The rest of the city seems to spiral from it outward in asymmetric, concentric rings, seamed together with a few large thoroughfares.

The city's main airport lies along Port-au-Prince's north flank. It is named after Toussaint Louverture, a hero of Haiti's independence struggle. The French lost control of

---

<sup>2</sup> Appendix B offers a map marked with key locations, as well as a representation of the urbanization patterns of the period under discussion.

the colony following an uprising of the kidnapped Africans and their children, who overthrew the institution of slavery over the course of a bloody thirteen-year war. In 1804, those revolutionaries forged the second independent postcolonial country in the world—the first ruled by and for people of color. Louverture rose from slavery to become a general in that fight, leading a brilliant campaign against armies of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The airport was not initially named for Toussaint. When it was first built in 1965, it bore the name of then-president François Duvalier. Its namesake labeled things after himself as part of a cult of personality that helped shore up a violent and extractive dictatorship that controlled Haiti for three decades. Countless people passed through its doors hoping to escape the brutality and oppression abroad. The dictatorship ended at that same airport in the early morning hours of February 7, 1986, when François's son and successor, Jean-Claude, drove a silver Mercedes to the runway and, with a small entourage, boarded a plane into exile.

The current terminal is new. The one built by Duvalier fractured suddenly on the afternoon of January 12, 2010. Passengers inside had been boarding American Airlines flight 1908 when they felt an enormous shock. According to one traveler, "it felt like a plane had hit the building."<sup>3</sup> The shock came not from the air, but from the earth itself.

---

<sup>3</sup> Daphne Duret, John Lantigua, and Julius Wigham II, "Boynton Man Was on Last American Airlines Plane out of Haiti," *Palm Beach Post*, January 13, 2010.

Underneath the city, a nearby seismic fault line had shifted. In that moment, the landscape changed from a sedentary background into a motion, heaving and sliding. The textile that was Port-au-Prince wrinkled violently from the restless ground below. Buildings all across the city collapsed. The people inside, hundreds of thousands of them, died. The earth betrayed the city, and the city betrayed its inhabitants. The 2010 Port-au-Prince earthquake is one of the deadliest disasters in modern history. AA 1908 managed to depart that night—the last commercial flight to do so for many weeks. Shaken travelers peered out into the darkness. The lights were off in the crumpled city below.

The new terminal has a small baggage claim where one jostles with fellow passengers. On a typical day, there might be an elderly Haitian woman with several hats perched one on top of the other upon her head, an efficient way to transport hats to the sun-drenched island without crushing them. A large ex-military type might stand with arms folded, sunglasses perched backwards on his head as he watches the bags revolve along the belt. Inevitably, a group of foreigners, often American, stands together in matching brightly colored T-shirts. Missionaries and aid groups are among the most common foreign visitors to Haiti. While this has been true for many years, it became even more evident in the months following the earthquake. In its aftermath, Port-au-Prince became an object of global fascination. People around the world felt an urgent need to respond. Money and people poured in. International aid and disaster response is

also a multi-billion-dollar industry, and many people arrived expecting—consciously or unconsciously—to turn the city’s suffering into profit.<sup>4</sup>

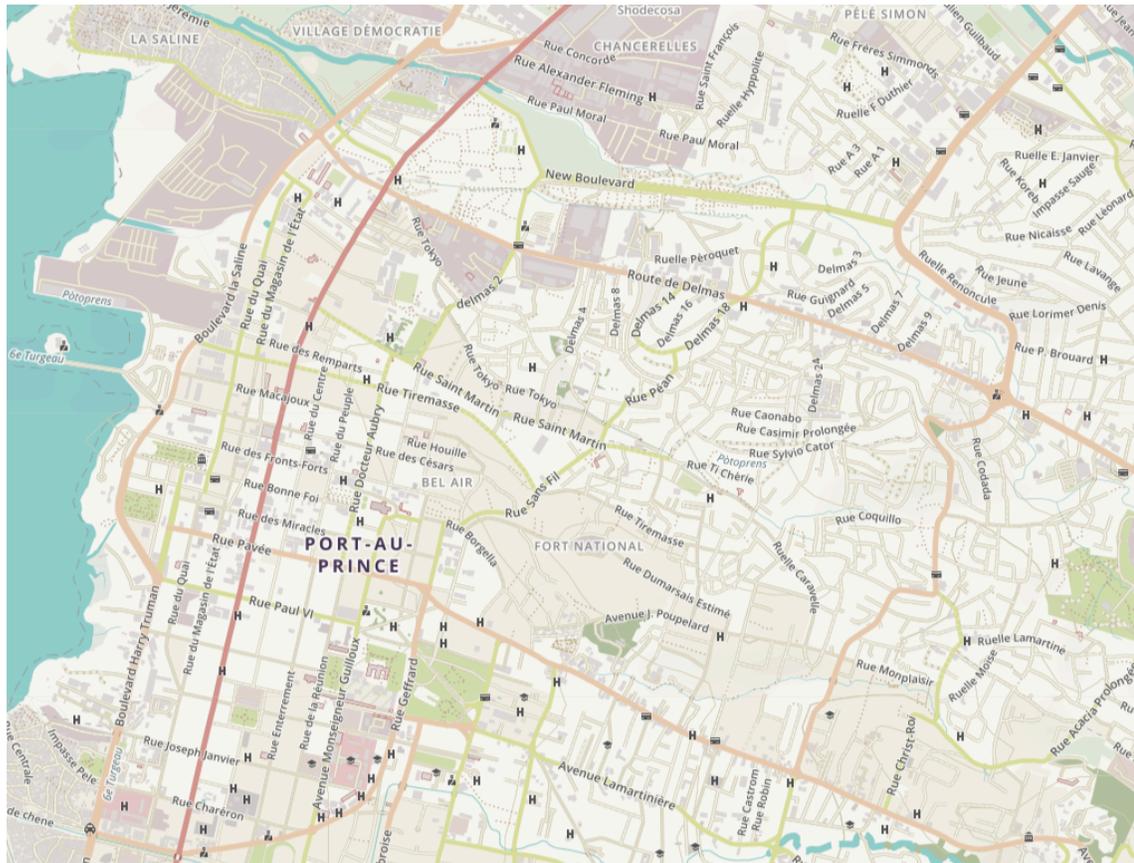
The refrain of the post-earthquake humanitarian effort was “build back better” — a mantra that recast the event from tragedy to opportunity for profound structural change.<sup>5</sup> Ideas multiplied about how to save, rebuild, or relocate Port-au-Prince. Quickly, people interested in shaping relief and recovery outcomes realized that response efforts were constrained by the limited knowledge available to those outside the city concerning its streets, geography, and environment. Arriving from overseas appeared more straightforward than navigating from one side of the city to another. A community of professional and amateur geographers in Haiti and abroad crowdsourced this problem using a platform called OpenStreetMap. One activist geographer recalled, “over 450 OpenStreetMap volunteers from an estimated 29 countries used the imagery to digitize roads, buildings, and other features, creating the most detailed map of Haiti in

---

<sup>4</sup> For more on the earthquake and its aftermath, see: Alex Dupuy, “Disaster Capitalism to the Rescue: The International Community and Haiti after the Earthquake,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 43, no. 4 (2010): 14–19; Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, “A Man-Made Disaster: The Earthquake of January 12, 2010— A Haitian Perspective,” *Journal of Black Studies* 42, no. 2 (March 2011): 264–275; Jonathan Katz, *The Big Truck That Went by: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left behind a Disaster* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Laura Rose Wagner, “Haiti Is a Sliding Land: Displacement, Community, and Humanitarianism in Post-Earthquake Port-Au-Prince” (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2014); Mark Schuller, *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> A few examples of this theme: The World Bank, “Haiti - Supporting the Plan to Build Back Better” (The World Bank, October 25, 2010); “Haiti: Building Back Better,” Clinton Foundation, January 12, 2011, <https://www.clintonfoundation.org/haiti-building-back-better>; CAFOOD et al., “Building Back Better: An Imperative for Haiti,” Parliamentary Briefing Paper (UK, January 2011); Lilliane Fann, “Disaster as Opportunity? Building Back Better in Aceh, Myanmar and Haiti,” Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper (London: Overseas Development Group, November 2013).

existence in just a few weeks.”<sup>6</sup> New forms of spatial knowledge accompanied the new discourses being generated about the city (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Downtown Port-au-Prince on OpenStreetMaps (2018)**

The new map revealed Port-au-Prince as a *location*, hanging on the surface of the earth, but it communicated little about the social, political and cultural processes that endow

---

<sup>6</sup> Robert Soden, “4 Years On, Looking Back at OpenStreetMap Response to the Haiti Earthquake,” *World Bank: Latin American & Caribbean: Opportunities for All* (blog), October 29, 2014, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/4-years-looking-back-openstreetmap-response-haiti-earthquake>.

the site with the quality of *place*.<sup>7</sup> As a product of digital spatial and photographic technologies, the map conveys a sense of scientific authority and quantifiable knowledge. But the distance between different landmarks or the estimated travel time between them are not the only or the most important contexts for situating Port-au-Prince. The city is also shaped by the relationships between its millions of inhabitants, their perceptions of closeness or distance from one another and to the land itself. It is built upon layers of affective attachment, story, and memory. The space of the city is a material “arena of action and movement,” whereas place is created by “stopping, resting, becoming, and becoming involved.”<sup>8</sup> Lived experience and maps are not necessarily separate ways of knowing: experience informs the way maps are made and used, and maps play a role in the way people interact with space. The map, while offering a representation of location, is also a cultural artifact of place. It can speak little to the sounds of the city, its meanings, its millions of stories.

Haitian novelist Lyonel Trouillot offers to navigate through the accumulated layers of lived experiences that is Port-au-Prince:

---

<sup>7</sup> Some of the works that have shaped my thinking about space and place include Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1974); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); John A. Agnew, *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Allen & Unwin, 1987); Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989); David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Charles Withers, “Place and the ‘Spatial Turn’ in Geography and in History,” *Journal and History of Ideas* 70, no. 4 (October 2009): 640.

What you saw at the airport, twenty porters for a single suitcase, babbling in every language, that's nothing. Wait until you see the city center.... Despite their best efforts, foreigners often lose their sense of hearing as they confront things, animals, humans all equal in their right to make a din. Pots and pans. Mufflers. Shouters selling everything, from elixirs to antibiotics by way of skin-lightening cream and pills that make you fat. Bureaucrats from the mayor's office chasing away market-women selling grains, fruits, and vegetables on the sidewalk. ... In the city center, noise is like poverty, you never get to the end of it. Whenever you think you've circumscribed poverty in the neighborhoods built for it, it overflows and stands up elsewhere...

Here, in this disfigured city, we've got so little room that there's no place for silence and little love for mystery. Here, for lack of better we get drunk on the din. And, when the end comes, like a sick old dog tired of uselessly wandering about, we lie down and we die of an overdose of noise.<sup>9</sup>

Trouillot's tour gives an indication of the cacophony of human experience and encounter that structure Port-au-Prince. Any trip through across town today is almost always accompanied by the rhythmic hammering and clattering of construction workers. The city sounds like a constant process of becoming. It is inevitable that in the wake of a disaster that felled a large portion of the city, survivors would take up the task of rebuilding. But this racket speaks of a much longer story, one that has as much to do with what came before the earthquake as what came after.

This dissertation, "The City and the State: Construction and the Politics of Dictatorship in Haiti," offers a new account of place-making in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Caribbean. It began as a historical investigation into circumstances that produced the total failure of the built environment in 2010, and grew a larger history of urbanization.

---

<sup>9</sup> Lyonel Trouillot, "On the Sounds of Haiti," trans. Laurent Dubois, *Transition*, no. 111 (January 2013): 9–13.

It takes as a point of departure the explosive growth of the Haitian capital after 1950 and traces the ramifications of this dynamic across wider social and political contexts.

Drawing from historical maps, textual sources, interviews, and my own experiences living in Port-au-Prince, I contend that production of the city's specific geographic and material forms reflected a consolidation and expression of social and political processes that also underpinned the Duvalier regime (1957-1986). Some imprints of the regime are obvious: for example, in Chapter 3, I explore the politics behind the airport's construction and the ideological meaning the regime invested in it. Other signs of its influence are more subtle: in Chapter 4, I show how the construction of elite neighborhoods on top of fragile aquifers in the 1970s revealed a strategy of environmental neglect that appeased important interest groups. "The City and the State" analyzes construction practices—ranging from slum clearance, transportation infrastructure, and the political economy of cement—to uncover the dictatorship's values and logics, as well as the international contexts in which it was situated. This dissertation shows how Port-au-Prince's built environment operated as an interface between material and political forms that transformed the dynamics of both.

Current scholarship on the Caribbean is framed by a rich literature that reveals how the transition from slavery to freedom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century produced an archipelago

of unique peasantries.<sup>10</sup> Following the pathbreaking research of Eric Williams (1944) and Sidney Mintz (1986), scholars have revealed that, rather than being external to capitalism or modernity, plantation slavery in the Caribbean was in fact the birthplace of capitalist modernity. Rebecca Scott, Thomas Holt, and Fredrick Cooper (2000) have argued that emancipation initiated renegotiations of labor relationships between political elites and the formerly enslaved, negotiations that had a direct impact on the shape and limitations of citizenship. Across the Caribbean, peasantries emerged out of the rejection of low-paid wage labor, as different groups tried to navigate their way towards greater personal independence by limiting their exposure to systems premised on their exploitation and disposability. In Haiti, this dynamic produced one of the largest and most independent rural societies in the Caribbean, with the vast majority of the population participating in autonomous family-based agriculture with minimal contact with elites and state representatives.

But the Caribbean, like the rest of the world, was altered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by structural transformations that privileged explosive urban growth. Increasing environmental degradation, myopic agricultural policies, land appropriation,

---

<sup>10</sup> Some of the works that have influenced my thinking on this topic include: Frederick Cooper, Thomas Cleveland Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation In Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860–1899* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Hilary Beckles, *Great House Rules: Landless Emancipation and Workers' Protest in Barbados, 1838–1938* (Kingston, Miami and Oxford: Ian Randle Publisher, 2003); Sidney W. Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012).

demographic pressure, and lack of economic returns led many farmers to put down their tools and travel to urban areas in search of greater opportunity. Until about 1950, only 10% of the population in Haiti lived in cities and towns. Today, the World Bank estimates that 64% of the country's 10.6 million inhabitants live in urban areas. About 2.6 million live in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area—about one out of every four people. The city today is the second largest in the Caribbean after Santo Domingo, and Haiti is the fourth most urbanized country in the region.<sup>11</sup>

I argue that new questions and methods are needed to fully grapple with the implications of this transformation. It is not my intention to examine in depth the causes of rural-to-urban migration; rather, I explore the political, social, and material implications of this dynamic upon the material arena of the capital.<sup>12</sup> The initial acceleration Port-au-Prince's urbanization corresponded with three decades of the Duvalier dictatorship. The quotidian consequences of urbanization—the cutting of trees,

---

<sup>11</sup> "Haitian Cities: Actions for Today with an Eye on Tomorrow" (Washington D.C.: The World Bank Group, January 1, 2018), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/709121516634280180/Haitian-cities-actions-for-today-with-an-eye-on-tomorrow>.

<sup>12</sup> For a deeper sense of the causes of migration in Haiti, see: Uli Locher, "Rural-Urban Migration and the Alleged Demise of the Extended Family- The Haitian Case in Comparative Perspective," Working Paper (Montréal: McGill University, August 1977); Uli Locher, "The Fate of Migrants in Urban Haiti: A Survey of Three Port-Au-Prince Neighbourhoods" (Yale University, 1978); Michel Laguerre, "Migration and Urbanization in Haiti.," *Sociologus Zeitschrift Fur Empirische Soziologie Sozialpsychologische Und Ethnologische Forschung A Journal for Empirical Sociology Social Psychology and Ethnic Research* 37 (1987): 118–139; Josh DeWind and David Kinley, *Aiding Migration : The Impact of International Development Assistance on Haiti* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); Raymond Baril, "'To Find Life': Migration and Subsistence Strategies in the Haitian Peasantry," *LABOUR Capital and Society/TRAVAIL Capital et Societe* 24, no. 1 (1991): 40–65; James Ferguson, *Migration in the Caribbean : Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Beyond* (London: Minority Rights Group International, 2003); Matthew Casey, *Empire's Guestworkers: Haitian Migrants in Cuba during the Age of US Occupation* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge, MA, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

the laying of concrete—were not merely symptoms of a changing rural world. Nor was Port-au-Prince an inactive backdrop upon which more engaged social, economic, and political dynamics unfolded. The landscape built up during the regime was both a reflection of the period’s politics and a constitutive part of them.

By focusing on urbanization, I am also connecting the Haitian experience to a wider process of immense global transformation. Around the world, populations are shifting from rural to urban areas. The United Nations estimates that in 2016, 54.5% of the planet’s total population lived in cities; it calculates that this will rise to 60% by 2030.<sup>13</sup> Urbanization in Haiti has followed a pattern similar to its Latin American neighbors, with the most significant difference being that its acceleration began slightly later. The themes explored in the pages that follow—such as migration, elite hostility, slum clearance, politicized infrastructure, environmental degradation, and corruption—are by no means exclusive to Haiti. But the details of their articulation in that country remain relatively unknown, largely because scholarship on the country is limited by what Michel-Rolph Trouillot calls “the myth of Haitian exceptionalism,” a snarl of associations framing the country as bizarre, exotic, or tragic.<sup>14</sup> Urban history bypasses these problematic themes by building a Haitian case study that can easily be put into comparative conversation with cities in Latin America and around the world.

---

<sup>13</sup> UN Habitat, “The World’s Cities in 2016” (United Nations, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “The Odd and the Ordinary: Haiti, the Caribbean, and the World,” *Cimarrón: New Perspectives on the Caribbean* 2, no. 3 (1990): 3–12.

This choice of time frame also contributes to our understanding of the Duvalier regime, one of the more brutal and long-lasting examples of 20<sup>th</sup>-century dictatorship. Scholarship on the period is thin. Like Haiti itself, the Duvalier dictatorship is most widely known in caricature. Most narratives present racialized and sensationalized accounts that characterize its politics as extreme public violence perpetrated by a black nationalist government against a passive and ignorant population.<sup>15</sup> Others tend “to reduce Duvalierism to an epiphenomenon” whose devastating excesses stemmed from character flaws of father and son.<sup>16</sup> By using something as ordinary as construction as an entry point into the period, I offer more nuanced account that situates the regime and its capital within complex overlapping frames that connect the built environment to national and international contexts.

This is not to minimize the regime’s violence, oppression, and brutality. As I show in Chapter 2, violence against vulnerable people was constitutive part of the city’s history of urban planning. Moving beyond personal explanations of authoritarianism, “The City and the State” uses construction practices as a means of investigating how the state functioned through a diffuse network of actors associated with it on local, national,

---

<sup>15</sup> For examples of this narrative, see Robert I. Rotberg, *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971); Elizabeth Abbott, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and Their Legacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991); Robert Debs Heinl, Nancy Gordon Heinl, and Michael Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1995* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996); Amy E. Potter, “Voodoo, Zombies and Mermaids: U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Haiti,” *The Geographical Review* 99, no. 2 (2009): 208–30.

<sup>16</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 192.

and international levels. The personalities that come into focus are not those of the Duvalier family, but rather city residents and mid-level Haitian and non-Haitian affiliates who interacted with the city as administrators, politicians, planners, architects, investors, and diplomats. By studying their contributions to Port-au-Prince's material formation, my research illuminates the larger state apparatus and international networks through which the Duvaliers governed Haiti.

In crafting this new approach, I draw on two critical works: Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *State Against Nation: The Origin and Legacy of Duvalierism* (1990) and Simon Fass's *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival* (1988).<sup>17</sup> Both accounts analyze the formation and operation of Duvalierist strategies of extraction—what I call in this dissertation its “infrastructures of corruption.” Trouillot explores this theme through a sweeping historical narrative, positioning Duvalierism as the outcome of economic and political processes set in motion by the French colonial slave state and perpetuated and modified by successive generations of Haitian and foreign commercial and political interests. Fass's deeply-researched on-the-ground study of the economic life of an ordinary Port-au-Prince neighborhood provides a more synchronic approach, revealing

---

<sup>17</sup> Some other key works that have influenced my thinking include: Alex Dupuy, *Haiti in the World Economy: Class, Race, and Underdevelopment since 1700* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Robert Fatton, *The Roots of Haitian Despotism* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007); Leslie Péan, *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*, vol. 4, 4 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 2007).

the consequences of these infrastructures of corruption on the daily survival of the city's most vulnerable inhabitants. From these different vantage points, both Fass and Trouillot illuminate the political and economic dynamics structuring the 1957-1986 period. This project builds an intersection between them by bringing a sweeping historical approach to an analysis of the intensely local.

To contextualize urban politics in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "The City and the State" begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I show how the country's postcolonial rulers sought to negotiate a post-slavery system that maintained profitable colonial labor structures. United in a rejection of racial prejudice, this latter group imagined a system of hierarchy founded on an urban-rural divide rather than on race. This underlying structural framework remained intact in the 20<sup>th</sup> century even as migrants left rural areas to establish themselves in cities. The growing class of urban poor were perceived by elites and municipal officials as displaced peasants. Unmoored from entrenched frameworks of cultural legibility, they became renewed targets of violence and derision, including in urban planning decisions. This is evident in the common refrains that rural-to-urban migration has "ruralized" Port-au-Prince or that urbanization has wrenched migrants and their descendants from critical cultural and social networks. In both scenarios, the presence of the poor in urban spaces is taken as an indication of social

failure rather than constructive choice.<sup>18</sup> The subsequent chapters trace the perpetuation and modification of this underlying framework across shifting historical contexts.

The foundation of my historical research is my personal knowledge of Port-au-Prince, a city I lived in for a total of fifteen months while working on this project, both before and after the 2010 earthquake. I have spent countless hours in its streets, talking with residents about their lives and their relationship to the city.<sup>19</sup> I have also interviewed Haitian politicians and urban planners directly implicated in some of the stories that follow. Thanks to the generous support of a Fulbright-Hays fellowship, I studied extensively in its libraries, archives, and private collections. The sites featured in “The City and the State” are all places I have visited. Some I know well.

To supplement this on-the-ground experience, I traveled widely to archives in France, Canada, and across the United States. An appendix of repositories consulted for this project is available at the back of this text. I draw together a multitude of historical sources, including diplomatic correspondence, historic newspapers, oral history interviews, legal codes, development reports from international agencies, along with visual sources such as maps and photographs. This expansive approach allows me to

---

<sup>18</sup> For comments on the “ruralization” of Port-au-Prince, see for example: Sabine Malebranche, “Consolidation et Revitalization des Centres Historiques: Le Cas du Centre Historique de Port-au-Prince” (GIM, Montréal, 2000); Gérard Barthélémy, “L’extension des lotissements sauvages à usage populaire en milieu urbain ou Paysans, Villes, et Bidonvilles en Haiti: Aperçus et réflexions,” June 1996.

<sup>19</sup> I conducted over one hundred oral history interviews with earthquake survivors in 2010, an initiative I call the Haiti Memory Project. Conversations with people whose lives were dramatically altered by transformations of the built environment seeded the questions this dissertation attempts to answer.

triangulate a new narrative of the period that tacks between different perspectives and viewpoints to produce both new research and fresh perspectives on more familiar events.

“The City and the State” uncovers never-before-told stories, including the origins of Cité Soleil, the Cold War history of Port-au-Prince’s airport, and the centrality of multilateral development institutions to the collapse of the regime. Previously unknown actors become visible, such as the butchers of Port-au-Prince and the farmers of the Cul de Sac plain, ordinary people who fought in self-defense against spatial politics that threatened their livelihoods. Even figures directly implicated in the regime’s political processes, such as cabinet ministers Pierre Petit and Guy Bauduy, have never before featured in historical accounts of the period. I also expose willing foreign participants who took advantage of the regime’s predatory policies, including the founder of the Dallas Cowboys, millionaire Clint Murchison Jr., and the French construction conglomerate Frères Lambert. Cumulatively, these stories illuminate the web of local and international connections undergirding Port-au-Prince.

The first chapter, “Judging Their Locality”: The Haitian City and Legal Landscapes of Power,” serves as a prologue, examining the laws and legal codes that governed spatial-social relationships to reveal overlapping geographies of power in 19<sup>th</sup> century. I show how rurality replaced blackness as the fundamental category of exclusion and cities became the legal category of privilege. Although these laws did not give rise to the

world envisioned by their authors, they generated forms of administrative ambiguity, legal inequality, and uneven citizenship had an enduring impact on political and social realities.

The second chapter, "Wart on the Face of the Capital": Slum Clearance, Displacement, and Political Consolidation" draws from Haitian and American newspapers, government publications, and foreign travel literature to analyze a series of slum clearance projects overseen by the Duvalier administration during its first three years. Playing on elite anxieties about rural-to-urban migration (developed in Chapter 1), Duvalier used bulldozers to break apart politically radical communities that, loyal to a formidable political opponent, had the potential to challenge the new regime. It examines how the regime weaponized urban planning as a strategy in the consolidation of power across two themes: the displacement of residents of La Saline and their relocation to Cité Simone (later known as Cité Soleil), and the construction of a American-owned slaughterhouse that put local butchers out of work.

The third chapter, "'Men jet-la!': Port-au-Prince International Airport as a Cold War Crossroads" takes a familiar story about the Duvalier regime and Port-au-Prince's history and turns it on its head. Several widely-read accounts of the period say that the United States paid for the construction of Haiti's international airport in exchange for the country's vote to exclude Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1962. My research shows that this never came to pass, and on the contrary, the regime

built the airport without outside support, relying on Haitian resources and talent. The regime used autonomy as a fulcrum to turn the airport into a fundamental symbol of Duvalierist nationalism, even embossing its image onto stamps and coins. This chapter also provides a window onto the contradictory dynamics that produced a messy and inconsistent American policy towards Duvalier, circumstances emblematic of U.S. foreign policy more generally. Afraid of rising communist influence in the Caribbean, some U.S. officials were willing to work with the violent authoritarian regime, while embassy officials in Port-au-Prince urged breaking ties or even supporting a coup. I draw primarily from U.S diplomatic correspondence, oral histories, newspapers, maps, and photographs to uncover the history of the airport's construction across local and international politics, revealing the airport as a critical international nexus of the Caribbean Cold War.

The fourth chapter, "And We Will Be Devoured: Urbanization and the Consumption of Resources" analyzes the environmental consequences of a construction boom that began in 1971, following the death of François Duvalier and the passing of power to his son, Jean-Claude. Although anxious elites tend to blame rural-to-urban migration for the city's growing environmental vulnerabilities, I use demographic and urban planning data produced by the United Nations and Haitian planning agencies alongside Haitian newspapers to show that it was the construction of elite enclaves and not low-income communities that increased the city's risk for flooding and depleted its

water supply.

The final chapter, “The Price of Power: The City and Infrastructures of Corruption” builds on what Leslie Péan calls Haiti’s “political economy of corruption” by examining the role played by urbanization and construction in the structure of Duvalierist extraction.<sup>20</sup> The building boom described in Chapter 4 turned cement into one of the country’s most important—and presumably profitable—commodities. Under Jean-Claude, Haiti began to shed the brutal isolationism established by François Duvalier. But this transition made it more vulnerable to international demands for reform. In the late 1970s, ascendant multilateral financial institutions leveraged the dictatorship’s growing dependency on international aid to demand an end to graft, prompting regime officials to invent a new infrastructure of corruption that began with the nationalization of the cement industry. My analysis, based primarily of French diplomatic correspondence, Haitian newspapers, and economic reports produced by international development agencies, exposes how urbanization fed into the dictatorship’s efforts to maintain and adapt its state forms across shifting international and domestic circumstances.

“The City and the State” concludes with a brief overview of how the political implications of urbanization came to a head after the collapse of the Duvalier

---

<sup>20</sup> Péan, *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*.

dictatorship in 1986. I situate the 1990 election and subsequent ousting of populist leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide within the broader context of Port-au-Prince's dramatic material transformation.

For references purposes, a map of city is available for consultation in Appendix B. Designed by Canadian architect David Smith, it marks the main sites described in this dissertation, and indicates the expansion of the urban fabric between 1965 and 1987.

Readers might be surprised by the relative absence of discussion of the 2010 earthquake in the pages that follow. This is intentional. I was walking through the rubble of the city when I first began to ask the questions that this dissertation attempts to answer. How do transformations to the built environment, either sudden or gradual, shape the kinds of lives possible for its inhabitants? But in the subsequent eight years, I have seen the tremendous suffering of the victims used to attract audiences to narratives of all kinds. I have also seen the earthquake treated as a starting point in critical conversations about urban issues, an approach that elides a complex and important history. Through my research, I learned that there had been decades of prior conversations concerning increasingly hazardous urban life; the earthquake was a particularly dramatic chapter in a much longer story. In this dissertation, I have opted not to use the physical and structural violence of the disaster and its aftermath to call attention to the implications of my research findings. Nonetheless, the seeds of this project were planted in my mind through countless conversations with survivors who

reckoned with the profound implications of a changed urban space. I hope this research will deepen on-going dialogues about the city's future by expanding our understanding of its past.

# 1. “Judging Their Locality”: The Haitian City and Legal Landscapes of Power

In the early 19th century, Port-au-Prince was a walled city. Initially, the French erected fortifications at the capital’s two main gates and pointed cannons to the north and south. Additional armaments sat on a sandbank among the shoals, facing the sea. Nonetheless, the French lost the city to the British in 1794, a casualty of the wars that would be later known as the Haitian Revolution. The British protected their prize by encircling it with ramparts and a moat. They expanded the city’s defenses, building a fortress on a nearby hill overlooking the town and bay, Fort National (see Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> These protections could not prevent the city from falling to Toussaint Louverture’s forces in 1798. Six years later, the armies of the formerly enslaved defeated the colonial powers and declared independence, naming Port-au-Prince the capital of newly-independent Haiti. The country’s first leaders maintained the parapets, fearful their former oppressors planned to invade again. But after independence, the walls surrounding the city symbolized a new conflict: the urban-rural divide.

In this chapter, I explore the formation of a postcolonial geography of power in which cities and rural areas were the basis of a new social hierarchy—one that would inform the relationship between the city and the state during the Duvalier regime. I argue that Haitian elites, hoping to rebuild the territory’s colonial wealth premised on

---

<sup>1</sup> Georges Corvington, *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*, vol. 1 (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007), 354–55.

unfree labor, devised a new framework in which rurality replaced blackness as the fundamental category of oppression. Conversely, cities were synonymous with privilege. A centralized framework was established through a series of laws and legal codes organizing administrative space. This vision for the country, roundly rejected by the majority of the formerly enslaved and their descendants, never became dominant. And yet, its continued existence in the world of law provided a foundation for new forms of oppression in different historical contexts that profoundly shaped political and social realities.



Figure 2: 1800 map showing the city's defenses and Ft. National.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Plan de la ville du Port Republicain*, 1800, 1800, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, GE C-9246, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53098570j>.

Efforts to limit the movements of rural populations, bind them to the land, and exclude them from cities were undermined by urban population's dependency on rural food production. Historian Henock Trouillot describes a standard market day in 19th-century Port-au-Prince: "At four in the morning, one could see along the road a great number of peasants who waited for the doors of [the gate] Saint-Joseph to enter the city." Those who could afford to use horses or mules to transport produce to market, and "one could sometimes count nearly three hundred animals, which gives an idea of the number of peasants who...entered the city to fill its four markets with their crops."<sup>3</sup> These economic interrelationships required mobility that belied official efforts to establish firm boundaries between urban and rural areas.

But the scene depicted by Trouillot contains evidence of the impact of these efforts, however incomplete they may have been. The market-sellers transporting goods waited patiently outside city walls, their access mediated by authorities from within. They arrived on set market days and would be expected at some point to leave. They were welcomed in the city not on their own terms but to the degree that they served the needs of its inhabitants.

---

<sup>3</sup> Henock Trouillot, "Le Code Rural de Boyer et la Paysannerie Haitienne," *Conjonction*, no. 96-97 (1965): 74-75.

After illuminating the social divisions that produced and were reinforced by an urban-rural divide, I show how this landscape was further complicated by another overlapping geography of power, political and economic centralization of the American Occupation (1915-1934). These layered forms of centralization would set the stage for Haiti's patterns of urbanization and centralization in the second-half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were integral to the formation of the Duvalier regime.

The foundation for both uneven geographies of power discussed in this chapter is administrative territory. Haitian national space is structured through overlapping units of territory with different meanings and hierarchies of authority. Its territorial organization is modeled after the French system, another legacy of colonialism. Today, the nation is subdivided into nine departments, which are further broken down into arrondissements. Arrondissements are composed of communes, small local states with independent governments. The largest administrative fault line of social tension appears within communes, which are divided into two different kinds of spaces. The vast majority of each commune is divided into circumscriptions called communal sections. Before 1987, these units were called rural sections. The rest of the territory, a very small part of it, is set aside as the commune's *ville*, a term that means city but refers to the site's status as a local capital, or *chef-lieu* (See Figure 3).

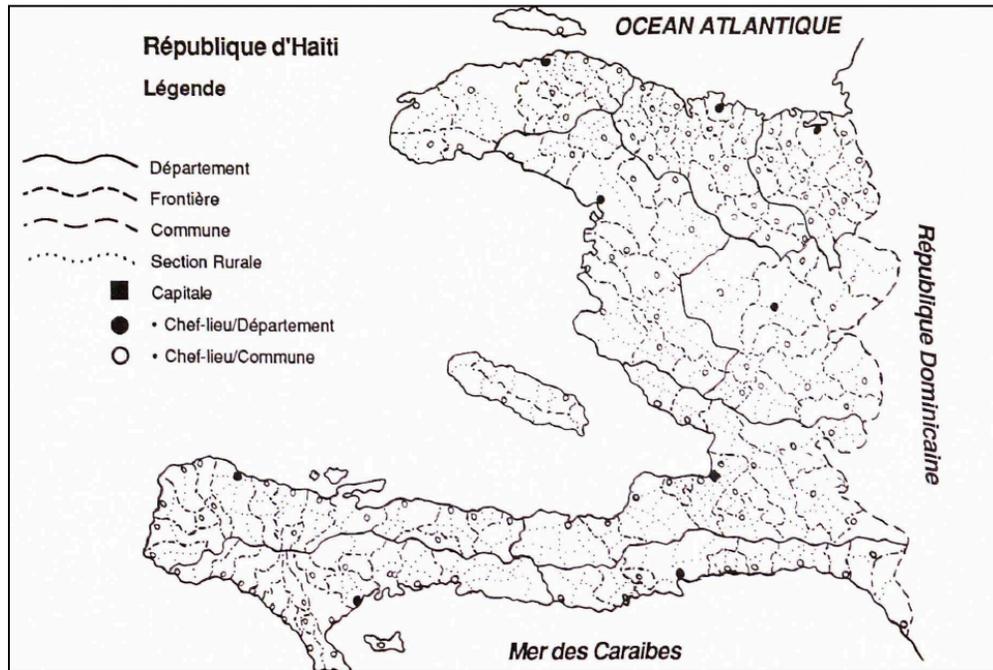


Figure 3: Map showing administrative boundaries from department to rural section<sup>4</sup>

This relatively straightforward hierarchy of space contains within it the roots of profound friction. Historically, typologies of rural and urban space within the commune have been mobilized to shore up or perpetuate forms of social inequity. Today, one of the most troubling artifacts of this history is the relative paucity and incoherence of laws governing or defining urban spaces. For most of Haiti's history, cities functioned primarily as nodes of tax extraction in the economic networks through which produce was brought to domestic markets and agricultural commodities such as coffee were exported internationally. These spaces lacked laws because, as elite-dominated areas,

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, *Section Rurale ou Section Communale: subdivision géographique typiquement haitienne.*

they were not considered in need of governance or control. This was felt acutely in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake: efforts to rebuild have been slowed down by uncertainty about what authority is actually responsible to implementing urban planning in the capital. Writing in 2015, urbanist Gary Lherisson warned, "Nowhere is the notion of the city or urban space defined ... the Haitian city, if it exists in fact, has no existence in law."<sup>5</sup> This was not such a problem in the city's early history, when Port-au-Prince had a population of just a few thousand people inside the city walls. But 20<sup>th</sup> century urbanization pushed the city's material fabric outward into the surrounding territory. First it stretched into the nearby rural sections, then into adjacent communes. The capacity of Haiti's limited administrative framework for governing cities became overwhelmed by the urban transformation.

### ***The Rural Codes***

Rural sections, on the other hand, have been extensively defined and regulated over Haitian history. Successive governments promulgated *Rural Codes* that both invented the unit of the rural section and elaborate legal codes to govern life within them. The first code was published in 1827. It laid out a repressive police state that would oversee a system of militarized agriculture. The colonial plantation system, which had generated so much wealth for the French, had been systematically dismantled

---

<sup>5</sup> Gary Lherisson, "Principes, Reglements et Outils Operationnels de la Legislation Haitienne sur le Developpement Urbain" (Ministère de la Planification & de la Coopération Externe, August 5, 2015), 15.

during the Haitian Revolution. Sugar cane fields burned; machinery was dismantled and destroyed. Much of the planter classes' knowledge in how to manage a slave-based sugar economy left with colonial refugees.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, postcolonial elites believed that reviving the plantation economy was essential to the survival of the new nation.

In 1825, Haitian President Jean-Pierre Boyer agreed under duress to pay an indemnity to former colonists for property lost during the war, which included the bodies of the formerly enslaved. In exchange, France agreed to recognize Haiti's independence. The total indemnity was equivalent to roughly \$3 billion in today's currency and paying it off would require intensifying Haiti's agricultural production.<sup>7</sup> In the world's first proudly black independent country, it was untenable to rebuild the economic system based on the racist hierarchies that had underpinned colonial slavery. Instead, elites proposed a new hierarchy based on space. The following year, Boyer promulgated the *Rural Code*, which consisted of six laws divided into 202 individual articles.<sup>8</sup> It created rural sections as the underlying geographic framework organizing the new system. Article 130 stated that the president would oversee the subdivision of

---

<sup>6</sup> Ada Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Dubois, *Haiti*, 7; Kate Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (Chicago and London: University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 69.

<sup>8</sup> Boyer's legal commission did not create the 1826 *Rural Code* from scratch. It drew from many precedents, including: the *Code Noir* of 1685; rural police laws promulgated by the revolutionary Civil Commission of Polvérel et Sonthonax during the Haitian Revolution; Toussaint Louverture's 1800 *Réglement Relatif à la Culture*; and Christophe's 1812 *Code Henry*. Like the other Codes implemented under Boyer (including the *Code Civil* and the *Code Pénal*), the *Rural Code* was also heavily influenced by the Napoleonic Code in France.

each commune into sections: “Each section shall be named, and its limits and boundaries fixed.”<sup>9</sup> There is no parallel provision, in the *Code* or elsewhere in Haiti’s legal corpus, determining the space of cities or *villes*. Each rural section was placed under the authority of military officers charged with enforcement. The *Code* laid out an elaborate police state mandated highly regulated agricultural labor and suppressed *vagabondage*.<sup>10</sup>

The first article of the *Code* declared Haiti's commitment to agriculture as “the principle source of prosperity in a State” that should be “protected and encouraged by Civil and Military authorities.”<sup>11</sup> After excluding state-licensed professionals, artisans, soldiers, and government officials—who were presumed to be based in or connected to institutions based in cities—it specified that “those who cannot justify their means of existence shall cultivate the soil.”<sup>12</sup> The third article obliged the latter to enter into notarized “mutual engagement” with the owner of a plantation “upon which they must exercise their industry.”<sup>13</sup> It banned rural inhabitants from constructing homes away from plantations. They were not at liberty to leave their plantation to travel within the

---

<sup>9</sup> *Code Rural d’Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: L’Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1826), 65.

<sup>10</sup> For more on how these anti-vagrancy laws were used in other post-slavery societies, see: Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Pennsylvania: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985); Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); David Oshinsky, *Worse Than Slavery: Parchman Farm and Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1996), *From Slavery to Vagrancy in Brazil: Crime and Social Control in the Third World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992)

<sup>11</sup> *Code Rural d’Haïti*, 1–2.

<sup>12</sup> *Code Rural d’Haïti*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Code Rural d’Haïti*, 23.

commune for more than eight days. The *Code* prohibited leaving the commune on weekdays without written permission from an employer. These laws reinterpreted the exploitative labor relationships of slavery for the postcolonial context of independent Haiti. Instead of drawing on racist typologies to construct social hierarchies, the *Code* reinvented a similar hierarchy based on citizens' relationships to the land.

Cities and towns, although ambiguously defined, were specifically exempted from its strictures. When cities and towns first appear in the *Code*, they are defined as places rural inhabitants cannot access freely. The first mention of this distinction is in Article 4 of the 1826 *Rural Code*:

Citizens whose employment is agriculture shall not be permitted to quit the country to inhabit the *villes* and *bourgs* without a permission from the Justice of Peace of the commune they want to leave and of the commune where they want to establish themselves.<sup>14</sup>

The *Code* refers to *villes*, implying that one space of exemption was the administrative capital of each commune. But it also refers to *bourgs*, or "towns," indicating that settlements that were not necessarily the capital of the commune could also be spaces of exemption. The *Code* also defines exemption by the type of employment its authors associated with urban spaces, including civil servants, artisans, and licensed professionals. Writing in 1980, legal scholar Louis Thomas attributes to

---

<sup>14</sup> *Code Rural d'Haïti*, 3.

these spaces of exception a particular physiognomy, "agglomerations of a certain size with housing units similar to those generally found in the *chef-lieu* cities proper."<sup>15</sup>

Not only were inhabitants of the *villes* and *bourgs* not subject to the *Code's* limitations, they were also granted privileges over the inhabitants of rural sections. The *Code* reserved most forms of commerce for residents of cities, declaring that, "no wholesale or retail shop shall be established, no traffic in the production of the soil shall be carried on in the countryside under any pretense whatsoever" (except to sell sugar to or cotton to processing plants). It authorized retail only to "licensed hawkers dwelling in city and towns."<sup>16</sup> While urban dwellers could enter rural sections to engage in trade—albeit with a permit—inhabitants of rural sections were not permitted to freely enter the cities. The restrictions were also inheritable across generations. Article 5 stated that any rural inhabitant who wished to have their child educated in a town needed to secure papers from a justice of the peace.

The *Rural Code* established the personal liberty of the peasant as secondary to the prosperity of the state. Lawyer and legal scholar Saint-Amano wrestled with this in his 1890 commentary. Grappling with the *Code's* repressive stance towards the peasant, he defended the intentions of its authors, insisting that the greater good was at stake:

The principal preoccupation of the legislatures seems to have been to above all protect agriculture, agriculture work, and order, even at the detriment of certain principles of

---

<sup>15</sup> Louis Thomas, *Les Communes de la République d'Haïti à l'épreuve des mutations du XXe siècle* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Imprimerie M. Rodriguez, 1986), 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Code Rural d'Haïti*, 5.

individual liberty... Should we blame our legislators for letting themselves be dominated by this preoccupation? Obviously not. In a country like ours, where the public fortune rests on fruits of the soil, protecting agriculture is protecting the fortunes of all."<sup>17</sup>

Yet the *Code* also established an elaborate system of sharecropping by which the laborer only received a small portion of the profits generated from the plantations. The prosperity of the state was synonymous with the prosperity of landowners. When the *Code* asserted that "agriculture is the principal source of prosperity for the State," it was also declaring that the State was made up of those who profited from agriculture.

Governance in rural sections was left in the hands of the military.<sup>18</sup> Low-level officers were selected by the president to serve as Officer of the Rural Police for each section. Main duties included the repression of *vagabondage*, maintenance of order on plantations, and the organization of upkeep on public and private roads. The officer reported to the Commandant of the Commune, who answered to the Commandant of the Arrondissement. The *Code* charged both higher-ranking officers with making regular visits to all the sections within their circumscription with the purpose of inspection and

---

<sup>17</sup> J. Saint-Amano, *Le Code Rural d'Haiti Publié avec Commentaire et Formulaires, notes et Annexes à l'Usage des Fonctionnaires, Officiers et Agents de la Police Rural*, 5th ed. (Port-au-Prince: Département de l'Agriculture, 1890), 109.

<sup>18</sup> The *Code* authorized positions of civil authority for the rural sections as well, but these officials were subordinate to the military. Theoretically, each section was to be assigned an Agricultural Council composed of local notables selected by the Commandant of the Commune with input from the Commune's Council of Notables and Justice of the Peace. The historical record is quiet on whether Councils of Agriculture materialized. Sections also fell under the authority of the municipal officials of the Commune, which in 1826 were Councils of Notables. But this Council, selected by the President, exercised very little decision-making authority and was primarily charged with assessing property and collecting taxes for the State.

enforcement. The Commandant of the Arrondissement answered directly to the president of the republic.

Rural police officers also served as primary mediators in local conflicts. Residents could appear before a justice of the peace only if the local officer could not arbitrate.<sup>19</sup> This police force functioned as rural residents' primary access point to the institutions of the state. Each officer was supported in these duties by three guards. Considering the political instability that roiled the civilian administration during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, historian Laurent Dubois has suggested that military control of rural areas might have provided residents with a degree of stability:

While control of the national government in Port-au-Prince constantly shifted as the result of civil war, the local political structures in most of Haiti's regions remained largely unchanged. The military commanders of each district ran the local governments and managed much of the administration of people's daily lives... although the district commanders were sometimes replaced when a new government came to power in Port-au-Prince, many stayed in their positions for years, even decades, providing a certain continuity despite the frequent changes in leadership on the national level.<sup>20</sup>

Despite imaginative efforts on the part of its creators to replace race with space as the fundamental category of oppression, the *Code's* similarity to colonial slavery was apparent. Its rules were difficult to enforce, and relied on the cooperation of military officers—many of whom in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century would have once been enslaved and perhaps unlikely to sympathize with forced labor laws. One source tells of the military

---

<sup>19</sup> *Code Rural d'Haïti*, 44.

<sup>20</sup> Dubois, *Haiti*, 169.

officer in charge of the Arrondissement of Cayes, General Jérôme-Maximilien Borgella, who refused to implement the *Code* in his circumscription because it was too harsh.<sup>21</sup> The story of General Borgella also suggests that for some, the freedom offered by the Haitian Revolution was not just freedom from racial oppression, but increased personal liberty more broadly conceived.

Authorities who consented to implementing the *Code* almost immediately confronted ambiguities and impracticalities. For example, some elites technically lived in rural sections but had no intention of engaging in agricultural work alongside peasants. Records indicate that in 1828, one of the *Code's* chief authors, Joesph Inginac, worked with a local judge in Cayes on how to redefine exempt spaces to include areas such as *faubourgs* (neighborhoods) and *banlieues* (suburbs).<sup>22</sup> The argument was that since some elite residents of rural sections paid the same taxes as city-dwellers, they should not be considered as residing outside the city. "Mitigating this difference between cities and the countryside clearly established by the *Rural Code*," observes historian Henock Trouillot, "required great effort if one did not want to clearly contradict the code. The local judge granted this revision in decisions, not

---

<sup>21</sup> Kesner Millien, "Les circonstances et les Enjeux du Code Rural de Jean-Pierre Boyer," *Le Nouvelliste*, November 8, 2011, <http://lenouvelliste.com/article/95619/les-circonstances-et-les-enjeux-du-code-rural-de-jean-pierre-boyer>.

<sup>22</sup> Trouillot, "Le Code Rural de Boyer et la Paysannerie Haitienne," 68. This is the same arrondissement in the same era of Borgella's reported refusal to implement the *Code*. Additional local research on the history of land and law in Les Cayes is necessary to resolve this contradiction.

spontaneously, but under orders from the head of state."<sup>23</sup> Shortly after its promulgation, the Code's authors were urging local judges to amend the letter of the law to better establish the spirit of its meaning.

Such moments of slippage reveal how the spatial order represented in the *Code* was intended to buttress an existing social hierarchy. Another example from a few years later indicates that this ambiguity was not easily resolved. In 1832, a judge wrote a letter to "Commissaires of the Republic" (possibly the Commandants of Arrondissements) clarifying that the *Code's* spatial divisions should be considered flexible, and that local authorities should "take into account that the inhabitants of the *bourgs* et *bourgades* depend on the *chef-lieus* of the Commune where the public functionaries reside."<sup>24</sup> Residents of these areas, the judge wrote, should be allowed "without distinction of industry, to continue to enjoy, as in the past, the free exercise of their profession, subject to taxes." Evidently, although the *Code* technically included exemptions for non-agricultural professions (including civil servants, soldiers, artisans, licensed professionals, domestic servants, and lumberjacks), this conflict indicates that the geographic distinction between urban and rural took priority, and labor status required legal clarification.

---

<sup>23</sup> Trouillot, 68.

<sup>24</sup> Trouillot, 68.

Historical records suggest that authorities were more flexible towards elites than non-elites. For example, in 1834, a woman named Miliette Jean sought a license to peddle merchandise in the countryside but was denied a permit on the grounds that, as a resident of a rural section, she lacked the right to engage in retail.<sup>25</sup> The intention of the *Code* was to use administrative space to reinforce the social hierarchies and economic structures of colonialism.

The *Code* failed twice over: not only did the creation of a geography of uneven rights befuddle residents and legal authorities, it also failed to resurrect the plantation system. Michel-Rolph Trouillot—Henock's nephew—argues that the *Code* was "little more than a sign of the leaders' deep-seated despair at their inability to make the cultivators return to the plantations."<sup>26</sup> The formerly enslaved refused to participate in a system based on the violent appropriation of their labor for the profit of others. Rather than participate in a system so unfair, they opted to take control of the means of production by starting their own small-scale, independent farms in the country's mountainous interior where it was difficult for the state to reach them.

In rejecting the plantation model, the new Haitian peasantry produced what Jean Casimir describes as the "counter-plantation."<sup>27</sup> This concept, further explored by Gérard Barthélémy and Laurent Dubois, refers to social-economic spatial formations that

---

<sup>25</sup> Trouillot, 63.

<sup>26</sup> Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 60.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Casimir, *La Culture Opprimée* (Delmas, Haïti: Lakay, 2004).

promoted equality and autonomy through family farms centered around *lakou*.<sup>28</sup> The *lakou* refers to the structure of houses positioned around a shared courtyard common in rural Haiti, but in a broader sense it refers to a social model that prioritizes egalitarianism and personal freedom. This alternative model flourished in spite of—and in opposition to—the *Rural Code*. Hannibal Price, a political and plantation owner attested to the futility of control:

I know how many cultivators lived [on my plantation] twenty, fifteen, and ten years ago. I have seen their numbers shrink every day, and my income decline each year. Where are they...? On new properties they have founded for themselves and their families. Could I have stopped them?<sup>29</sup>

Even if the *Code* failed to implement the world envisioned by its original authors, its continued authority reinforced the geography of uneven rights. Those who lived under its authority lived in servitude; those who chose to live outside its authority lived in legal precarity. The *Code*, reflecting existing socioeconomic hierarchies and inscribing them in new ways, became widely reviled as the ultimate symbol of state oppression. Writing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, historian Louis-Joseph Janvier blamed the *Code* for provoking destabilizing conflict: “The mass that the *Rural Code* relegated out of the cities was on average twenty pure blacks against a mulatto. Was the black peasant able to love who oppressed him, who drove him out of the town, who imprisoned him in the

---

<sup>28</sup> Gérard Barthélémy, *Le Pays en Dehors: Essai sur l'Univers Rural Haïtien* (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 1989); Dubois, *Haiti*, 108.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 74.

country, as in a penal colony...?”<sup>30</sup> This indicates that although the *Code* failed at the creating the world envisioned by its original authors, its legal inequalities framed people’s lives in other ways. Janvier argues that resentment towards the *Code* and the discrimination and anti-democratic principles it represented ultimately fueled a peasant-led rebellion against Boyer in 1843.

### ***Rural Codes as a Framework for New Oppression***

Though the 1826 *Code* was repealed with Boyer’s overthrow and followed by a brief window of progressive leadership, it was resurrected by successive governments who enacted new *Rural Codes* in 1846, 1858, 1862, and 1864—the last of which remained in place for nearly one hundred years. Advocates argued that the 1864 edition mitigated the excesses of its predecessors, but it retained the rural-urban divide.<sup>31</sup> It upheld harsh restrictions on movement and elaborated on the repression of individuals who did not participate in plantation agriculture.

The 1864 *Code* is perhaps most important for introducing the figure of the *chef de section*, an official whose status would become synonymous with unchecked authority and abuse of power in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>32</sup> The *chef de section* essentially replaced the position of the officer of the rural police of the 1826 *Code*. The new edition

---

<sup>30</sup> Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d’Haïti (1801-1885)* (Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1886), 152.

<sup>31</sup> Saint-Amano, *Le Code Rural d’Haïti Publié avec Commentaire et Formulaires, notes et Annexes à l’Usage des Fonctionnaires, Officiers et Agents de la Police Rural*.

<sup>32</sup> For example, see the figure of the police in: Marie Vieux-Chauvet, *Love, Anger, Madness: A Haitian Triptych*, trans. Rose-Myriam Rejouis and Val Vinokur (New York: Modern Library, 2010).

included greater incentives for *chefs de sections* to report infractions among the population. According to the 1826 *Code*, anyone who reported a violation received one half of the resulting fine. But in the later version, only the *chef de section* or his adjuncts benefited financially from reported infractions; remuneration was considered part of his salary.

In an 1890 commentary on the 1864 *Code*, the lawyer Saint-Amano indicated the law had generated friction between the population and the *chefs de section*: "It is feared that this compensation excites inordinately the zeal of the agents and gives way to abuse ... Maybe it would be preferable to pass the entirety of the fines to the public coffers and raise the salaries of the agents. But then that would risk, instead of excessive zeal, half-heartedness or even inaction."<sup>33</sup> By linking officer income to the number of violations reported, the *Code* established conditions for a predatory relationship between the *chef de section* and the population under his authority. As the chief representative of government authority in rural sections, for many Haitians, the *chef de section* served as the only access point to the state or its institutions of justice. Writing more than a century later, in the 1980s, Louis Thomas observed that "the bulk of the rural population considers the 'Chef de section' to be the incarnation of the final accessible authority."<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Saint-Amano, *Le Code Rural d'Haiti Publié avec Commentaire et Formulaires, notes et Annexes à l'Usage des Fonctionnaires, Officiers et Agents de la Police Rural*, 63.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, *Section Rurale ou Section Communale: subdivision géographique typiquement haitienne*, 60.

Although the *Code's* laws may have been irrelevant for the day-to-day life of the average Haitian peasant farmer, its continued legality provided a framework for new forms of oppression in different historical contexts. Its association with slave labor became a divisive issue during the American Occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) when the U.S. Marines adapted its organizational structure to fit their imperial project. The occupiers appropriated the system of Rural Police by bringing this corps in December 1922 under the control of the Gendarmerie d'Haiti, a force created by the Americans to help reign in regional opposition.<sup>35</sup>

In 1916, the Occupation also began a road building project that would better centralize national control in Port-au-Prince. To find labor for the project, the U.S. Marines invoked sections of the 1864 *Rural Code*. Article 53 stated that, "Highways, public and private roads are placed under the supervision of the authorities and agents of the rural police"; the next article elaborated, "Public highways and communications will be maintained and repaired by the inhabitants, in rotation, in each section through which these roads pass and each time repairs and necessary." Three decades before, Saint-Amano had argued that these provisions were "nothing but a *corvée*," an illegitimate way to exploit unpaid and unfree labor.<sup>36</sup> He argued that it was "only

---

<sup>35</sup> Ernest Bernardin, *L'espace Rural Haitien: Bilan de 40 ans d'exécution des Programmes Nationaux et Internationaux de Développement (1950-1990)* (Delmas, Haïti: Editions des Antilles S.A., 1990), 258.

<sup>36</sup> Saint-Amano, *Le Code Rural d'Haiti Publié avec Commentaire et Formulaires, notes et Annexes à l'Usage des Fonctionnaires, Officiers et Agents de la Police Rural*, 24.

preserved provisionally in anticipation of a special law on the matter.” But no “special law” was ever promulgated to annul these articles, and in July 1916, they served as a legal foundation for forcing thousands of Haitians from rural sections to work on road construction without pay.

U.S. Marine Major Smedley Butler oversaw this revival of the *Code*. Butler was the Marine in charge of the newly composed Haitian Gendarmerie that had taken over the policing of rural sections. Writing to a colleague in 1917 about the road from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien, he confided: “It is not well to describe in a letter the methods used by us to build this road, but it might be interesting to you to know when this highway is finished, it will have cost the Haitian government only about \$500 a mile.” He went on: “Nearly 900 men work on this road ... We have 15,000 at work in the whole Haiti.”<sup>37</sup> Needless to say, the Marine’s use of the *corvée* was wildly unpopular among the general population, and it contributed to a revolt against the Occupation in Haiti’s North known as the *Caco* Revolt.<sup>38</sup> *Corvée* labor was officially discontinued on October 1,

---

<sup>37</sup> Smedley Butler to John Avery McIlhenny, December 31, 1917, Personal Papers Collection, Smedley Bulter Papers, Series 1.2, Box 9 Folder 34, U.S. Marine Corps Research Center Archives.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the American Occupation, see: Marvin Chochotte, “The History of Peasants, Tonton Makouts, and the Rise and Fall of the Duvalier Dictatorship in Haiti” (University of Michigan, 2017); Dubois, *Haiti*; Raphael Dalleo, “‘The Independence So Hardly Won Has Been Maintained’: C.L.R. James and the U.S. Occupation of Haiti,” *Cultural Critique* 87 (April 2014); Patricia J. Lopez, “Clumsy Beginnings: From ‘Modernizing Mission’ to Humanitarianism in the US Occupation of Haiti (1915–34),” *Environment and Planning A* 47, no. 11 (November 1, 2015): 2240–56; Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

1918, but reportedly continued for several months longer in some regions that were under the authority of unscrupulous officers.<sup>39</sup>

The *Rural Code* would again provide the foundational basis for new form of oppression under François Duvalier. He absorbed the position of *chef de section* into an apparatus of oppression, appointing to the position individuals whose primary qualification was unwavering loyalty to him; in return they received unchecked power over the people in their circumscription.<sup>40</sup> While previous leaders may have also shaped local politics in their image, Duvalier took this practice to new and frightening extremes.<sup>41</sup> As a result, these local authorities became synonymous with political abuses. There are few studies of the *chef de section* from this period, and there is much work to be done on situating this figure into its historical, political, social, and cultural contexts.<sup>42</sup>

In 1962, Duvalier would replace the century-old *Rural Code* with his own. The *Rural Code of François Duvalier*—which remains in force today—reinscribed the position

---

<sup>39</sup> United States Congress Senate Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, *Inquiry Into Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo: Hearing[s] Before a Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, United States Senate, Sixty-Seventh Congress, First and Second Sessions, Pursuant to S. Res. 112 Authorizing a Special Committee to Inquire Into the Occupation and Administration of the Territories of the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1922), 497–98.

<sup>40</sup> Chochotte, “The History of Peasants, Tonton Makouts, and the Rise and Fall of the Duvalier Dictatorship in Haiti.”

<sup>41</sup> Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 166–73.

<sup>42</sup> Discussion of the *chef de section* in the Duvalier era is limited to a few key articles and passages: Jean L. Comhaire, “The Haitian ‘Chef de Section,’” *American Anthropologist* 57, no. 3 (1955): 620–624; Prina Lahav, “The Chef de Section: Structure and Functions of Haiti’s Basic Administrative Institution,” in *Working Papers in Haitian Society and Culture*, ed. Sidney W Mintz (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 51–83; Georges Anglade, *Atlas Critique d’Haïti* (Montréal: Groupe d’études et de recherches critiques d’espace. Département de géographie, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1982), 131.

of *chef de section* but eliminated some of the most discriminatory legislation of its predecessor, such as the *corvée* and prohibitions on vagabondage. It reflected a more realistic vision of rural economic life: Rather than use laws shore up large plantations, the 1962 *Code* regulated interactions between small farmers, merchants, and speculators. It mandated the immunization of livestock and placed environmental protections on sensitive areas to reduce erosion.

The 1962 *Code* illuminates what David Nicholls has called the most “significant result” of Duvalier’s ideological project: “the sense which was given to the mass of the peasants that they were really citizens and that what they did was important.”<sup>43</sup> Its first article recognized the rural section, rather than the commune, as the nation’s fundamental territorial unit. It repealed provisions limiting the mobility of rural inhabitants. However, while removing certain forms of stigma, it simultaneously introduced new ones. Article 18 raised “peasant” a special civil status that applied to those living in rural sections, that would be marked on birth certificates and civil documents. The regime might have portrayed this as a form of protection, but it would come to symbolize a loathed form of discrimination that further degraded the rural population.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, 237.

<sup>44</sup> See the Conclusion of “The City and the State.”

An example taken from the period of the military junta that took over following the collapse of the regime illustrates the political volatility of rural sections and those who claimed authority over them. A 1988 conflict in Haiti's North Department erupted between the *chef de section* of Trou d'Enfer in the Commune of Borgne and the villagers from an area called Danti in the adjacent Commune of Gros Morne. Authorities in Borgne had been trying to absorb the village into their circumscription to take advantage of the area's agricultural potential, but "the peasants of Danti, judging their locality much closer to Gros-Morne than to Borgne, had always refused to bend to the diktat of the *chef de section* of Trou d'Enfer, despite the vandalism, notably arson, ordered by the latter."<sup>45</sup> Violence erupted, and three peasants and the *chef de section* ended up dead. In reprisal, military forces stormed the area armed with machine guns and tear gas, arrested peasants, and set fire to their homes.<sup>46</sup> The 1987 Jean Rabel Massacre was also carried out by local *chefs de section*, who on the orders of local landowners, murdered at least 139 people to break up a peasants' right group.<sup>47</sup>

The basis for the *corvée* and the unchecked power of *chef de section* are both rooted in the *Rural Codes* that placed inhabitants of rural areas in a state of limited citizenship. Inhabitants of *villes* and cities, exempt from the *Rural Code*, were not directly implicated

---

<sup>45</sup> Bernardin, *L'espace Rural Haitien*, 253.

<sup>46</sup> Americas Watch, National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, and Caribbean Rights, *The More Things Change: Human Rights in Haiti* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1989), 33.

<sup>47</sup> Bernardin, *L'espace Rural Haitien*, 245.

in the *corvée* and would not have been directly subjected to a *chef de section*. But this political geography of uneven rights buttressed other pre-existing social dynamics. The hierarchies of slavery and freedom sublimated into the organization of rural and urban spaces.

### ***Communes and the Centralization of Power***

The highly uneven spatial relationships inscribed in the *Rural Codes* interacted with another overlapping geography of power organizing national space: political and economic centralization. In this section, I outline a brief history of the struggles for control between the central government, based in Port-au-Prince, and the municipal governments based in communes. In the process, I offer alternative an historical geography to the one put forth by Georges Anglade in *Atlas Critique d’Haïti* (1982). His account of three successive stages of historical geography—beginning with the colonial *morecellement*, transitioning into a 19<sup>th</sup> century regionalization, and unfolding into 20<sup>th</sup> century centralization—depends largely on an interpretation of the organization and direction of market flows and exchanges. But a different pattern emerges when we center political, rather than economic, relations.

After independence, the plantation system faltered, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, space was divided into fifty-nine communes, forming eleven unique provinces with regional urban economic centers: Aquin, Cap-Haïtien, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Jérémie, Miragoâne St. Marc, Petit-Goâve, Port-de-Paix and Port-au-Prince. Each region was

organized between port cities and their surrounding hinterlands, which were linked by market networks.<sup>48</sup> This organization reflects what Anglade has called the “regionalization period” of Haitian history. Each port city had a distinct oligarchy and peasantry, and specialized in different kinds of agricultural commodities. The oligarchies competed for control over state institutions, fueling a century of civil wars. Of these port cities, Port-au-Prince was the largest and controlled the most trade. In 1890, the population of Port-au-Prince was estimated to be 98,000, of which 60,000 lived in the *ville* itself (although it is unclear which form of the city these figures correlate to). Another 60,000 lived in the surrounding twenty-eight rural sections that together made up the commune. Cap-Haïtien, the next largest commune, had an urban population of 20,000 in 1890; an additional 15,000 people lived in the commune’s two rural sections. It is worth noting that during the colonial period, the population of Cap-Haïtien had been more than twice that of Port-au-Prince. Port-au-Prince was now the largest city in the country, but its port brought in less than one-third of the country’s total receipts. As Anglade shows, the remaining two-thirds was spread across the remaining ten major ports, with the greatest activity concentrated in Cap-Haïtien, Jacmel, and Cayes.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Thomas, *Les Communes de la République d’Haïti à l’épreuve des mutations du XXe siècle*, 274; Anglade, *Atlas Critique d’Haïti*, 131.

<sup>49</sup> Sémexan Rouzier, *Dictionnaire Géographique et Administratif d’Haïti*, vol. 3, 4 vols. (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Aug A. Heraux, 1927).

The shape of local governance was also an arena where regional struggles for power took place. In 1817, the first President of Haiti, Alexandre Pétion, established Councils of Notables to govern each territory.<sup>50</sup> The Councils were appointed by the president and had little autonomous decision-making power. Their main responsibilities were assessing land value and collecting taxes on behalf of the state. When the country was reunified under Boyer in 1820, he extended the system of Communes across the former kingdom. When Boyer led the Haitian annexation of Spanish Haiti, the newly independent republic on the territory of the former the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo, in 1821 – which later became the Dominican Republic—he used this system to integrate the new territory into the nation.<sup>51</sup>

When a democratic island-wide uprising overthrew Boyer in 1843, the provisional government that succeeded him promptly abolished the Council of Notables and established in their place Municipal Committees whose members would be chosen by popular vote.<sup>52</sup> Reconfiguring the territorial dimension of power was an important strategy for undoing the highly centralized authoritarian state Boyer had constructed. Municipal Committees consisted of a mayor, adjuncts, and municipal councilors whose numbers varied according to the size and importance of the commune. To preserve the integrity and independence of civilian administration, the 1843 Law on Communes

---

<sup>50</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1947), 38.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas, *Les Communes de la République d'Haïti à l'épreuve des mutations du XXe siècle*, 274.

<sup>52</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 41.

prohibited active soldiers from serving on the Municipal Committees. In creating local committees possessed of “civil and financial attributions,” the 1843 revolution endowed these local territories with the capacity for self-government.

The law also conferred on communes a category of property distinct from the public domain. After 1843, municipalities were authorized to collect income through revenue earned on communal lands, including wharfage and anchorage taxes, fees imposed on vendors in municipal markets and slaughterhouses, fees to use the cemetery, fines collected by the police, and other sources. These new properties came with a wide range of new responsibilities, including setting up free primary schools; paving and maintaining roads and street lighting; monitoring construction; usage permits for markets, slaughterhouses, and cemeteries; establishing weight and measurement standards; and building and maintaining ports and wharfs. All revenue generated from these spaces belonged to the commune. Each year, the mayor of the commune was to draft a budget that would be voted on by the other members of the Municipal Committee. If a commune lacked the resources needed to fulfill its local functions, the law authorized an infusion of funds from the central government, in the form of either a loan or contribution.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> “Décret du 9 mai 1843, du Gouvernement provisoire, sur l’installalion des municipalités.” (1843).

It soon became apparent, however, that few communes had the capacity to meet their new obligations entirely through locally generated funds. The law's emphasis on wharf, anchorage, and portage taxes as a source of income gave coastal communes with robust ports a distinct advantage over communes in the interior of the country. As we have seen, the country's formal economic activity was concentrated in eleven port cities, each of which was the *chef-lieu* of its commune. But the country's spatial organization meant that there were dozens of communes without major ports, or even major urban areas. Communes that could not support themselves failed to maintain the public spaces and services required of them by law and became increasingly dependent financial infusions from the central government.

Administrative territory continued to serve as a microcosm for debates about democracy and authoritarian control in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. President Lysius Salomon entrenched central control over municipalities in 1881 by promulgating a law that substantially overhauled the terms of local governance, undoing the work of the 1843 laws. This transformation had an enduring impact on how power was organized across the territory. The law did away with local elections and made local officials as appointees of the President. It also granted the president the authority to dissolve or

suspend Communal Councils. With a few small amendments, this law governed the relationship between local and central authority for 50 years.<sup>54</sup>

Administrative struggles over political power were secondary to military struggles. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century civil wars contributed to a destabilized central government with limited reach, and one could question the impact of the laws it produced structuring the relationship between the central government and the country's regional power structures. Each successive government saw their tenure as an opportunity to maximize profit before being inevitably unseated. In his study of Haitian constitutions, Claude Moïse argues that 19<sup>th</sup>-century legal texts were not the "result of a national consensus" or even "agreement among ruling classes."<sup>55</sup> They were approached as tools designed to advance the extractive capacity of state institutions and extend the power of the executive. The easiest way for a faction to gain spoils was to take over the national government for themselves. This produced a pattern in which no single president in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could dominate the country for very long: "regional armies served as a counterweight to the ambitions of central power, thus providing a mechanism to contain Haiti's rulers." The state's centralizing tendency in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also its biggest weakness.

---

<sup>54</sup> Thomas, *Les Communes de la République d'Haiti à l'épreuve des mutations du XXe siècle*, 11–12.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Dubois, *Haiti*, 168.

## ***The State in the City***

This would change following the American Occupation (1915-1934). We saw previously how the U.S. Marines activated the *Rural Code* to force residents of rural sections to labor without pay on road-building projects. Occupation leaders would also activate and remake the laws regarding power relationships between the central government and municipalities to better assert control over Haiti. A large part of their strategy was ending the financial and political autonomy of the commune.

The impact of these bureaucratic reforms was compounded by the establishment of a centralized professional military. Restructuring the Haitian armed forces made rebellion against authorities in Port-au-Prince more difficult. For the first time, it was possible for the powers in Port-au-Prince to crush regional opposition. Anglade writes of the Occupation, "The political objective of the spatiality in formation is to limit clashes for power to only the (controllable) factions of the capital, incubating the 'republic of Port-au-Prince.' The battlefield would give way to back room intrigue."<sup>56</sup> The national government would not again be ousted by regional military forces until 2004.

In 1922, the Occupation restructured Haitian finances, ostensibly to streamline public revenue and make its collection more efficient. It negotiated a new \$40 million loan to pay existing debts, which were owed to American-owned National City Bank

---

<sup>56</sup> Georges Anglade, *Espace et Liberté en Haiti* (Montréal: Groupe d'Études et de Recherches Critiques d'Espace, département de géographie, UQÀM, Centre de recherches Caraïbes de l'Université de Montréal, 1982), 129.

(now Citibank) in New York. Moreover, the terms of the loan granted the U.S. government decision-making power in over Haitian finances for as long as it took to pay back the loan.<sup>57</sup> As part of the restructuring process, individual municipal budgets were replaced with a single national budget. A new law in December 1926 stripped communes of all property not deemed essential to their function; all leases controlled by the commune were transferred to the central government. Municipal councils were granted usage rights over properties that the 1843 law had made them owners of.

While municipalities were no longer financially responsible for the upkeep of these sites, they also were deprived of the right to earn income from them. The Occupation stripped communes of the right to determine how income could be spent, assigning these responsibilities to the Ministry of the Interior and the *Banque Nationale de la Republique d'Haiti* (BNRH). While in principle this meant that wealth could be more evenly distributed across the country, the reforms also stipulated that no commune would receive a budget higher than the income it generated. Rich communes such as Port-au-Prince would continue to benefit disproportionately, while poor communes remained poor. Moreover, under U.S. stewardship, surplus revenue was diverted to repaying U.S.-backed loans. Not only were debts prioritized over local development, but the Americans consistently required debt repayments “far in excess of contractual

---

<sup>57</sup> Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, 133.

requirements and building up large cash reserves in anticipation of lean years."<sup>58</sup> If Port-au-Prince or any other commune generated revenue higher than the budget given to them by the central government, the excess would be used to pay off foreign creditors rather than reinvested in any of the municipalities. When the 1929 stock market crash ushered in one lean year after another, Haiti's obligation to prioritize loan payments made it the only Latin American country not to default on its debt.<sup>59</sup>

Infrastructure development in Port-au-Prince occurred at the expense of other municipalities. With financial restructuring, surplus revenue generated by local governments was now absorbed into the national budget, and some of this money was redirected into building up Port-au-Prince as an instrument of the Occupation. "For their own needs," wrote French anthropologist Roland Desvagues in 1954, "the occupiers set up the port, erected an aero-naval base, then an airfield; they developed an electrical plant, installed the telephone; they ensured better viability in the city, undertaking the construction of roads and bridges to insure connections to neighboring provinces."<sup>60</sup> They also appropriated large swaths of land in the interior of the country for agricultural investment projects and road building, in the process displacing rural families, many of whom would make their way to Port-au-Prince.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Schmidt, 165.

<sup>59</sup> Schmidt, 167.

<sup>60</sup> Roland Devagues, "Une Capitale Antillaise: Port-Au-Prince (Haïti)," *Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer* 7 (1954): 11.

<sup>61</sup> Valerie Kaussen, *Migrant Revolutions: Haitian Literature, Globalization, and U.S. Imperialism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 34.

In addition to restructuring public finance so that the national government controlled regional revenue and expenditure, Port-au-Prince enjoyed a preferential customs tariff during the Occupation. This made it disadvantageous to conduct import-export business out of any other port city. These bureaucratic and infrastructural changes also led to migration and social change. To maintain access to privilege, elites began to leave regional strongholds to establish themselves in Port-au-Prince. "The great families of the provinces," wrote Desvagues, "placed under the tutelage of the government ... quickly realized that to have a political career, obtain a government post or benefit from some customs privilege, it was necessary to move to Port-au-Prince."<sup>62</sup> There they had to compete with the established local elite, who already had a foothold in the increasingly important urban economy. This generated "a complete psychosis" regarding "what would come to be called 'the Republic of Port-au-Prince.'"<sup>63</sup> According to Anglade, the centralization of the state into Port-au-Prince represented a victory of the local Port-au-Prince elite over rival regional elites from the rest of the country.<sup>64</sup>

Near the end of the Occupation, in 1932-1933, Port-au-Prince generated nearly half of all of Haiti's customs receipts. More than two-thirds of all the country's imports landed on its docks; nearly one-fourth of all exports left from its shores.<sup>65</sup> Forty years

---

<sup>62</sup> Devagues, "Une Capitale Antillaise: Port-Au-Prince (Haïti)," 16.

<sup>63</sup> Devagues, 16.

<sup>64</sup> Anglade, *Atlas Critique d'Haïti*, 63.

<sup>65</sup> Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 74.

earlier, Port-au-Prince had only controlled one-third of the country's total trade. Exports increased, as did the ratio controlled by the capital city. "This centralization contributed to the homogenization of merchant and political groups in the capital, and to the reinforcement of their power," writes Trouillot.

American troops withdrew in 1934, but this did little reverse the erosion of municipalities or the centripetal dynamics that reorganized territorial dimensions of power. The Constitution of 1935, written under President Sténio Vincent (1930-1941), further expanded the power of the executive branch and placed the commune system firmly under its control. Additional legislation in 1937 made municipal councils answerable to the prefect of the arrondissement—a direct representative of the president—and turned local official positions into political appointments.<sup>66</sup>

Centralization increased as opportunities for political checks and balances declined. The growing importance of cities was reflected in new laws, including a 1937 urban planning law. But the ability of local authorities to enforce these laws was undercut by the expanding power of the executive branch.<sup>67</sup>

At the same time, the terms of the 1922 loan agreement continued to make Haiti vulnerable to U.S. influence over its domestic fiscal system. Vincent's successor, Lescot, renegotiated the terms of the loan, but representatives of the U.S. Department of State

---

<sup>66</sup> Louis Thomas, *Les Communes de la République d'Haïti à l'épreuve des mutations du XXe siècle* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Imprimerie M. Rodriguez, 1986), 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 100.

continued to insist that the government direct surplus municipal revenue towards loan repayment rather than local investment.

Port-au-Prince formed in the overlap between the geography of the urban-rural divide and the geography of political centralization. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was not self-evident that status as the administrative capital would confer Port-au-Prince a dominant position vis-a-vis the rest of the country. Although it has been the capital for most of Haiti's colonial and post-colonial history, this status had proven a liability for those who lived there.<sup>68</sup> For much of its history the city was a prize to be ransacked by regional factions competing for power. The quest to control the National Palace, warring elites in the 19<sup>th</sup> century destroyed the Port-au-Prince several times over.

After the American Occupation brought an end to the era of regional warfare, Port-au-Prince became the main arena of political life. As the seat of national government and the residence of the country's leaders, local issues were more actively managed by the Ministry of the Interior than those of other communes. The capital occupied a unique position as the center of power that was simultaneously disenfranchised by that central power. Yet that did not mean that the city itself was well cared for—although compared to other urban areas in Haiti, it might have seemed that

---

<sup>68</sup> Port-au-Prince was not always the capital of Haiti. In 1805, the capital was briefly moved to Dessalines (Marchand); it was relocated to Cap Haitian in 1845; and Pétionville was the capital of Haiti between 1859 and 1867.

way. The central government had taken on responsibility for managing municipal issues, but it was poorly organized for efficient management of these new obligations. Most of the Haitian elite and intellectual classes had relocated to Port-au-Prince by the end of the Occupation, and much of the writing on problematic urban management focused on the capital.

In the years following the Occupation, journalists lamented how ineffective and unresponsive local governance had become. In 1947, Ernest Chauvet, the Editor-in-Chief of *Le Nouvelliste*, ran regular editorials urging municipal officials to be proactive despite the limitations placed on their office. "There are municipal problems specific to each region, each locality," he reminded, "and at the regional and local level, they are as important as the national economic problem, the fiscal problem or the monetary problem."<sup>69</sup> Chauvet acknowledged that the capacities of local officials had been greatly diminished by the financial agreements made with the U.S., but nonetheless admonished them for being inattentive to their duties.

Responding to Chauvet's various accusations of laziness and ineptitude, the mayor of Port-au-Prince, Roland Duverneau, published a *Bulletin* in 1947 that recounted the progressive undermining of local authority by an increasingly voracious central government. "The Commune finds itself incapable of taking on the slightest act of civil

---

<sup>69</sup> "Le Rôle de la Commune," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 4, 1947.

life without seek the intervention of the State," the *Bulletin* complained. "The State becomes the only judge of the appropriateness of the execution of the smallest project thought up by the Communal Administration."<sup>70</sup> Not only had the formation of territorial administration limited municipal action, but Duverneau accused the government of interfering with the small amount of authority that remained: "The State may, for various reasons, become an obstruction hindering it from exercising its legitimate civil power."<sup>71</sup>

To prove his point and demonstrate his office's proactive efforts, Duverneau included in the *Bulletin* a series of letters from 1944 and 1945 that his predecessor, Edmond Mangonès, had written to the Ministry of the Interior. The letters warned that expanding central authority overlapped with local authorities, creating troubling holes in local jurisdiction around issues of public safety. Mangonès's letter argued that a 1937 Law on Urbanism—a building code promulgated by Lescot—was "incomplete."<sup>72</sup> The law authorized the municipal officials to mandate the repair or demolition of buildings deemed unsafe, and gave them the right to condemn buildings whose owners or occupants refused to comply. But although they could order the closure of buildings whose owners refused to comply, the law had failed to give officials any recourse when inhabitants or owners defied orders. "Although repeatedly mentioned," the central

---

<sup>70</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 100.

government had never addressed this oversight, "hence a certain reluctance on the part of the Communal Administration to enforce the sanction provided for by the law against the recalcitrant owner."<sup>73</sup> The layers of laws around city management contained contradictions that made them increasingly ungovernable. All administrative authority ultimately emanated from the Ministry of the Interior. By making all decision-making channels circle back to the executive branch, local officials were powerless to enforce laws and regulations ostensibly under their authority.

## **Conclusion**

Legal codes reinforcing the urban-rural divide served, says Anglade, "to prevent challenges to the dominant order from exceeding its boundaries; its fundamental function was to maintain the principal divisions of society."<sup>74</sup> In a country based on the rejection of racial prejudice, this uneven geography of power provided a means to reinscribe the colonial social division into the landscape based on a different set of logics. This spatial system overlaps with the geography of political centralization that made municipal governments hollow shells with little capacity for independent action or decision-making.

Port-au-Prince formed historically at the intersection between these two geographies. As the seat of the central government, the city has enjoyed special attention

---

<sup>73</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 100.

<sup>74</sup> Anglade, *Atlas Critique d'Haïti*, 142.

and privileges unavailable to other cities and regions. Its local politics became increasingly synonymous with national politics. But the tendency to treat Port-au-Prince as a metonym for the central government collapses important tensions between the locality and the institutions within it.

Walls and laws were not sufficient to limit and control the mobility of a population committed to independence and autonomy. Moreover, the country's food supply chain further undermined the separation between urban and rural areas, as farmers and market vendors moved through urban spaces. Describing the mobility inherent to this economic network Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes, "Through such daily or seasonal to-and-fro, repeated for generations, the peasants mounted the ramparts of the city."<sup>75</sup> The colonial ramparts surrounding Port-au-Prince came down at some point—except for Ft. National, their physical remnants have disappeared. But, as the next chapter indicates, poor people who moved from rural to urban areas did not escape discrimination even after they established themselves in urban areas. The racialized social hierarchies of the colonial era were perpetuated through spatial hierarchies in postcolonial Haiti. When dramatic urbanization reorganized the country again in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, these social prejudices were modified and maintained through new prejudice against the urban poor.

---

<sup>75</sup> Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 82.



## 2. "Wart on the Face of the Capital": Slum Clearance, Displacement, and Political Consolidation

In the early afternoon of August 7, 1972, a fire broke out in La Saline, a low-income neighborhood on the north end of downtown Port-au-Prince. The surrounding houses—shacks made from scraps of wood and reclaimed materials—burned quickly. Haitian firefighters called to the scene were quickly overwhelmed by the powerful conflagration, which spanned 60 yards. Members of Duvalier's militia, the *Volontiers de Sécurité Nationale* (VSN), commonly known as the Tonton Macoutes, emerged from the nearby prison of Fort Dimanche to help the beleaguered firefighters. Together they took axes to the flimsy houses that had not yet caught fire in an effort to contain the blaze. Residents rushed away on foot, carrying their most cherished possessions. A reporter for the Haitian daily *Le Matin* reported:

Hundreds of terrorized families fled, carrying mattresses, sewing machines, and other objects; an enormous, worried crowd gathered as much at La Saline as in Portail St. Joseph; a thick black smoke rising several dozen meters into the sky. Such was the gripping spectacle that took place Monday afternoon, the most devastating fire that Port-au-Prince had seen in several years.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Hier incendie devastateur à la Saline plusieurs dizaines de maisonnettes ont disparu dans les flammes," *Le Matin*, August 8, 1972.

The fire burned for nearly three hours, destroying some 750 homes and leaving as many as 8,000 people homeless.<sup>2</sup> Tourists on the cruise ship *Steward* snapped photos of the horrific spectacle from the nearby bay.<sup>3</sup>

The following day, the Haitian Minister of the Interior, Luckner Cambronne, announced at a press conference that the destroyed neighborhood would not be rebuilt—he claimed the slum, not the fire, was the true disaster. Surrounded by fellow macoute leaders, including Port-au-Prince mayor Rosalie "Madame Max" Adolphe and Victor Laroche, the head of the Haitian Red Cross, Cambronne declared that he was pleased with the fire's effects and that the area would be repurposed to expand the commercial district. "You are not unaware," he said, "that foreigners, while they are here, are drawn to La Saline to film this wart on the face of the capital and that these photos lead to bad publicity for Haiti ... This is a national issue because the shame and bad press fall on each of us."<sup>4</sup> Cambronne both produced and reflected what has become the dominant narrative of Port-au-Prince: the growth of low-income urban neighborhoods had degraded the capital and the poverty they represented was becoming synonymous with the country as a whole.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dorin, Bernard. "No. 653 / AM," August 10, 1972. 524/PO Box 87. CADN.

<sup>3</sup> "Hier incendie devastateur à la Saline plusieurs dizaines de maisonnettes ont disparu dans les flammes."

<sup>4</sup> "La Zone Sera Reconstituée--Le Président Donne 20,000 à La Croix Rouge." *Le Matin*, August 10, 1972.

Slum clearance through fire was a fact of life in Port-au-Prince under Duvalier. Low-income neighborhoods were cleared out through large-scale fires in 1968, 1972, 1975, and 1980. It happened so often survivors remembered the pattern, not the details, of their destitution. Diefé and Germaine Ofé were siblings who had moved to La Saline from Jacmel in the mid-1950s. In a 1989 interview, Diefé recalled a reoccurring process:

Someone comes and tells you that your house has to be destroyed. You think he's is joking and don't pay him any attention. And then, the next day, he arrives with a tractor and drives over your house, demolishing it. Sometimes they douse the whole neighborhood with gasoline and set it on fire. You can leave your house and return to find nothing. Sometimes, there are children in the house, cats, chickens, dogs, everything burns up.<sup>5</sup>

For Cambronne, the fires addressed the city's poverty by destroying some of its physical manifestations, but the Ofé siblings' account makes it clear that the destruction only compounded the precarity of their situation. Flames consumed the residents' shelters, their few possessions, and their investments. Germaine recalled how when the cries of "Fire!" rippled through the zone, people tried to save what they could of their belongings. But their vulnerability exposed them to other dangers as well. "To take the clothes, the beds, the mattresses, everything, you have to make several trips," she recounted. "But there are thieves waiting there to take advantage of the fire to steal your things." People who kept livestock for the nearby market, Croix-des-Bossales, lost

---

<sup>5</sup> Germaine Ofé, Jasmine Narcisse, and Dominique Raymond, *Germaine ou Chercher la Vie* (Haiti: United Nations Children's Fund, 1993), 77–78.

everything: "The pigs screamed loudly while they burned. There were...so many of them that people called the zone Trou-Cochon [Pig-hole]...All the merchants' chickens burned."<sup>6</sup> A fire like the one in 1972 would have been almost impossible to rebound from. The destitution could be lethal. "There were some who lost everything and died," Diefé recalled.<sup>7</sup>

There was little doubt in Diefé's mind that the regime was behind the fires. "It was Madame Max Adolphe who took care of these things," he said.<sup>8</sup> "There were people who went crazy on account of that woman." Under her direction, government agent "sold the land without worrying about the people who lived there. They crushed the poor, they burned them." The mayor of Port-au-Prince, Adolphe also served Duvalier as the head of the macoutes.

Even if the August 1972 fire had not been set by government agents, Cambronne's speech the following day performed much of the same work as state-sponsored arson. It communicated not only that the city's urban poor was expendable, but that the demolition of their homes advanced national interests. This attitude—while reflective of anti-slums policy common around the world at this time—also expressed a framework specific to Haiti's history and Duvalierist ideology. As described in Chapter 1, rurality replaced blackness as the fundamental category of oppression in postcolonial

---

<sup>6</sup> Ofé, Narcisse, and Raymond, 192.

<sup>7</sup> Ofé, Narcisse, and Raymond, 78.

<sup>8</sup> Ofé, Narcisse, and Raymond, 78.

Haiti. By entering and inhabiting urban spaces, urban migrants challenged this system and made evident its limitations. Their presence in urban spaces did not undo their marginality; rather, in the eyes of government officials and the city's more well-off inhabitants, their presence degraded the city.

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century geographies of power reflected in the *Rural Codes* fetishized the divide between privileged urban areas and disenfranchised rural areas. Unchecked migration of poor peasants to urban areas was technically proscribed by law. *Noirisme*, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century ideology of black nationalism and biological determinism espoused by François Duvalier and his cohort, similarly fetishized the rural-urban divide, and idealized the Haitian peasant attached to the soil. In both the *Rural Codes* and *noirisme*, poor people and their culture were categorically rural. Unlike his populist political opponent in the 1957 election, Daniel Fignolé, Duvalier and his allies portrayed migration to the cities as a sign of cultural decline. Slum clearance provided a method for Duvalier to demonstrate to his supporters that he was advancing his project of "national regeneration."

As I will show in this chapter, the *noiristes'* disdain for the urban poor was reinforced by white supremacist discourses of Haitian inferiority, which relied on the aesthetics of urban poverty to argue that the country was undeveloped and uncivilized. In both *noirisme* and anti-Haitian racism, there was no dignified place for the urban poor

in the city or in discourse. They represented aberrations to be condemned or hidden from view.

As the largest and most prominent low-income neighborhood, La Saline was a primary target for both visiting foreigners' critiques and officials' urban planning. Its inhabitants were approached as a conflict rather than a constituency. Combining a nationalist idealization of the peasantry with an authoritarian drive to destroy political opposition, Duvalier oversaw a series of slum-clearance measures that reflected both his public support for black nationalism and his more private support of American foreign investors willing participate in political corruption.

In this chapter, I situate slum clearance during the Duvalier regime within a longer history urban planning in Port-au-Prince. Then I examine Duvalierist urban planning across two significant examples. The first is the repeated destruction of La Saline and the transfer of its inhabitants to Cité Simone, a site that would be known after 1986 as Cité Soleil. The second is the replacement of La Saline's municipal abattoir with the Haitian American Meat and Provision Company (HAMPCO), a slaughterhouse privately owned by American investors. By examining Duvalierist politics through these stories, I reveal how the regime imprinted its politics onto the material space of the capital.

## ***The symbolic burden of Port-au-Prince***

Representations of Port-au-Prince have long operated as a vehicle for pronouncements on the project of black freedom and liberation. In his examination of Haitian literature, Michael Dash argues that “in the latter half of the nineteenth century...the stereotype of Haiti being a land of sorcery and cannibalism was firmly established” through accounts in the international press and foreigners’ travel writings.<sup>9</sup> In these texts, Port-au-Prince is described as a “Paris of the gutter,” uncleanness being used to buttress the argument that “the black man...is incapable of the art of government.”<sup>10</sup> Port-au-Prince was compared to European cities and found wanting, a judgment that was extended to the country as a whole. For example, in the 1900 book *Where Black Rules White*, the English traveler Veron Hesketh Prichard described the city as “a fester, a scar made by man.” He rejected the city's cultural sites as pathetic derivatives of European culture, emaciated by their proximity to blackness:

France has evacuated Port-au-Prince for a hundred years; do her cafés survive? In a degenerated form they do, for Haytian life is negro life grafted upon French life, and the black man possess among his faults or virtues a strong conservatism... We have, therefore, in the town of Port-au-Prince an imitation of Paris made a hundred years ago by men who had seen the original; and carried on revising during the last century by a negro race, who—the enormous majority of them, at least—have not.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> J. Michael Dash, *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915–1961* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981), 15.

<sup>10</sup> Spenser St. John, *Hayti or The Black Republic* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1889), xi, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Hesketh Vernon Prichard, *Where Black Rules White; a Journey across and about Hayti* (Westminster: A. Constable and Company, 1900), 21.

A similar traveler's account appeared in the *New York Times* that same year. The correspondent's central thesis, which he elaborated on at length, was that "the nastiness of Port-au-Prince is indescribably awful." The city's only redeeming quality, he wrote, as "a bona fide French restaurant kept by a live Frenchman."<sup>12</sup> So many of these accounts proliferated that a Jamaican visitor couched his own observations of the city with the plea: "I hope and ask that the condition of the streets of Port-au-Prince will not be attributed to the absence on the part of the general body of its inhabitants of their appreciation of what is safe, clean and healthy."<sup>13</sup>

European and American use of descriptions Port-au-Prince as a vehicle for pronouncements about black inferiority was so well established that anthropologist Melville Herskovits remarked in 1937, "Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic."<sup>14</sup> The anthropologist did not dispute that the capital "had little to recommend it" but took issue with the narrators' revealing lack of historical consciousness: "Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere...is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti." The French legacy in Port-au-Prince was not just the occasional

---

<sup>12</sup> "An Impression of Haiti: Port Au Prince Chiefly Remarkable for Its Dirtiness.," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1900.

<sup>13</sup> J. Montague Simpson, *Six Months in Port Au Prince (Haiti) and My Experience* (Philadelphia, PA: GS Ferguson Company, 1905), 46.

<sup>14</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2011), 36.

gourmet restaurant, he argued. The city's lack of infrastructure and development were an extension of the colonial condition imposed by the French when they controlled the territory. By ignoring the colonial roots of the city's condition, the writers of such accounts could overlook the role of Europeans had in creating the city in the first place.

Given this hostile and racist discursive context, it is no surprise that officials in Port-au-Prince approached urban planning with the foreign gaze in mind. The city took on even greater symbolic importance during the U.S. Occupation, when all provincial ports were closed to international traffic. While international visitors might have previously disembarked in Cap-Haïtien or Jacmel, in this period Port-au-Prince became the sole point of entry for foreigners. For many visitors, the city might be the only part of the country they experienced, further weighing its buildings and streets with the symbolic burden of representing an entire country or race. Efforts to control the use of urban spaces were consciously framed in terms of foreigners' expectations. In 1933, the Communal Commission complained to the chief of police that merchants were degrading one of the downtown plazas where weekly concerts were held: sidewalks meant for pedestrians were overtaken by "a crowd of merchants with a variety of stands lit with smoky oil lamps."<sup>15</sup> To make matters worse, the cries of ambulant vendors pushing ice cream carts and selling sweets "made a racket more characteristic of a quai

---

<sup>15</sup> *Bulletin de l'Administration Communale de Port-Au-Prince, Haiti* (Port-au-Prince: Compagnie Lithographique d'Haïti, 1933), 6.

than a public promenade." The officials argued that the police must take the matter seriously because the reputation of the country was at stake. "Foreigners, in particular, do not fail to draw comparisons with public parks in their countries which are not to the advantage of our community."

If merchants were a problem, even more so were those who did not seem to work. City officials wrote the police chief again in 1933 asking that his officers take a harder line on beggars because "the spectacle" of misery "discredits the Administration of the City of Port-au-Prince."<sup>16</sup> While some of the destitute were merely unfortunate, the city was particularly concerned about the "experts of idleness who deserted the surrounding countryside and the nearby cities where they originated." The former should be sent to welfare institutions, advised the officials, while the latter should be prosecuted with the full force of the law. No doubt this distinction was based in large part on the 1864 *Rural Code's* prohibition against peasants' unauthorized travel outside of the rural section of their residence. As examined in Chapter 1, these laws both reflected and reinforced urban prejudice against rural inhabitants and sought to maintain cities as elite spaces of wealth and privilege.

In this self-conscious context, the urban poor became an enemy that compromised the integrity of the nation. The U.S. Occupation compounded this

---

<sup>16</sup> *Bulletin de l'Administration Communale de Port-Au-Prince, Haiti*, 3.

problem. Not only did the centralization of the country into Port-au-Prince increase the city's symbolic burden, it also led to a net increase in the population, including that of its urban poor. While some migrants in the era were wealthy provincial elites, many were rural peasants displaced by the Occupation's military campaigns against the *Caco* rebels in the countryside or by the appropriation of land for agricultural investments.<sup>17</sup> These latter groups would have had difficulty finding shelter in a city that did not want them and had no housing for them, and would have ended up in make-shift houses in low-income neighborhoods. The newspaper *L'Essor* published an article in 1929 bemoaning the "sad parade of walking infirmities: open sores, broken arms held by filthy slings, twisted feet that hobbled and limped along on crutches." But the issue the paper wished to address were not the apparent lack of available health care for the population but the comfort of the foreign gaze: "What a blight these *malingreux* are upon a Port-au-Prince that we would like to make lovely and worthy of tourism. What a charming spectacle we offer to those who visit us!"<sup>18</sup> The term *malingreux* in this context was a neologism combining the French word for "sickly" with the Krèyol term for an open wound, turning "the oozing sore of disease into a metonymy for the urban populace itself."<sup>19</sup> These metaphors of physical and social disease coalesced around the geographic spaces where poor people lived, particularly the neighborhood north of the city, La Saline.

---

<sup>17</sup> Kaussen, *Migrant Revolutions*, 34.

<sup>18</sup> Georges Corvington, *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*, vol. 3 (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007), 593.

<sup>19</sup> Kaussen, *Migrant Revolutions*, 45.

## ***La Saline and Low-Income Neighborhoods***

One of officials' main concerns was the fact that the city's most prominent low-income neighborhoods were located along the waterfront in full view of the port where foreign tourists arrived.<sup>20</sup> It was hard to present visitors with a curated experience of Port-au-Prince's wealthier areas if the first place they saw upon arrival was La Saline and the bustling Croix-des-Bossales market. In her 1955 memoir called *Here is Haiti*, American visitor Ruth Wilson recalled La Saline as an "agonizing memory" that alarmed her so much that she brought up in a meeting with the Haitian president, Paul Magloire. "Ten thousand people were living in flimsy huts so close you could touch one from the other and there was no sanitation at all, not even a single privy," she wrote.<sup>21</sup> When another visitor, American author Herbert Gold, recalled approaching Port-au-Prince by sea in the early 1950s, La Saline was the only area that he identified by name:

The bay of Port-au-Prince was like a black mirror reflecting the heat. ... the entire city [was] spread out in a yellow-gray haze along the wide, wide bay--a low jumble of thick-walled colonial buildings and corrugated tin sheds nearby, and the smoking slum of La Saline, then the irregular slopes with spots of gardens, cloud-shrouded mountains rising in the distance above the town.<sup>22</sup>

The city's poorest families occupied the low-lying marshy lands by the port precisely because no one else had wanted to live there. La Saline, "the salt flats," had

---

<sup>20</sup> This problem was not unique to Port-au-Prince: in port cities around the world, marginalized populations inhabit marshy coastal areas that for environmental reasons were unattractive to residents with more resources and options.

<sup>21</sup> Ruth Wilson, *Here Is Haiti* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 192.

<sup>22</sup> Herbert Gold, *Haiti: Best Nightmare on Earth* (New Brunswick, NJ: Routledge, 2001), 5.

been a kind of no man's land in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. It was the site where, in 1806, Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines was assassinated by republican opposition leaders, near a small bridge called Pont Rouge. During the civil wars of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, it was a location where the government in Port-au-Prince executed its enemies out of the public eye.<sup>23</sup> Given its marshy terrain, it is also unlikely that the island's original inhabitants, the Taíno, would have lived there. Its first known inhabitants arrived in 1883, when President Lysius Salomon (1879-1888) opened state lands north of the city to rehouse people who had been displaced by a destructive fire, which started during an unsuccessful coup effort led by an army from Miragoâne. La Saline was one of Port-au-Prince's first extensions built beyond the colonial city designed by French colonists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The residents of La Saline had, over time, made the most of their marginality. Forced to live on a marshy shore, they drew their living from the sea. Many worked as fishermen or fishmongers. Others turned seawater into sea salt by digging dirt basins filled with pieces of wood that flooded with the tide; when the water receded, they harvested the salt crystals dried on the sticks at sold them at market.<sup>24</sup> French anthropologist Roland Devauges wrote in 1954, "The disorder [in La Saline] is more

---

<sup>23</sup> Sémexan Rouzier, *Dictionnaire Géographique et Administratif d'Haiti*, vol. 4 (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Aug A. Heraux, 1928), 91.

<sup>24</sup> W.H. Sebrell and Sam Smith, "Appraisal of Nutrition in Haiti," *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 7 (1959): 548.

apparent than real, because, alongside elements living no doubt more or less on the margins of society, there are small groups, poor but hardworking, of woodworkers, ironworkers, repairers of nets, merchants, etc."<sup>25</sup> Other occupations included laboring in factories of the nearby industrial zone, and working as bakers and butchers. Those Devagues describes as "more or less on the margins of society" might have been the thousands that cobbled together odd jobs in process of survival known as *cherche la vie*.<sup>26</sup>

Most of these varied activities centered around an enormous open-air market that sat at the foot of the wharf, known as Croix-des-Bossales, or Cross of the Africans (See Appendix B). Depending on the account, this refers either to the spot's function as a slave market or a slave cemetery in the colonial period. Given how completely death interlaced the slave trade, it may very well have been both. By 1892, Croix-des-Bossales was known as a "lively market on Fridays and Saturdays" that was regionally popular, frequented mainly by merchants from the nearby town of Archaie.<sup>27</sup> But when the American Occupation transformed Port-au-Prince into the main site of national and

---

<sup>25</sup> Devagues, "Une Capitale Antillaise: Port-Au-Prince (Haïti)," 35.

<sup>26</sup> Faye W. Grant and Dale Groom, "A Dietary Study in Haiti," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 34, no. 7 (1958): 710.

<sup>27</sup> Sémexan Rouzier, *Dictionnaire Géographique et Administratif d'Haïti*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Brevetée Charles Blot, 1892), 276.

international trade, the market began to transform from a regional trading ground to the economic center of the country (see Figure 4).<sup>28</sup>

A young observer named Sidney Mintz wrote about the market in 1959. He argued that although to an outsider the site seemed chaotic, "Croix-des-Bossales makes sense, can be understood, and is well worth understanding." It was the central nexus in a web of commercial relationships that spanned the entire country. He described trucks full of citrus driving from the north and rice brought from the country's agricultural heartland, the Artibonite Valley. Produce arrived from the mountains above Port-au-Prince, often carried in woven baskets on donkeys or atop women's heads. Much of the food supply was consumed by residents of the capital, but some was traded by vendors and transported back to the provinces to be sold. "To meet this flow of produce to Croix-des-Bossales come wholesalers, retailers, and customers," wrote Mintz. "Sellers and buyers clash together in a great wave, all day, every day but Sunday."<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> *Bulletin de L'Administration Communale de Port-Au-Prince, Haiti* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie "La Presse," 1932), 6–7.

<sup>29</sup> Sidney W Mintz, "The Place of the Internal Market System in the Haitian Economy," *Haiti Sun*, November 8, 1959.



Figure 4 Croix-des-Bossales vendors, 1930s<sup>30</sup>

As a node linking the entire country through its market flows, Croix-des-Bossales was one of the most important sites in the city, in 1946 generating an estimated 10% of the commune's entire income.<sup>31</sup> But the perceived lack of aesthetic appeal and proximity to the port alarmed officials concerned about curating an optimal experience for arriving visitors and perspective investors. Consequently, Croix-des-Bossales, like the neighborhood that encompassed it, would also be the target of multiple urban planning interventions.

---

<sup>30</sup> Philip Hansen Hiss, *Vendors Displaying Pots at an Open Market*, n.d., n.d., Digital Library of the Caribbean, <http://dloc.com/UF00028611/00003?search=haiti+%3dmarket>.

<sup>31</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 51, 61.

One of the market's most troubling sights was the municipal slaughterhouse (See Figure 5). Made of ornate prefabricated iron imported from France, its airy frame open to the sun was synonymous with cleanliness when it was erected in 1893. At the time, it represented a significant gesture towards public sanitation: by centralizing butchering in a single location outside the city's main residential area, officials in turn-of-the-century Port-au-Prince had implemented contemporary thinking about hygiene popularized throughout Europe.<sup>32</sup>

Waste drained from the abattoir into the sea via two large cement canals. But over the course of half a century, the slaughterhouse transformed from the model of hygiene to a public embarrassment. The drainage canals were inadequately irrigated and clogged with rotting entrails. In *Here is Haiti*, the abattoir served as the exclamation point following the American's alarmed description of La Saline: "Fetid tidal creeks reeked through the settlement. And the official slaughter house adjoined all this."<sup>33</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cleaning up or eliminating the waterfront became a central theme of urban planning in Port-au-Prince, specifically around the spaces of La Saline, Croix-des-Bossales, and the slaughterhouse.

---

<sup>32</sup> Paula Young Lee, ed., *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse* (Durham, N.H.: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008), 50.

<sup>33</sup> Wilson, *Here Is Haiti*, 192.

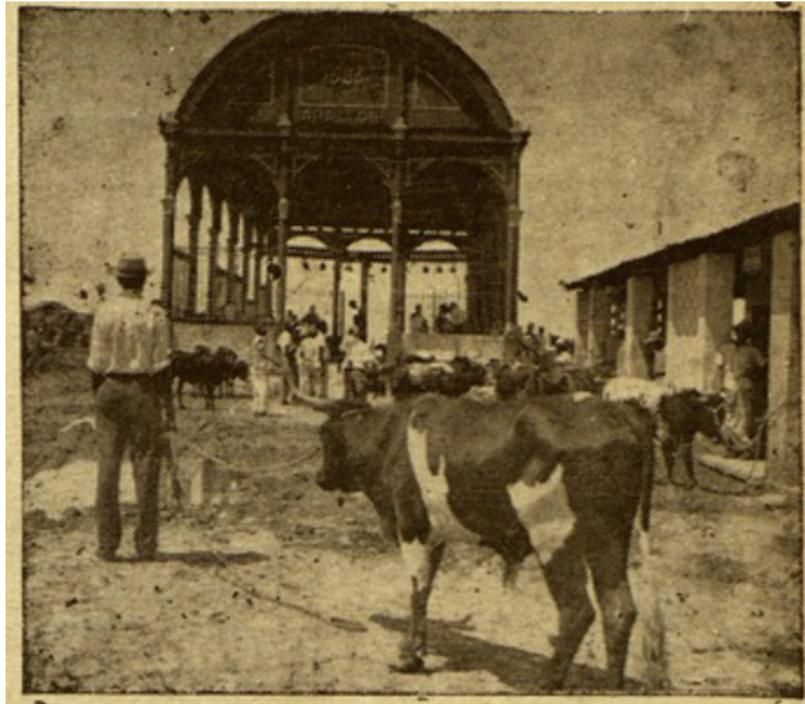


Figure 5: Photo of 19<sup>th</sup> century municipal abattoir<sup>34</sup>

### ***Early Slum Clearance and Urban Planning***

The Haitian government's first major effort at a housing project, in 1934, was aimed at reforming La Saline. President Stenio Vincent commissioned the project as U.S. Occupation forces were withdrawing. The small neighborhood of cement houses, called Cité Vincent, was inaugurated in La Saline on May 6, 1934. The complex included a school and a health center. Press coverage of the inauguration focused on its contribution to the appearance of the city and to public health.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> "\$500,000 Meat-Packing Plant," *Haiti Sun*, December 13, 1959.

<sup>35</sup> "La Saline Autrefois, La Saline Maintenant," *Le Nouvelliste*, May 7, 1934.

The next major urbanization effort was to create a more visually appealing landscape near the port by erecting the Bicentenaire quarter. In honor of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Port-au-Prince, President Dumarsais Estimé commissioned the construction of a chic waterfront development along a wide boulevard that included 57 pavilions, plazas, and parks, complete with an artificial lake and a reflecting pool.<sup>36</sup> In 1949, the government opened an International Exposition to attract tourism and improve international relationships through a celebration of Haitian culture and arts within a global context.<sup>37</sup> The physical transformation of the waterfront would be key to the project's success. One of its main audiences was "the foreigner who returns home [who] carries with him the painful memory of this dirty, muddy, place unfortunately situated within his view and his visit because of its proximity to the harbor."<sup>38</sup> Towards that end, a central low-income waterfront district, south of La Saline, was bulldozed in 1947 to make room for the Exposition.

While several hotels were built to lodge an anticipated wave of tourists, housing for the area's dislocated inhabitants did not come until later. Haitian newspapers covered the inadequacy of this approach. In 1948, after the demolition had occurred, *Le Nouvelliste* ran an editorial complaining that the government's housing policies were

---

<sup>36</sup> Augustin Mathurin, *Exposition Internationale*, 1975, 210.

<sup>37</sup> Millery Polyné, *From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan Americanism, 1870-1964* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2011), 117–25.

<sup>38</sup> *Bulletin de la Commune de Port-au-Prince*, 45.

insufficient to meet the needs of the people, either in quantity or quality.<sup>39</sup> The military rounded up unlucky beggars and transported them to La Gonâve, the island in the bay of Port-au-Prince.<sup>40</sup> Others were relocated to a field on the city's northeastern fringe, that would become the neighborhood of St. Martin.<sup>41</sup> Others, with nowhere else to go, moved to La Saline.

The Estimé government began planning additional public housing projects north of the city, but the president was overthrown by the military before the plans could be realized. Instead, these initiatives continued under the general who led the coup against him, President Paul Magloire. In 1951, Magloire founded a new government office for housing, the Office for the Administration of Workers' Cities (OACO).<sup>42</sup> Between 1951 and 1955, Magloire opened three housing projects, known as Cité Magloire Numbers 1 and 2, and Cité Militaire (See Appendix B for a map of Port-au-Prince). But rather than sheltering the people displaced by the construction of the Bicentenaire quarter, the new occupants were low-ranking public servants, teachers, and employees of the city's import-export houses. In the words of anthropologists Suzanne and Jean Comhaire Sylvain, the population of the housing projects increased as

---

<sup>39</sup> "Cités Ouvrières," *Le Nouvelliste*, April 14, 1948.

<sup>40</sup> Seldon Rodman, *Haiti: The Black Republic* (Old Greenwich, CT: Devin-Adair, 2000), 29; Love O. Leger to Georges Honorat, August 17, 1948, 993, Archives Nationales d'Haiti.

<sup>41</sup> Simon M Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 214–15.

<sup>42</sup> Auguste Maingrette, "Historique de la Cité Soleil," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 26, 1995.

"the least successful branches of prominent families" and "provincial aristocrats whose means are insufficient to meet the Port-au-Prince cost of living" moved in.<sup>43</sup> The ameliorated housing options became absorbed by wealthier and more well connected families, leaving the displaced people in a more precarious situation than they were before.

### ***The Election of 1957***

Urban planning interventions meant to curry favor with the middle classes were not enough to keep Magloire in power. In 1954, Hurricane Hazel ravaged the country's agricultural economy, killing between 400 and 1,000 people.<sup>44</sup> The administration's handling of the disaster relief effort exposed it to public accusations of callous corruption and contributed to Magloire's falling popularity.<sup>45</sup> His government fell amid a wave of protests and strikes in December 1956.

A bitter political struggle followed in the wake of Magloire's collapse, with four major candidates for the presidency locked in brutal competition. Louis Déjoie, a businessman with large agricultural investments, promised land reform and represented the interests of the commercial bourgeoisie. The only light-skinned man among the

---

<sup>43</sup> S Comhaire-Sylvain and J Comhaire-Sylvain, "Urban Stratification in Haiti," *Social and Economic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1959): 185–86.

<sup>44</sup> National Weather Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, "Hurricane Hazel, October 15, 1954," accessed February 20, 2018, <http://www.weather.gov/mhx/Oct151954EventReview>.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew J. Smith, *Red and Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change, 1934-1957* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 166.

primary candidates, he was widely perceived to represent the interests of the *milat* elites, although he counted both dark and lighter-skinned people among partisans. Clement Jumelle, an economist, served for many years as the Minister of Finance under Magloire and, in the eyes of the public, represented a continuation of the Magloire order. Daniel Figiolé was a professor, a passionate orator, and a labor organizer who had built a dedicated following among Port-au-Prince's working class. The final candidate was François Duvalier. A mild-mannered doctor, during the previous decades Duvalier had published writings that helped establish the post-Occupation *noiriste* movement.

*Noirisme* emerged out as a right-wing offshoot of *indignisme*, a cultural and intellectual revival led by the author and ethnologist Jean Price-Mars that aimed to recover Haiti's African cultural legacies and valorize its peasant traditions. Before and during the Occupation, Americans expanded on the rhetoric present in literature that portrayed Haiti as an uncivilized nation in need of white American leadership in order to mature.<sup>46</sup> *Indignisme* developed in part as a response to the racism of the Occupation. It argued that the country's troubles stemmed not from inadequacies of Haitian culture, but from its leaders' failure to account for the unique culture of the peasantry—particularly Vodou, their spiritual practices, and their close relationship with the land.

---

<sup>46</sup> See: Dash, *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915–1961*; Millery Polyné, *From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan Americanism, 1870–1964* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011); Renda, *Taking Haiti*; Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*.

Among the advocates of *indignisme* were Marxists such as Jacques Romain who saw color prejudice as a surface manifestation of deeper struggle between competing classes that just so happened, for historical reasons, to appear to be phenotypically grouped. Other proponents, such as François Duvalier, contended that racial difference between blacks and the lighter-skinned population was the foundation of social conflict. This is the fundamental premise of *noirisme*. Its proponents coalesced into an intellectual group that in 1938 founded a new journal, *Les Griots*. The publication's articles, many of which were written by Duvalier himself, drew on the ideas of European racist Arthur de Gobineau to develop a discourse of biological determinism that posited considerable differences between African and European peoples; this was used to extrapolate differences in society and culture. From the *noiriste* viewpoint, talk of class struggle was a distraction at best, and at worst an a *milat* invention that served to divide the black majority.<sup>47</sup>

If Haiti's essence was its "authentic" African heritage, argued the *noiristes*, it followed that the country could only be legitimately governed by "authentic" dark-skinned people. While Duvalier and his cohort had initially competed for power with Dumarsais Estimé in 1946, they adopted him as a figurehead of the movement when they were offered positions in his administration. But despite their enthusiasm for a

---

<sup>47</sup> Matthew J. Smith, "VIVE 1804!: The Haitian Revolution and the Revolutionary Generation of 1946," *Caribbean Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 31.

black head of state – the first since the end of the U.S. Occupation twelve years before – *noiristes* contended that democratic governance was essentially a European system that had no place in Haiti. Historian Matthew Smith traces how, in the 1930s, Duvalier and his colleagues published articles and tracts positing that Haiti should emulate "the polities of modern Africa" that "were based on communitarianism," subordinating the good of the individual to the good of the community.<sup>48</sup> Only an "authentic" black leader could head the community. In this regard, *noirisme* – and for some scholars, even *indignisme* – represented a Caribbean variant of the right-wing fascist politics waxing in Europe at the time.<sup>49</sup> Some individuals associated with Duvalier had even played an active role in fascist movements in France.<sup>50</sup>

The *noiristes* used this approach to interpret the pressing issues of administrative territory as well. In 1952, Achille Aristide, a sociologist closely associated with Duvalier, published a pamphlet titled *Mémoire de la Municipalité en Haïti* arguing that the reason the system of communes did not function well was because it adhered too closely to French legal code and failed to express the country's unique history.<sup>51</sup> Haitian politics,

---

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Red and Black in Haiti*, 26.

<sup>49</sup> Dash, *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915–1961*; Valerie Kaussen, "'Hereditary Antagonism': Race and Nation in Maurice Casseus's *Viejo*," in *French Civilization and Its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, ed. Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 175.

<sup>50</sup> Chelsea Stieber, "Gérard de Catalogne, passeur transatlantique du maurrassisme entre Haïti et la France," in *Doctrinaires, vulgarisateurs et passeurs des droites radicales au XX e siècle (Europe–Amériques)*, ed. Olivier Dard (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 233–54.

<sup>51</sup> Achille Aristide, *Mémoire Sur La Municipalité En Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1952), 39.

he averred, were determined by the military legacies born of the Haitian Revolution, which had "modif[ie]d] our ethnic mentality" and "imprint[ed] its dynamics, its character, and its specificity onto our institutional ensemble."<sup>52</sup> Political power in Haiti should be centralized, he argued, and the democratic possibilities signified by the commune were at odds with the Haitian essence.

The urban poor had little place in the framework advanced by the *noiristes*. "The Haitian community is essentially rural," argued *Les Griots* in September 1939. *Noirisme* proposed national regeneration through revival and revalorization of peasant culture that resembled the *volkgeist* dimension of concurrent fascist movements that were roiling Europe. This thread of discourse first emerged in the 1920s and 1930s through new genre of the modern Haitian novel that mythologized the peasant and called for a return to the earth.<sup>53</sup> In *Les Griots* and other literary outlets, writers such as Lorimer Denis and Carl Brouard extolled the virtues of Vodou, spiritual attachment to the land, and the communitarian labor practice known as *konbit*. They celebrated what they deemed the "untamed and anti-modern culture of the Haitian peasantry," writes historian Joshua Clough. "The 'savage' and 'primitive' offered an antidote to the anemic bourgeois rationalism characteristic of Western modernity."<sup>54</sup> *Noirisme* criticized modernity and

---

<sup>52</sup> Aristide, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Chelsea Stieber, "The Northern Récit Paysan: Regional Variations of the Modern Peasant Novel in Haiti," *French Studies* 70, no. 1 (January 2016): 44–60.

<sup>54</sup> Joshua Clough, "Exile and Ethnography: Jacques Roumain and the Problem of Place in French and Haitian National Thought 1927-1944" (City University of New York, 2012), 21.

urban life, which it associated with the decadent and irresponsible light-skinned elite; the non-elite peasantry was by definition rural. Rural-to-urban migration could only point to the decline of "authentic" Haitian culture and the toxicity of a light-skinned elite. Peasant families that left rural areas to come to Port-au-Prince faced a double uprooting: their physical migration and departure from deeply rooted frameworks of cultural legibility. In both the 19<sup>th</sup>-century geography of power outlined in the *Rural Codes* (discussed in Chapter 1) and the geography of culture advanced by the *indigniste* and *noiriste* movements, rural populations preferably stayed rooted on the land. In this framework, migration was ultimately a form of subversion.

When it came time for the 1957 presidential election, few among Port-au-Prince's working class supported François Duvalier. Instead, they rallied behind his opponent, Daniel Figiolé, who worked for many years as a labor organizer in the city. In 1945, he founded *Mouvement Ouvrier Paysanne* (MOP), which by 1957 had become the largest organized labor organization in Haitian history.<sup>55</sup> He parlayed this loyalty into the ability to summon spontaneous protests that intimidated opponents, giving his partisans the name *woulo komprèse*, or "steamroller."<sup>56</sup> "At [Figiolé's] slightest gesture," writes historian Etzer Charles, the city's poor and working classes "invade the streets to demonstrate their power, their anger, and their determination to end the privileges of

---

<sup>55</sup> Smith, *Red and Black in Haiti*, 94.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, 86.

the rich."<sup>57</sup> Although dedicated to socialist and working-class issues, his discourse was more *noiriste* than Marxist.<sup>58</sup>

Magloire's collapse had thrown the national political system into turmoil and created a constitutional crisis. Between December 1956 and September 1957, Haiti had five different governments. The army, led by General Léon Cantave, became the true arbiter of power.<sup>59</sup> When it became clear that army leadership supported Duvalier, a Dejoie-Fignolé coalition formed and demanded Cantave's resignation. In response, Cantave fortified himself in the army barracks, pitting the army against itself. On May 25, 1957, the capital erupted into civil war as soldiers fought one another and Fignolé's supporters took to the streets. Taken aback by the dangerous deterioration of events, the candidates and the military resolved to establish a provisional government and placed Fignolé at its head. Supposedly a gesture to restore calm by appeasing his supporters, it also legally disqualified Fignolé from participating in the ongoing election. Cantave was replaced by General Antonio Kébreau to lead the military.

Fignolé's term as president lasted only nineteen days. In addition to drafting legislation that addressed labor grievances, he also proposed restructuring the military's officer corps, likely because he had little support among their ranks.<sup>60</sup> On the night of

---

<sup>57</sup> Etzer Charles, *Le Pouvoir politique en Haïti de 1957 à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1994), 65.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *Red and Black in Haïti*, 65.

<sup>59</sup> Charles, *Le Pouvoir politique en Haïti de 1957 à nos jours*, 69.

<sup>60</sup> Charles, 74; Smith, *Red and Black in Haïti*, 180–81.

June 13, Kebreau removed Fig nolé from office at gunpoint. A Haitian Coast Guard ship ferried him to Môle St. Nicholas, where he was hustled onto a plane bound for the United States.

Fig nolé's sudden fall sent enormous shock waves of anger and disappointment through La Saline and the city's popular neighborhoods. The first head of state fully committed to their concerns had been outmaneuvered by his opponents, who had expressed little interest in their needs. On June 15, a false rumor began to circulate that Fig nolé had not been carted off into exile but rather had been assassinated. Furious, thousands of residents of La Saline, Bel Air, St. Martin, and Portail St. Joseph marched through the streets. Some beat pans and oil drums, turning their fury into sound. Others threw rocks, broke windows, and set fires. One of the targets was the depot that held the equipment for a new municipal slaughterhouse at Croix-des-Bossales begun during the Magloire administration. That night, it burned to the ground.<sup>61</sup>

The military retaliated with ferocious violence. With Fig nolé gone, Kebreau sent soldiers into La Saline who sprayed machine-gun fire indiscriminately at civilian homes. When protestors approached the notorious prison Fort Dimanche, soldiers within flooded the road with spotlights to better see the protestors better as they fired on them (See Appendix B).<sup>62</sup> The protestors were "mowed down," in the words American

---

<sup>61</sup> "Ce qui s'est passé, samedi soir, à la Capitale," *La Phalange*, June 18, 1957.

<sup>62</sup> Bernard Diederich and Al Burt, *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005), 97.

journalist Carlton Beals: "Particularly they struck at the shacks along the harbor front and the boulevard to the airport."<sup>63</sup> This description suggests that La Saline bore the brunt of the attack. The next morning, as the violence waned, the army acknowledged twelve casualties and twenty prisoners. But these numbers do not reflect the carnage: between 500 and 1,000 are estimated to have died that night.<sup>64</sup> "The actual number cannot be known," explained Beals, "because all but the few bodies taken to the morgue were loaded into lorries and buried in the plain. There have been no funeral processions. Relatives have been afraid to claim bodies in the morgue."<sup>65</sup>

The massacre silenced opponents of the military junta that replaced Figiolé. Restrictive press laws were enacted and opponents were censored. Four months later, on September 22, 1957, Haitians headed to the polls to vote in a presidential election organized by General Kebreau. Clement Jumelle, sensing that François Duvalier's alliance with the military had compromised his chances of winning, dropped out of the race a few days before. The two remaining candidates were Louis Déjoie and François Duvalier. Duvalier won approximately two-thirds of the national vote, but lost in Port-au-Prince.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Carlton Beals, "Haiti Under the Gun," *The Nation*, July 6, 1957, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Charles, *Le Pouvoir politique en Haïti de 1957 à nos jours*, 75.

<sup>65</sup> Beals, "Haiti Under the Gun," 3.

<sup>66</sup> Heinl, Heinl, and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, 527.

## ***The Weaponization of Urban Planning***

On the campaign trail, Duvalier had promised that his election would signal a new era of national regeneration. He crafted a narrative that implied he could wrest power from a corrupt *milat* elite, rebuild the country from the financial and social wreckage of the Magloire government, and restore power to Haiti's black majority — power that he claimed had been withheld since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Duvalier translated this mission into a drive to eliminate any trace of opposition to his power. Almost immediately after the election, the army began arresting and imprisoning supporters of Louis Déjoie, who himself went into hiding. As Haitian political scientist Etzer Charles argues, these actions foreshadowed the world to come:

The arrests were carried out beyond any legal rule, according the arbitrary will of the those who carried them out. They occurred all hours of day and night, offering a spectacle of violence to terrified witnesses...It created a climate of terror that was a total refusal of all democratic norms. Every individual, outside of the repressive structures, is prisoner in his own universe...Illegality becomes the rule and legality the exception. The repressive function, in a way, shifted from "occasional retroactivity" to "continual proactivity." All constitutional guarantees were suspended and the country lived under martial law.<sup>67</sup>

Arbitrary and constant terror would come to define the dictatorships of both François Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude. Scholars have thoroughly documented the horrific violence wrought not just against the opposition, but also against lukewarm supporters.<sup>68</sup> There are even instances of executions of faithful loyalists, a dynamic that

---

<sup>67</sup> Charles, *Le Pouvoir politique en Haiti de 1957 à nos jours*, 282–83.

<sup>68</sup> Bob Nérée, *Duvalier: le pouvoir sur les autres, de père en fils* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1988); Diederich and Burt, *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes*; Fatton, *The Roots of Haitian*

imbued the regime with an unpredictability that served to further heighten its terror. David Nicholls argued that the main targets of this the Duvalierist apparatus of repression were urban and rural elites, and suggested that the country's impoverished multitudes were unaffected, uninterested, or unaware.<sup>69</sup> But the limitations of this argument become visible when we take the city as the lens through which to observe the regime. From Duvalier's first months in office, one of the primary targets of his ideological enthusiasm was La Saline.

The regime weaponized urban planning in its quest for political and social domination. In one of his first addresses to the Haitian public as president, Duvalier argued that the most obvious signs of the "decadence" and "degradation" of the Magloire government was the unemployed labor force, which in both the cities and the countryside "live[d] in misery, promiscuity, and despair."<sup>70</sup> The discourse of promiscuity had deep roots in writings about poverty, both in Haiti and abroad. It suggested the housing density was not just a logistical question, but also a moral one that had the potential for sexual deviance. The solution, he said, was to tear down La Saline. The zone was a "disgrace" that "will not enhance a city that wants to make itself more beautiful."<sup>71</sup> The speech did not mention any other concrete neighborhoods or projects.

---

*Despotism*; Bernard Diederich, *The Murderers Among Us: History of Repression and Rebellion in Haiti Under Dr. Francois Duvalier, 1962-1971* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishing Inc, 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, 215.

<sup>70</sup> "Le Message du Président de la République au Peuple Haitien," *Haiti Journal*, November 12, 1957.

<sup>71</sup> "Le Message du Président de la République au Peuple Haitien."

No other location was singled out by name. The effectiveness of this rhetorical gesture was based on the long-standing idea that La Saline symbolized poverty and social ills of the country as a whole.

The longstanding association between La Saline, filth, and social decay had inspired Duvalier's predecessors to embrace slum clearance, and Duvalier may have simply been continuing this policy. But in the wake of the violence in June, it seems the new president's policy of urban beautification may have also carried a more vindictive implication. La Saline was not only an unsightly neighborhood near the waterfront, it was also the home of one of his rivals' major sources of power. After Duvalier's inauguration on November 22, 1957, bulldozers continued the work that machine guns had begun to break up Figiolé's base of support.

As part of his consolidation of power, Duvalier appointed new communal governments all around the country, as previous presidents had done before him. The new municipal government in Port-au-Prince was led by a young firebrand named Windsor Laferrière.<sup>72</sup> Laferrière, a twenty-nine-year-old activist, proved his loyalty to Duvalier during the violent summer months of 1957, when he reportedly hid caches of weapons in his home to distribute to Duvalierists.<sup>73</sup> Laferrière's municipal adjuncts, Israel Sylvain and Carlo Mevs, were both dentists. The latter was a member of one of

---

<sup>72</sup> Windsor Laferrière was the father of Haitian writer Dany Laferrière.

<sup>73</sup> "Haiti's President Forced to Resign," *The New York Times*, April 3, 1957.

Haiti's wealthiest commercial families. Like Laferrière, he was known for his penchant for violence, having been arrested in 1955 for the armed assault on an elderly man in his home after insults were exchanged at a dinner party.<sup>74</sup> No one made light of the Communal Commission's calling following Duvalier's inauguration in January 1958. Victor Nevers Constant, a Duvalierist elected to the Senate in September 1957, encouraged the new officials to tackle the rising housing crisis, the issue of urban zoning, and the areas where population density had led to "the most shameful promiscuity."<sup>75</sup> Cleaning up or eliminating La Saline was to be one of the Commission's priorities.

A week after the inauguration of the new municipal government, Duvalier held a press conference in La Saline to announce a wave of public works programs. The most important one was the immediate elimination of the neighborhood, which *Le Nouvelliste* described as "this terrible plague."<sup>76</sup> But there was also money to be made. Behind the scenes, the government signed a contract with a Miami-based firm called Starlite to bulldoze a section of La Saline to make way for an "American-type super-market," or what Americans would now call a shopping mall. The contract would include the construction of 100 housing units to shelter the people displaced by the project on empty

---

<sup>74</sup> "Grant Claims Attacked in Home by Dentist Mevs 1:00 AM Sunday," *Haiti Sun*, October 23, 1955.

<sup>75</sup> "A l'Installation des Ediles," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 21, 1958.

<sup>76</sup> "D'Important Travaux commencent bientôt à la Saline," *Le Nouvelliste*, February 3, 1958.

state land in the adjacent Commune of Delmas, Rural Section 1, a zone known as Varreux.<sup>77</sup>

In May 1958, the government took a significant next step and promulgated a decree that declared "in the interests of urbanization and sanitation projects... the zone commonly known as 'La Saline'" was now recategorized as public land. Any sale of property in the zone was prohibited without the express approval of a judge and the consultation of three judge-appointed experts.<sup>78</sup> In July, the Haitian parliament began hashing out the details of selling the land appropriated from the poor to private investors.<sup>79</sup> But first, the land had to be cleared. The new housing project seems to have materialized quickly.<sup>80</sup> On July 10, 1958, *Le Nouvelliste* published a brief article under the headline "Last Minute" notifying the city that, the following day, residents of La Saline were to be relocated to new housing project next to the processing plant of the Haitian American Sugar Company (HASCO) about two miles north of La Saline.<sup>81</sup> The settlement would be named Cité Simone in honor of Duvalier's wife. The operation itself had been hastily planned and it is unclear if the residents themselves received more

---

<sup>77</sup> Peter Abeille to DOS, "Foreign Service Dispatch No. 338," March 24, 1958, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 405, NACP.

<sup>78</sup> "'La Saline' déclarée d'Utilité Publique," *Le Nouvelliste*, May 15, 1958.

<sup>79</sup> "A Propos de Terrain à la Saline," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 19, 1958; "A la Chambre des Députés," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 17, 1958.

<sup>80</sup> It seems likely plans for the Cité had been drawn up with help from United Nations experts before Duvalier assumed the presidency. See: Yves Henri Rivaille, "Rapport d'Activité" (Port-au-Prince: United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, December 1, 1957), S-0175-0543, UNARMS.

<sup>81</sup> "Dernière Heure," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 10, 1958.

notice. Carlo Mevs of the Communal Commission told the press that he had begun meeting with representatives of *Le Service de la Population*, the *Institute Haitian du Bien-Etre Social*, and *l'Administration Générale des Contributions* only three weeks before.<sup>82</sup>

Moving forward suddenly on urban planning may have been an effort to build positive press for the regime and the municipality: on April 30, a cache of explosives reportedly controlled by Déjoists detonated near the Iron Market, leading Duvalier to oversee a massive crackdown in the capital. The National Assembly, controlled by Duvalierists, suspended the constitution and declared a state of siege, which granted the president emergency powers and the right to rule by decree.<sup>83</sup> The new mayor, in his enthusiasm, had announced over the radio that Déjoists would be eradicated either "by strangulation or bloodshed."<sup>84</sup> But apparently, there were some constraints in this early period of Duvalierist zeal. Laferrière was fired from the Communal Commission a few days later and sent abroad the following month as Haiti's new ambassador to Argentina.<sup>85</sup>

Following these events, the municipal government was reshuffled: *noiriste* radio personality Antoine Hérard was appointed mayor, while Dr. Sylvain was named Prefect

---

<sup>82</sup> "2022 personnes transférées à la Cité des Vareux," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 11, 1958.

<sup>83</sup> Diederich and Burt, *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes*, 110.

<sup>84</sup> Alain Sicé, "'Le Gouvernement, maître du terrain', ou comment éliminer l'opposition," June 16, 1958, 524 PO/B Box 12, CADN.

<sup>85</sup> "Départ de W. Laferrière," *Le Nouvelliste*, June 27, 1958.

of the Arrondissement.<sup>86</sup> Moving forward quickly with the housing project might have been an effort to shift the broader conversation about the municipality to something more constructive—or it might have been taking advantage of the president's new powers to move quickly with an unpopular reform. According to *Le Nouvelliste*, on the morning on July 11, Carlo Mevs directed the relocation of more than 2,000 La Saline residents. Press coverage of the event portrayed benevolent government officials thoughtfully considering how best to alleviate the suffering of a destitute population. No mention was made of the sale of the land underneath their homes or the shopping mall that was to replace them.

The government hosted a formal inauguration a new housing project in Varreux called Cité Simone on September 22, 1958. Before arriving at the site, the entourage passed by the cleared lot in La Saline, where Lucien Chauvet, the Undersecretary of Commerce and Industry, boasted: "In this place, where we are currently assembled, there was once a pile of miserable slums where languished a rank multitude. You see no trace of them today."<sup>87</sup> When they arrived at Varreux, the Minister of Labor, Jean Magloire, opined that the houses were a concrete symbol of a "regenerated Haiti" and of "the manifested will to reconstruct our community." Although the speech couched the new project in the paternalistic language of solicitude, its main message was less

---

<sup>86</sup> "Me. Antoine Hérard a été installé," *Le Matin*, May 20, 1958. The grandson of Theodore Holly, Raphael Holly, is also named one a municipal official.

<sup>87</sup> "Les Grands Discours du 22 Septembre 1958," *Haiti-Journal*, September 26, 1958.

compassionate. "For a long time, the Haitian people were identified with poverty," he said. "This image must be destroyed." Cité Simone was not pitched to Duvalier's supporters as a solution to the problem of inadequate housing, but rather a shoring up of Haitian dignity in the eyes of the world. It was imperative that the government "erase this shame laid out before the eyes of our foreign visitors at all costs."<sup>88</sup> Magloire drew on long-standing insecurities about the way Haiti was judged by non-Haitians to justify the destruction of low-income neighborhoods.

The initial development consisted of two hundred two-room apartments organized in twenty pavilions built closely together on little more than a tenth of a square mile. The settlement housed 1,098 people, only half the population that had been displaced in La Saline.<sup>89</sup> It is not clear how the new residents were chosen: a family rehoused at Cité Simone could either have been rewarded for their loyalty or connections, or punished for their support of Figdolé. According to political scientist Simon Fass, the process was heavily mediated by the military or *macoutes*:

Army personnel in charge of the relocation process, joined after 1957 by Macoutes, claimed first rights of rental (i.e. de facto ownership). These beneficiaries of state patronage, in turn, leased or gave smaller parcels to junior officers, family, friends or other close supporters in the supplementary iterations of the patronage process. After complete subdivision of a tract by the pecking order of beneficiaries, each further subdivided his or her area into small lots for sale, land rental, or, after investment in construction, for dwelling rental to additional family, friends, and supporters. Displaced

---

<sup>88</sup> "Discours Prononcé Par S.E.Me. Jean A. Magloire," *Haiti Journal*, September 25, 1958.

<sup>89</sup> "Discours Prononcé Par S.E.Me. Jean A. Magloire."

families not party to this process rented land and dwellings from households that were party to it.<sup>90</sup>

In the context of Cité Simone, Fass's observations suggest that homes might have gone the families of Macoutes and loyalists among the La Saline population, or perhaps to families not from the area at all. According to a 1968 Haitian study, moving into the new housing development had some benefits, at first. The new apartments had electricity, which was rare in Haiti. The complex was equipped with public fountains. There was a school, a playground, a medical dispensary, and a daycare. Despite the anti-slum discourse regarding the "promiscuity" of the multi-family home, officials distributed most of the apartments to two families. Only 27 families enjoyed a whole apartment to themselves; the other 346 families shared apartments, each occupying a nine-by-thirteen-foot room. Most of the Salinians were probably accustomed to living in close quarters, however. Kitchens and bathroom facilities were communal spaces located outside the pavilions.<sup>91</sup>

In 1960, the government added another 140 apartments to Cité Simone, this time to make room for a new batch of displaced La Salinians who were displaced to make room for a Texaco-sponsored bus station near the wharf at Croix-des-Bossales.<sup>92</sup> Another

---

<sup>90</sup> Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti*, 215.

<sup>91</sup> Arnoux Boucard, "Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1" (Université d'Etat d'Haiti, 1968), 8.

<sup>92</sup> "La Saline's Bus Park," *Haiti Sun*, April 17, 1960.

group was relocated in 1964.<sup>93</sup> When Hurricane Inez hit Port-au-Prince in 1966, victims were also relocated to Cité Simone.<sup>94</sup> Given this growing demand, the houses constructed by the government at this location—1,200 altogether by 1971—were hardly sufficient for the number of people displaced by government initiatives and natural disasters.<sup>95</sup>

After the initial inauguration, the 1968 report on Cité Simone described a poorly maintained settlement. The playground's equipment was broken. The local depot was poorly stocked. The public toilets had not been maintained and were unusable, forcing residents to relieve themselves in the surrounding cane fields. The area's water supply had been cut off by a handful of assembly plants and factories that opened in the area and separated the settlement and Port-au-Prince.<sup>96</sup> The combination of inadequate drainage, lack of access to drinking water, and open defecation made the marshy land a dangerous home for mosquitoes, bacteria, and disease.

Yet it was the distance from Croix-des-Bossales that bothered the initial transplants more than anything else. Residents' livelihoods were still intertwined with the economic activities centered at the country's largest marketplace. When they lived in La Saline, commuting to Croix-des-Bossales was easy. Cité Simone was two miles farther

---

<sup>93</sup> "Prochain Transfert à La Cité Simone O. Duvalier," *Le Jour*, October 13, 1964.

<sup>94</sup> Boucard, "Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1," 9.

<sup>95</sup> Boucard, 10.

<sup>96</sup> Boucard, 10.

north. Transportation required greater investment, either in terms of walking time or the cost of taking public transport; both options created hardships for the impoverished citizenry.<sup>97</sup> People who wanted to engage in trade in the complex spread their goods out on their doorsteps since the government failed to make good on a promise to build a covered market in the district.<sup>98</sup>

When Cité Simone first opened, two buses reportedly ferried people into town for 25 centimes, but this service stopped for economic reasons in 1963.<sup>99</sup> The cost of traveling by *tap-tap*, colorful pick-up trucks that drove on fixed routes, was 50 centimes. These kinds of daily costs represented large investments for the city's poor. According to the World Bank, in 1961, the country's average *per capita* income was 325 gourdes, or about \$65.<sup>100</sup> At a price of one gourde for a round-trip ticket to the city, it would have cost roughly 80% of an average person's income for the commute alone. The hardship would have been particularly acute for Cité Simone residents, who had lower than average incomes. This expense would have eaten up most of their income before expenditures on food, clothing, and shelter.<sup>101</sup> Given these circumstances, many of Cité

---

<sup>97</sup> See: Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti*.

<sup>98</sup> Boucard, "Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1," 54.

<sup>99</sup> Boucard, 15.

<sup>100</sup> World Bank, "Current Economic Position and Prospects of Haiti," Department of Operations, Western Hemisphere (Washington D.C.: World Bank, September 8, 1961), 1, World Bank Documents and Reports, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/343921468250212357/Haiti-Current-economic-position-and-prospects>.

<sup>101</sup> See also: Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti*.

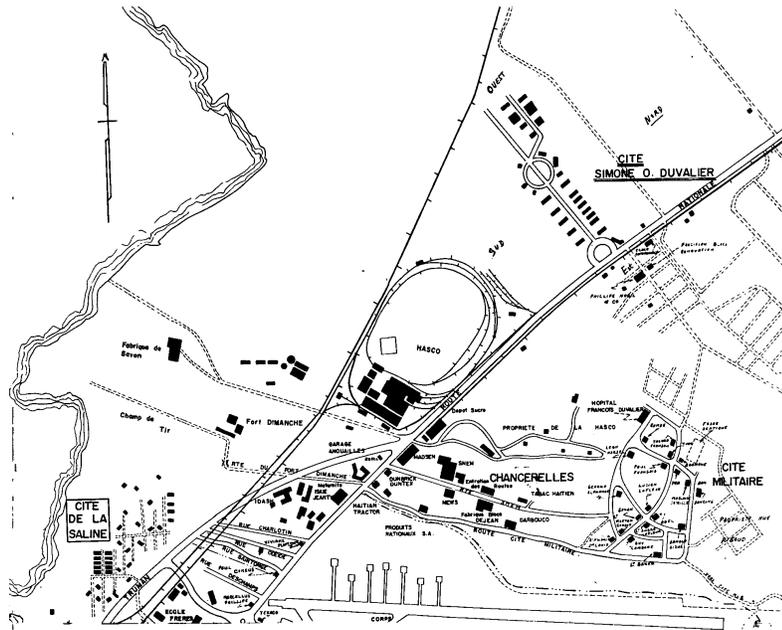
Simone's first inhabitants moved out and returned to La Saline to be closer to Croix-des-Bossales.<sup>102</sup>

Some authors speculate that the construction of Cité Simone was economically motivated as a means of supplying labor to HASCO or nearby factories in the Chancerelles industrial zone. One of the factories, *Fabrique Nationale de Souliers*, was owned by the Mevs family and managed by municipal leader Carlo Mevs.<sup>103</sup> But as Figure 6 indicates, Cité Simone was farther from the factories than La Saline. There is no evidence that HASCO had a labor shortage or was changing its production methods and needed more workers. Living in Cité Simone pulled people farther away from economic opportunity, and many of them did what they could do move back.

---

<sup>102</sup> Boucard, "Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1," 14.

<sup>103</sup> "New Shoe Factory Utilizing Local Rubber Producing Quality Product at Low Cost, Competes with Imports," *Haiti Sun*, November 25, 1956.



**Figure 6: 1968 Map showing Cité Simone in relationship to La Saline**<sup>104</sup>

Those who had been relocated to make room for the shopping mall in 1958 were able to find housing more or less where they lived previously, since the much anticipated "American-style shopping mall" never materialized. Observers from the era recalled a billboard heralding the mall's imminent construction with the words "*ICI BIENTOT*" ("Coming soon") withering in sun the rain for a year or two before it collapsed.<sup>105</sup> The area was soon repopulated with shacks made of boxes and reclaimed materials.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Boucard, "Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1."

<sup>105</sup> Diederich and Burt, *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes*, 108.

<sup>106</sup> Boucard, "Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1," 57.

On December 17, 1967, La Saline was purged again, this time by fire. With little notice, macoutes raided the area, dousing the shacks with gasoline and setting them ablaze. In the newspaper *Le Nouveau Monde*, Duvalier's spokesperson Gerard de Catalogne praised the regime for the attack: "Cleaning up La Saline was President Duvalier's year-end gift to the people of Port-au-Prince. Too long it had been polluting the air, creating health hazards and promiscuity."<sup>107</sup> The government openly took credit for the devastating fire in the name of national regeneration.

This time, La Saline residents reportedly resisted the destruction of their homes. According to American freelance correspondent Virginia Prewett, the residents "have armed themselves with sticks, stones, and Molotov cocktails to resist Duvalier's "cleanup squads" when they appear." The violence was so extreme that the Haitian Catholic Church, generally reluctant to criticize the regime, condemned the violence and expressed sympathy for the victims. At midnight mass that year, the service included a prayer for the victims of the fire. Even more explicitly, a local Catholic publication ran an article condemning the indifference of the city's rich to the suffering of the poor: "While Port-au-Prince stores are jammed with well-to-do Christmas shoppers...the poor of La Saline watch their huts, their pets and other animals being burned. In the hell that is this capital, is there no cave to receive them?"<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Virginia Prewett, "Burning Beauty," *Pasadena Independent*, February 2, 1968; Greg Chamberlain, "Haitian Slum Destroyed," *The Guardian*, August 12, 1972.

<sup>108</sup> Prewett, "Burning Beauty."

The fire of 1967 marked the beginning of a pattern. La Saline was razed again by fire in 1972 and again in 1975. The horrific August 1972 fire described at the beginning of this chapter was rumored to have similarly been set by the government, but unlike in 1967, if this was true officials refrained from boasting about it. The Haitian Red Cross promised to build new houses at Cité Simone to house the survivors.<sup>109</sup> Those who did not end up in government housing were given the opportunity to rent land, ostensibly from the state but more likely from a well-connected local who could profit from the arrangement.<sup>110</sup> Housing—both its creation and its destruction—reflected the logics of the Duvalier regime.

### ***The Haitian American Meat and Provision Company***

Slum clearance also provided opportunities to work with foreign investors whose business models depended on holding the population of Port-au-Prince—and particularly the poorer classes—captive to exploitative prices and practices. In the case of the La Saline abattoir, the regime and its supporters took advantage of growing anxieties about sanitation and hygiene in order to claim control over an industry that had traditionally been in the hands of the city's marginal classes.

When it was built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the slaughterhouse at Croix-des-Bossales incorporated contemporary ideas of sanitation and hygiene, such as airflow

---

<sup>109</sup> "La Zone Sera Reconstituée--Le Président Donne 20,000 à La Croix Rouge," *Le Matin*, August 10, 1972.

<sup>110</sup> Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti*, 215.

and sunlight, but had become an object of elite revulsion in the fifty years that followed. Construction on a new indoor slaughterhouse had begun under Magloire, but it was destroyed before it was completed during the turmoil of the summer of 1957. Duvalier's new municipal administration initially proposed reforming and renovating the 19<sup>th</sup> century design.<sup>111</sup> But over the following months, the city and the regime decided to privatize the industry altogether, probably because it offered an easier path to profit.

In November 1958, municipal officials signed a contract with a newly-formed American company, the Haitian American Meat and Provision Company (HAMPCO). The company would, at its own expense, build a large new slaughterhouse at Damiens, on the fringes of the commune of Port-au-Prince. The empty land underneath was donated by the Ministry of Agriculture. The new facilities would meet the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene. In exchange, the company would enjoy the exclusive right to slaughter livestock within the city of Port-au-Prince.<sup>112</sup> All meat sold within a 9.3-mile radius of the city center would have to originate from the HAMPCO plant. The city's meat vendors could bring cows to the plant, where for a small fee they would be slaughtered and the meat prepared for sale.

The main investor in this new undertaking was Clint Murchison Jr., the son of a wealthy oil tycoon from Texas. According to one chronicler, he "would become known

---

<sup>111</sup> "Big City Improvement Plants," *Haiti Sun*, February 8, 1958.

<sup>112</sup> Forest Abbuhl to DOS, "No. 240," Foreign Service Dispatch, December 12, 1958, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Narrative Reports, Box 408, NACP.

for his hedonism and womanizing...[and] given to jumping into deals he barely understood."<sup>113</sup> A "gifted but impetuous 36-year old," Murchison had recently founded the Dallas Cowboys. His taste for risk might explain how he became one of the country's biggest foreign investors in this period, eager to do business with Duvalier.<sup>114</sup> He had prior experience in Haitian industry, having signed a contract to build a flour processing plant in 1956 called Caribbean Mills. "The project for a flour mill does not make sense economically," mused Roy Davis, the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti in 1956. "No advantages to the government can be perceived."<sup>115</sup> Therefore the objective, officials speculated, had to be personal gain: "It is understood that Murchison paid between \$200,000 and \$250,000 in graft to obtain the right to build the flour mill. Ex-President Magloire is believed to have received substantial stock interest in the company for permitting entry of this concession to the country."<sup>116</sup> Although Magloire began the deal, Duvalier followed through with it, signing a contract in January 1958 that raised the price of flour by a dollar per pound, making it considerably more expensive than in the United States or the neighboring Dominican Republic.<sup>117</sup> While the behind-the-scenes dealings with

---

<sup>113</sup> Bryan Burrough, "Game Changers," *The Texas Monthly*, February 2009.

<sup>114</sup> In *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*, 249, Péan indicates that the Murchison family also had significant ties with the Genovese mafia family in New York, which he says invested heavily in the Murchison oil company. Whether Duvalier and Murchison were connected through the mob, their business dealings in Haiti resemble a criminal racket.

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in: Péan, *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*, 4:250.

<sup>116</sup> Harold Rosen to Mr. Hoover, "The Financial Schemes of Ex-President Paul Magloire," Office Memorandum, December 20, 1956, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, USOM to Haiti, Office of the Director, Classified Subject Files, 1950-1962, Box 6, NACP.

<sup>117</sup> Péan, *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*, 4:250.

Murchison's next enterprise are unknown, he clearly won Duvalier's favor: In April 1959, the president received Murchison at the National Palace to award him the silver-plated insignia of the National Order of Honor and Merit.<sup>118</sup>

With a price tag of about \$500,000, the new plant opened in January 1960. It represented the largest private investment of the previous year.<sup>119</sup> It had its own diesel power and cavernous refrigerated rooms to store the butchered meat (See Figure 7). The *Haiti Sun* celebrated that the new slaughterhouse, compared to the one in La Saline, was "a comparatively odorless place the ultimate in sanitation [sic]."<sup>120</sup> To mark the occasion, the company hosted a barbecue where Haitian workers roasted imported hotdogs over a large grill. They served them to American guests and Haitian officials, including the new mayor of Port-au-Prince, Philippe Charlier, Minister of Agriculture Michel Phillipeaux, and President Duvalier. HAMPCO's new president, Murchison associate Gordon Duval, marked the occasion with a conspicuous speech denying that his company had paid bribes for the project at any point. There would, however, "be a pay-off to all the people of Haiti." He said the plant would provide a better market to sell animals, a steady supply of sanitary meat products, and cheaper processed products such as bologna, hotdogs, and hams. Conscious of the impact HAMPCO would have on La Saline, he also

---

<sup>118</sup> "President Decorates 3 American Industrialists During Palace Ceremony," *Haiti Sun*, April 12, 1958.

<sup>119</sup> "Meat Plant Ready: \$500,000 Enterprise Is Built Near Port-Au-Prince," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1960.

<sup>120</sup> "\$500,000 Meat-Packing Plant."

promised that the new jobs would go to the workers laid off from the municipal slaughterhouse.<sup>121</sup>



**Figure 7: The HAMPCO Plant, 1961<sup>122</sup>**

Almost immediately, the new plant ran into significant trouble. The old municipal slaughterhouse had been built near the shore so that unwanted animal parts could be flushed out to sea. The lack of access to flowing water compromised the system; drainage canals became clogged and created a source of embarrassment for officials. Despite promises of state-of-the-art sanitation and hygiene technology, architects for the new site had overlooked the issue of disposal altogether. It was nowhere near the ocean, and no one thought to build a "cooker" for the incineration of

---

<sup>121</sup> "President at Official Inauguration of Abattoir," *Haiti Sun*, January 10, 1960.

<sup>122</sup> Donald Born to DOS, "No. 361," Foreign Service Dispatch, March 14, 1961, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 408, Folder Labor-Marine, NACP.

carcasses and viscera.<sup>123</sup> Initially, unwanted animal parts would be sent to a new factory that would turn cow innards into *afiba*—a kind of cow-tripe sausage. The city constructed a building near the shore for this purpose, but for reasons that remain unclear, the sausage plant ended up in the hands of a local businessman rather than being granted to HAMPCO.<sup>124</sup> Instead, the plant's managers tried to pass the burden of waste disposal onto the butchers who brought cattle to the plant, an unpopular strategy that failed to produce the desired results. By May, U.S. officials observing the major American investment remarked that "the plant had had to be closed down several times for health reasons because of the accumulation of viscera."<sup>125</sup> A Haitian employee of the nearby Barbancourt rum distillery complained that the foul smell would spoil the rum—a situation so dire he warned, perhaps jokingly, it "might well persuade many Haitian people to turn Communist."<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, *Financial or Business Interests of Officers or Employees of the Senate: Hearings Before the United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, Eighty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, on Jan. 23, 24, 1964. Part 9* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), 1433.

<sup>124</sup> Philip Williams, "Memorandum of Conversation" (American Embassy, Port-au-Prince, May 12, 1960), RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, NACP.

<sup>125</sup> Philip Williams, "1. The Haitian American Meat and Provision Company (HAMPCO) 2. Labor Troubles at Caribbean Mills, Incorporated," Memorandum of Conversation, May 12, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, NACP.

<sup>126</sup> Donald Born, "Shutdown of Barbancourt Rhum Distillery" January 18, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 1, NACP.

Disagreement about disposal was only the beginning of the plant's conflicts. It disrupted a range of economic activities that had developed around the La Saline slaughterhouse, from the herders who had walked cattle to market to the hundreds of people who had made a living purchasing the leftover animal parts.<sup>127</sup> The city's butchers were the ones to put up the biggest fight. HAMPCO's fee for third-party slaughtering was ten dollars per cow, a price almost five times higher than what was previously charged at the municipal slaughterhouse in La Saline. They would only accept livestock that passed the U.S. Department of Agriculture standards.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, HAMPCO required a minimum of thirty cattle to do business with a butcher.<sup>129</sup> This meant that many small-time butchers were not able to use the new plant, even though the monopoly legally obligated them to. Rather than pay the high costs, some butchers began illegally taking their cattle to the adjacent commune of Croix-des-Bouquets to slaughter and prepare the meat outside of city limits.<sup>130</sup>

The price of meat soared and the city experienced a shortage within weeks of the plant's opening.<sup>131</sup> Newspapers were full of commentary and debate on the situation. Some journalists thought butchers did not deserve to be driven out of business.<sup>132</sup> On

---

<sup>127</sup> "\$500,000 Meat-Packing Plant."

<sup>128</sup> "Some Butchers Object to New Hygienic Methods," *Haiti Sun*, January 24, 1960.

<sup>129</sup> Donald Born to DOS, "No. 408," Foreign Service Dispatch, May 5, 1960, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 408, Folder Labor-Marine, NACP.

<sup>130</sup> "Hampco Notice: Be Selective for Health Sake," *Haiti Sun*, November 6, 1960.

<sup>131</sup> "Situation Séciale Dans Le Marché de La Viande," *Le Nouvelliste*, March 10, 1960.

<sup>132</sup> "Slaughterhouse Switch Kills Old Prices," *Haiti Sun*, March 13, 1960.

other hand, wrote *Le Matin*, "this slaughtering process should have been abolished long ago in a country which is in the midst of a great tourist movement."<sup>133</sup> The overarching concern about Haiti's reputation in the eyes of foreigners permeated all aspects of urban planning in Port-au-Prince.

To protest the rules and regulations that threatened their livelihood, two city butchers' unions went on strike in March 1960. With two weeks, the more elite union dropped out of the strike, following a negotiation with the company and the city to lower the costs of high-quality meat, such as T-bone steaks and filet mignon. But this agreement left the cost of "ordinary meat (Grade C)" at inflated prices. This pushed the burden of the company's profits onto the city's poor majority, people who ate meat rarely, but when they could afford it, would purchase the least expensive variety.<sup>134</sup> The union representing the city's independent butchers continued the strike alone.

On June 1, the independent butchers' union shut down their shops and stalls to protest the monopoly, its higher prices and new rules. Later that same day, HAMPCO's manager relayed to U.S. officials at the American Embassy that the butchers' "protest had been nipped in the bud in short order." Lucien Chauvet, who now served as the Prefect of Port-au-Prince and a leader of Duvalier's secret police, along with his "strong-arm boys," had "advised the butchers in no uncertain terms that they were striking

---

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in "Slaughterhouse Switch Kills Old Prices."

<sup>134</sup> "Fixed Prices for City Meat," *Haiti Sun*, March 27, 1960.

against the Government and such action would not be countenanced."<sup>135</sup> The Prefect was a direct representative of the President, so it is likely that Chauvet acted under specific orders from Duvalier. Although violence was implicit rather than explicit, it was suggests that president's signature paramilitary violence was deployed against Haitian butchers fighting for their livelihood in the service of an American millionaire.

While visiting the U.S. Embassy, HAMPCO's manager also gloated about the commission's decision about the price of meat. While the returns on high-quality meat were low, they purchased Grade C meat for \$0.06 to 0.08 per pound, and had managed to sell it for \$0.19 to 0.21 per pound. By passing these inflated prices onto the lower classes, he anticipated that the factory would start to turn a profit within two years.<sup>136</sup> This confirms that company's business model was to squeeze the poor majority as much as possible, a plan at least tactically endorsed by Duvalier.

Yet the plant continued to flounder. Despite the initial intimidation and violence that broke up the butchers' strike, the government proved unable or unwilling to enforce HAMPCO's monopoly. To avoid the fees and higher prices, intrepid butchers continued to take their livestock outside city limits and smuggle the cuts back into the capital. HAMPCO ran hypocritical notices in the local papers trying to create fear around the

---

<sup>135</sup> Forest Abbuhl, "Strike of Independent Butchers in Port-Au-Prince Quashed" June 1, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 1, NACP.

<sup>136</sup> Abbuhl.

poor sanitation at the abattoir in nearby Croix-des-Bouquets, but the citizens of Port-au-Prince were unconvinced and refused to buy HAMPCO's more expensive meat.<sup>137</sup>

Eventually, HAMPCO gave up trying to enforce its monopoly. Slaughtering returned to La Saline. But the original 19<sup>th</sup> century slaughterhouse was dismantled, and what sanitary or aesthetic elements it had provided disappeared. Germaine Ofé, the long-time resident of La Saline whose experiences with the fires were discussed at the beginning of this chapter, recalled having an earlier relationship with a man who worked as a butcher at the abattoir. She had collaborated with him, buying innards from the slaughterhouse and traveling around the country selling them for a profit. Her account does not mention the closure of the abattoir, possibly because she only arrived in Port-au-Prince in 1956 and had not yet entered the industry during the HAMPCO fiasco. But the city's abandonment of the site deteriorated the zone. From her perspective, the urban planning initiative made little sense. In a 1989 interview, she recalled:

There used to be a clean and safe abattoir nearby — that's where the father of my children worked — they took it apart piece by piece... There was an abattoir for goats on one side, one for pigs on another side, and one for cattle at another, but all in the same hall, the same court. The gate was close. People worked on the inside, so when someone passed by on the street they couldn't see what they were doing. When you pass by now, you see some killing the cows. It wasn't like that before. They destroyed everything.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> "Hampco Notice: Be Selective for Health Sake."

<sup>138</sup> Ofé, Narcisse, and Raymond, *Germaine ou Chercher la Vie*, 192.

Instead of trying to control the local market, HAMPCO readjusted their business model. They would prioritize exporting meat to U.S. markets, primarily to nearby Puerto Rico.<sup>139</sup> But getting certified to sell export to the U.S. was challenging. The factory eventually constructed a cooker to address the issue of waste disposal, but U.S. government authorities would only accept imports if the Haitian government raised its standards of meat inspection. In January 1961, the regime agreed, issuing a new set of laws that revised the Department of Public Health's standard inspection practices.<sup>140</sup> In March, a U.S. embassy official was tasked with the unenviable assignment of inspecting the slaughterhouse and its methods on behalf of the Department of Agriculture. While the plant seemed acceptable, the official found the Haitian inspection officers to be somewhat negligent, and he recommended holding off on authorizing imports to the U.S.<sup>141</sup> Frustrated, HAMPCO's management indicated they would lobby their U.S. political connections, including Vice President Lyndon Johnson, to have the process expedited.<sup>142</sup> This was not an empty threat, or promise. The Murchison family had made

---

<sup>139</sup> David R. Thompson to DOS, "No. 355," Foreign Service Dispatch, April 7, 1960, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 408, Folder Labor-Marine, NACP.

<sup>140</sup> *Reglement du Departent de la Sante Publique concernant l'Inspection de la Viande et des Produits Derives de la Viande* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1961).

<sup>141</sup> Donald Born to DOS, "No. 361," Foreign Service Dispatch, March 14, 1961, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 408, Folder Labor-Marine, NACP.

<sup>142</sup> Robert Newbegin, "Problems of the Haitian American Meat and Provision Company," Memorandum of Conversation, April 10, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, Folder Economic, NACP.

major donations over the years to help further the political ambitions of their fellow Texan and were well connected in Washington, D.C.<sup>143</sup>

That summer, the U.S. government granted the HAMPCO authorization to export meat from Haiti into its borders, although it is unclear whether that permission hinged more on political influence or any improvement in Haiti's inspection system. Regardless, the company was soon mired in further scandal, this time in the United States. In 1963, the plant became a key part of a corruption investigation into the U.S. Senate's Secretary to the Majority Leader, Bobby Baker, who had also been a long-time Johnson aide. A multi-year inquiry into Baker by the U.S. Senate Rules and Administration Committee revealed that HAMPCO had retained his services before they acquired authorization, and that he had agreed to find buyers for the company's meat in exchange for a per-pound commission.<sup>144</sup> These and other revelations about corruption led to Baker's resignation. Murchison remained unscathed. At first, the investigation was also interested in the Johnson's role in the scandal, but this aspect was dropped after John F. Kennedy was assassinated and Johnson became president.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> William O. Brown, "Friends in High Places: The Wealth Effects of JFK's Assassination on the Assets of LBJ's Supporters," *Public Choice* (1986-1998); *Leiden* 86, no. 3-4 (March 1996): 247-256.

<sup>144</sup> E.W. Kenworthy, "Baker Meat-Deal Figure Resigns as Federal Aide," *The New York Times*, February 29, 1964; United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, *Financial or Business Interests of Officers or Employees of the Senate: Hearings Before the United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, Eighty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, on Jan. 23, 24, 1964. Part 9.*

<sup>145</sup> "Republicans Attack Conduct of Baker Investigation," *CQ Almanac 1964* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1965).

The HAMPCO case also illustrates that Duvalierist corruption took place in a larger political ecosystem that facilitated and encouraged it. It appears that Murchison was more than willing to pay hefty bribes for the opportunity to take advantage of Haiti's monopoly systems and force Port-au-Prince's residents to pay much higher costs for food. He also suggested that by activating political patronage networks in the U.S., he could turn a profit in Haiti. Foreign investors like Murchison were part of network that extended through and beyond Haiti and held the population hostage. And Duvalier was willing, at least at first, to support his new associates by reducing resistance through paramilitary forces, which would in 1962 be formalized as the *Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale*. These alliances aggravated urban poverty both by disrupting and appropriating economic systems that had previously been the domain the city's marginalized classes and by raising the financial burden of survival.

## **Conclusion**

The growth and destruction of Port-au-Prince's low-income neighborhoods is a critical part of the city's urban history. Since at least the 1920s, elite urban Haitians identified the growth of low-income neighborhoods as one of Port-au-Prince's central problems. Their objections revolved less around the structural poverty than the fact that the neighborhoods presented an unpolished appearance that foreign visitors associated with the country as a whole. Some travelers confirmed these anxieties, publishing

narratives that framed their dismissal of Haiti in general in terms of their displeasure with the appearance of the capital.

When Duvalier came to power in 1957, he weaponized these discourses to take action against La Saline, whose inhabitants had been devoted supporters of his political rival in the election, Daniel Fignolé. He proposed an ideological project of "national regeneration" that found expression through urban planning projects that played on racialized discourses of urban modernism. Slum clearance also served to affirm a *noiriste* vision of Haiti that idealized the rural peasantry as the "authentic" expression of a biologically-determined Haitian character. By leaving the land, migrants to Port-au-Prince symbolized transgression of this order and forfeited their legibility in positive cultural frameworks. These geographies of power were spatial sublimations of the racial and social hierarchies of colonial slavery, adapted and refitted for the postcolonial world.

The government built Cité Simone to house a portion of the displaced people, but the housing project was poorly maintained and developed without the needs of its inhabitants in mind. The regime also tried to wrestle control of the abattoir from La Saline and auction the rights to slaughter livestock to American investor Clint Murchison Jr. In all likelihood, Murchison rewarded the dictator for the predatory privilege of increasing prices on an already strapped population and reaping in profits. Regime officials authorized violence against protesting butchers to help a foreigner

establish an exploitative business. Despite the rhetoric of assistance, urban planning was not meant to help the poor.

The people of La Saline resisted these attacks as best they could. When the land cleared in 1958 remained empty, inhabitants soon repopulated it. HAMPCO's efforts to place a stranglehold on the city's slaughterhouse industry failed as people traveled beyond city limits to prepare their meat. Duvalierist violence against the urban poor continued, however. La Saline was destroyed by fire at least four more times during the regime. The government openly took credit for at least one of these fires, and survivors' narratives suggest that they were involved with more. Even if they did not set each fire deliberately, government officials such as Luckner Cambronne capitalized on their destruction to try to claim the land for ventures that would presumably be more lucrative for the regime. Although in any given instance slum clearance might have had an economic or political motive, it also afforded the regime an opportunity to perform its ideological project of "national regeneration," since the urban poor had long been established as an enemy of the nation rather than a constitutive part of it.

Although officials sometimes adopted a paternalistic discourse when discussing violent slum clearance, survivors' narratives make it clear that these interventions only increased the precarity of their lives. Systematic efforts to make the city inhospitable communicated clearly the message that they were not welcome in Port-au-Prince.

For Germaine Ofé, who migrated to from Jacmel to Port-au-Prince in 1956 only to have her neighborhood routinely burned to the ground, this felt like an impossible position:

They tell us sometimes to return to our homes that what would I do in Jacmel? I have nothing in Jacmel. I don't have lands, I don't have pigs in Jacmel, I don't have chickens in Jacmel. This is where I fight. When I need to go see my family, I go there but if I go to live there without five centimes, what will I be able to do? I prefer to die here.<sup>146</sup>

Ofé and her neighbors lived beyond the conceptual limitations placed on them. In the city, their poverty marked them as rural outsiders despite decades of residency in Port-au-Prince. It was not a question of simply going back home. After living so many years in La Saline, she said, "you almost forget the road back to your country. You don't have roots anymore."<sup>147</sup> But she felt she belonged in the city, and wanted to be left in peace. Regardless of her motives in moving to Port-au-Prince, she did not experience it as a form of cultural decline. Yet her life was made considerably more challenging because of those who did.

---

<sup>146</sup> Ofé, Narcisse, and Raymond, *Germaine ou Chercher la Vie*, 193.

<sup>147</sup> Ofé, Narcisse, and Raymond, 194.

### 3. “*Men jet-la!*”: François Duvalier International Airport as a Cold War Crossroads

On August 24, 1960, the newspaper *Le Nouvelliste* published an unusual letter. The self-proclaimed "peasants of the Cul de Sac Plain" – residents of the wide valley north of the Port-au-Prince – wished to alert President Duvalier to a "dangerous situation...that could compromise our future and even our life."<sup>1</sup> The issue at stake was the plan for construction of a new airport on the outskirts of the capital. The authors were careful to clarify that they were not against its construction per se. Given the era's rapid technological change, they wrote, it was "necessary and even indispensable as much for the raising of our economy as for the construction of this modernized New Haiti." They indicated their enthusiastic support for Duvalier's "politics of regeneration," of which the new airport was to be an important example.

Yet technological innovation would come at a cost to them. Building the runway would require bulldozing their homes and cutting down their sugar cane fields and groves of banana, avocado, and coconut trees. The letter writers argued that doing so would conflict with Duvalier's commitment to "social justice" and "uplifting of the peasant masses." The Cul de Sac Plain was one of the country's most important agricultural areas, and building a landing field there would take a serious toll on the

---

<sup>1</sup> "Insertion Demandée," *Le Nouvelliste*, August 24, 1960.

rural economy. They said they had “not stopped questioning the future.” Helpfully, the letter also included suggestions for repositioning the runway farther to the northeast, onto a stretch of dry, arid land away from the Cazeau-Tabarre road connected their communities. They invited government officials to visit and compare these options for themselves—surely they would see the wisdom of the peasants’ recommendations. “You will not fail to come to our help,” the letter concluded. Forty individuals signed their names.

At a time when any criticism of the dictatorship was dangerous, these farmers made their needs visible by appealing to Duvalier's cult of personality. Their letter mobilized carefully politicized autocratic language in defense of their community and their land. It deployed the regime's ideological discourse of rural uplift to try to influence a government decision that would have an enormous impact on their lives. Whether out of diplomacy or enthusiasm, the farmers expressed aspirations for their country that aligned with Duvalier’s promises of a “New Haiti,” promises that dislodged Haiti from discourses of backwardness and located it in those of modernization. In positioning their plea, the letter reveals how the regime’s political discourses and practices might have appeared to a group of farmers on the outskirts of the capital. It makes briefly visible the lives of ordinary Haitians, people whose fates, like the Ofé siblings in La Saline (described in Chapter 2), were wrapped up in the regime's urban planning policies. There are not many sources like it from this period. In

this sense the letter provides a unique perspective on what would become of one of the regime's signature projects: the construction of François Duvalier airport.

In a comparison of maps from before and after the airport's eventual construction between 1964 and 1965, it is hard to tell if the needs of the letter writers were met. Some of the key landmarks, such as a road between Tabarre and Cazeau, appear to have remained intact after construction. But a careful look at a 1967 photographic map produced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reveals that the runway stretches across a patchwork of verdant farm plots near Tabarre, occupying what must have been some of the best farmland in that area.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to keep in mind the dramatic local impact of the airport, because the story that it is possible to tell from archival evidence is one with sweeping transnational implications. The peasants of the Cul de Sac Plain fall from view, replaced by intricate political jousting between Haitian and American officials who saw the airport's construction as a contest between Duvalierist claims to nationalist sovereignty and U.S. claims to extraterritorial sovereignty within the heated context of the Caribbean Cold War. A microhistory of the airport provides a crack through which to peer out at the complex politics of the post-Cuban Revolution Caribbean, a time when some U.S. officials were willing to strike deals with violent autocrats like Duvalier particularly, at

---

<sup>2</sup> Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, *Port-Au-Prince and Vicinity*, 1: 12,500, E9350 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army, 1967), Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Libraries, [http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/txu-oclc-17740473-port\\_au\\_prince1-1967.jpg](http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/txu-oclc-17740473-port_au_prince1-1967.jpg).

that moment, if they thought it would limit the influence of Castro's Cuba and the Soviet Union. It reveals a paradoxical approach within U.S. foreign policy in this period, where local and regional policy unrolled along two incongruent tracks. Inconsistencies within the U.S. government and the anti-communist zeitgeist of its northern neighbor gave the Duvalier regime leverage it would not have had otherwise, and Haitian officials proved themselves creative and skilled at navigating this new field of political possibility.

In part because of the fraught international circumstances from which the airport emerged, the regime positioned its construction of the airport and the finished project as an ideological symbol of independence and autonomous innovation. The image of the airport was printed onto stamps and minted onto coins. It was lauded in government publications and speeches. Esteemed *kompas* musicians composed songs glorifying it. Farmers on the land where it was to be built pledged their allegiance to the project while protesting its placement. It became a central motif in Duvalier's mythology about itself. Physically, the airport was and remains today a major international junction, the central crossroads of people, things, and ideas that links Haiti to the rest of the world. Its history serves as another kind of crossroad where local and global forces intertwine and reveal both the centrality of Port-au-Prince's construction to the Duvalier regime and the construction that turned the Caribbean into one of the Cold War's most important theatres.

## ***Building Runways in Port-au-Prince***

Port-au-Prince's runways have always been tied up in questions of sovereignty and control. The country's first airport, Bowen Field, was constructed shortly after the beginning of the American Occupation (1915-1934). It was little more than a 2,200-foot strip of cleared land stretching along the north side of the city, with a few adjacent hangers and machine shops (See Figure 8, the runways of Bowen Field are visible on the upper left side).<sup>3</sup> In the summer of 1919, a plane with a rifle mounted on its nose took off from Bowen Field and flew northward, where it fired on anti-imperial *Caco* rebels, in the first instance in the Marine Corps of a tactic that would become known globally as "dive-bombing."<sup>4</sup> Next to the military strip lay a second dirt airstrip controlled by Pan American World Airways, the main provider of commercial air service to the island nation. On February 2, 1928, the famous transatlantic pilot Charles Lindbergh visited Port-au-Prince in his plane "The Spirit of Saint-Louis," a publicity stunt meant to soften the image of the military occupation.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Intelligence Section, Division of Operations and Training, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, "Monograph of Haiti," 1932, 601–3000, Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

<sup>4</sup> Markus-Michael Müller, "Entangled Pacifications: Peacekeeping, Counterinsurgency and Policing in Port-Au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro," in *The Global Making of Policing: Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Jana Hönke and Markus-Michael Müller (New York: Routledge, 2016), 1; Leo J Daugherty III, "Fighting Insurgents in Haiti and the Lessons of Small Wars (1919-1929)," in *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps*, vol. 1 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2015), 64–98.

<sup>5</sup> Georges Corvington, *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*, vol. 3 (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007), 569–70.



**Figure 8: Aerial photo of Port-au-Prince, 1932.<sup>6</sup>**

In 1942, Pan Am built an airport terminal and a new, paved, 4,800-foot runway at Bowen Field to accommodate its new fleet of Douglas DC-3 commercial planes.<sup>7</sup>

Beginning in 1952, Pan Am started flying heavier DC-4 and DC-6 planes, which carried more people longer distances without needing to refuel. The runway, which could not withstand the increased weight and speed of these newer modes of transportation, began to disintegrate. Regular flooding also damaged the surface: a ravine cut alongside

---

<sup>6</sup> Intelligence Section, Division of Operations and Training, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, "Monograph of Haiti," 1932, Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

<sup>7</sup> Carl A. Posey and United States Civil Aeronautics Administration Regional Aviation Assistance Group, "Airport Study: Port-Au-Prince, Haiti" (Foreign Operations Administration Institute of Inter-American Affairs, July 1955), RG 286 Records of the Agency for International Development, Mission to Haiti Executive Office, Box 16, NACP.

the field and the water table, which lay just under the surface, routinely rose up in the rain. The clay-rich soil shifted underneath, warping the pavement into waves along the runway.<sup>8</sup> The runway, like much of the rest of the country, was also seriously damaged in Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

At the same time, the capital's northward expansion began to encroach upon the airport. The base of the new Autoroute de Delmas highway ran along the edge of the field. In December 1955, President Paul Magloire began to erect a housing project for members of the military just north of the runway, called Cité Militaire (described in Chapter 2). On the southern side, he built Cité Magloire Numbers 1 and 2. Their proximity made the approach more difficult for pilots.<sup>9</sup>

But just as landing was becoming more challenging, more and more were people were trying to come to Haiti. Tourism had developed into a preferred leisure activity for Americans during the post-World War II years, and the Caribbean was a relatively close and affordable travel destination.<sup>10</sup> Haitian leaders had worked on cultivating the country's reputation as a travel destination since the 1940s. In 1949, in honor of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Francois Duvalier and Arthur Bonhomme to The Development Loan Fund, "Proposal for a Loan for the Construction of a New AIRPORT for Port-Au-Prince HAITI," August 9, 1958, RG 286 Records of the Agency for International Development, Mission to Haiti Executive Office, Box 12 Folder Application Proposal, NACP.

<sup>9</sup> Posey and United States Civil Aeronautics Administration Regional Aviation Assistance Group, "Airport Study: Port-Au-Prince, Haiti."

<sup>10</sup> For more on the international politics of tourism and air travel, see: Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Chandra D. Bhimull, *Empire in the Air: Airline Travel and the African Diaspora* (New York: NYU Press, 2017).

bicentennial of Port-au-Prince's founding, President Dumarsais Estimé organized an International Exposition to show off Haitian cultural heritage. He invested in a massive urban beautification project that remade the city's waterfront district, envisioning the event as Haiti's debut on the world stage.

Estimé was overthrown in a military coup a few months after the Exposition opened, but his successor, Paul Magloire kept the tourist dream alive. Living up to his big-spending reputation, in 1952 he spent \$25,000 to fly celebrities from Hollywood to host the world premiere of *Lydia Bailey*, a major motion picture about the Haitian Revolution.<sup>11</sup> In 1949, Port-au-Prince welcomed over 8,400 foreign visitors. By 1954, that number grew to nearly 50,000. That year, tourism was the second-largest source of Haiti's foreign exchange earnings, surpassed only by the sale of coffee.<sup>12</sup>

Haiti's leaders knew there were more tourists—and dollars—to be had. Nearby Jamaica registered 104,000 tourists in 1952, nearly double Haiti's volume.<sup>13</sup> Cuba's industry was even larger, with between 200,000 and 250,000 visitors arriving annually in the 1950s.<sup>14</sup> Port-au-Prince enjoyed a modest but regular influx of tourists arriving via

---

<sup>11</sup> Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "Hollywood Goes to Haiti: The Port-au-Prince Premiere of *Lydia Bailey* (1952)," in *Slave Revolt on Screen: The Haitian Revolution in Film and Video Games* (forthcoming, University Press of Mississippi).

<sup>12</sup> Posey and United States Civil Aeronautics Administration Regional Aviation Assistance Group, "Airport Study: Port-Au-Prince, Haiti," 3.

<sup>13</sup> "Tourism," *Geography and History of Jamaica*: published by the Gleaner, accessed February 11, 2018, <http://www.discoverjamaica.com/gleaner/discover/geography/tourism.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Farber, "Cuba Before the Revolution," *Jacobin*, September 6, 2015, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/09/cuban-revolution-fidel-castro-casinos-batista/>.

cruise ship, but these visitors tended to stay a day or less and spent much less money in-country than those who arrived by plane and stayed for several days in the city's hotels.<sup>15</sup> To attract the new jet-set class of high-spending tourists, Haiti would need bigger planes. To get those, it needed a bigger runway.

In 1955, Carl Posey, an aviation engineer with the Regional Aviation Assistance Group, part of the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administration, came to Port-au-Prince to investigate possibilities for improving the airport. Port-au-Prince's growing urban periphery made enlarging Bowen Field unrealistic. Instead, the engineer proposed constructing a new airport 2.5 miles north of Bowen Field at the mouth of the wide Cul de Sac plain near Tabarre and Cazeau, a zone also known as Maïs-Gâté, or "rotten corn." Posey proposed a construction plan, divided into four stages and estimated to cost \$4 million. This price tag included the cost of buying the land, laying the runway, buying the navigation equipment, and erecting an airport terminal.<sup>16</sup>

However, little progress was made on the project after Posey submitted his report. Magloire's government collapsed amid strikes and popular demonstrations in December 1956. Haiti roiled with political turmoil in the subsequent months as different factions competed violently for power, as described in Chapter 2. In March 1958, five

---

<sup>15</sup> Gerald Drew, "No. 269," February 10, 1960, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, USOM to Haiti, Office of the Director, Classified Subject Files, 1950-1962, Box 1, NACP.

<sup>16</sup> Posey and United States Civil Aeronautics Administration Regional Aviation Assistance Group, "Airport Study: Port-Au-Prince, Haiti."

months after François Duvalier won the presidential election, his new government took up the issue of the airport again, applying for a loan from the Development Loan Fund (DLF), a newly formed international development arm of the U.S. government and a precursor to the U.S. Agency for International Development.<sup>17</sup>

While that application was in process, Bowen Field went from being a nuisance to a liability. Pan Am announced in July 1958 that within two years it would be converting its fleet from piston planes to much larger Boeing 707s. The first commercial jet planes, Boeing 707s reduced by half the flying time from the United States to the Caribbean and transported more passengers.<sup>18</sup> Pan Am promised that this would be a boon for the Caribbean as a whole, as visiting became easier for tourists who would then spend more money on hotels, restaurants, and souvenirs. But without a larger runway to accommodate the new planes, Haiti would miss out on this opportunity. Pan Am planned on sending jets from New York and Miami to San Juan, Nassau, Ciudad Trujillo (now Santo Domingo), and Montego Bay.<sup>19</sup> Visiting Haiti would require propeller-plane connections from these other destinations.

Meanwhile, complicating its situation, the Duvalier regime had, after making their DLF requisition, opened negotiations with multiple sets of U.S.-based private

---

<sup>17</sup> Harlan Harrison to David Keogh, December 1, 1960, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, USOM to Haiti, Office of the Director, Classified Subject Files, 1950-1962, Box 1, NACP.

<sup>18</sup> "Les avions de transport Jet," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 16, 1958.

<sup>19</sup> "Les Jets de la PAA desserviront les Caraïbes," *Le Nouvelliste*, October 14, 1959.

investors on the airport project. This made Haiti ineligible for DLF consideration, since it violated rules that stated, "to be eligible for Fund financing, [a project] mustn't be able to obtain financing on reasonable terms from other free world sources, including private investment."<sup>20</sup> It is not clear why the Duvalier administration pursued concurrent strategies to building the airport. It is possible that Haitian officials sought alternatives because they did not consider U.S. government support to be reliable, or that they did not know or did not care about the Fund's guidelines. They also might have been assessing which opportunity had the most potential for graft.

To that end, the government signed a contract in June 1958 with an American firm called the John C. Peterson Construction Company, based in New York. Two months later, the Haitian government cancelled that contract and signed a new one with another American firm, a Haitian-run company called International Housing Development Corporation (IHDC), based in Florida.<sup>21</sup> These contracts were vague on the specifics of the project's funding, but they suggested that the money would come from Haitian government bonds guaranteed by special funds including the lottery and the government monopoly office. The contracts also indicated the possibility of raising taxes on coffee exports as a means to guarantee the loans, an idea that would push the cost of

---

<sup>20</sup> Harold Rosen to Harry Yoe and Caspar Green, "Status of the Mais Gaté Airport Project," Memorandum, August 1, 1958, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, USOM to Haiti, Office of the Director, Classified Subject Files, 1950-1962, Box 10 Folder DLF, NACP.

<sup>21</sup> Jean Magloire and Andre Theard, "Communique," *Le Moniteur*, January 24, 1959.

the airport onto Haiti's struggling independent coffee farmers.<sup>22</sup> In June 1958, after being warned that they were jeopardizing American aid, government ministers informed agents of the U.S. development mission in Haiti, United States Operation Mission (USOM) that they were no longer interested in trying to pursue DLF funding.<sup>23</sup>

### ***The First Inauguration of Construction***

Despite these funding setbacks, it seems the Duvalier regime must have felt pressure to demonstrate progress on the airport, because in September 1958 it made a show of inaugurating construction on the runway. Though both engineering plans and funding prospects remained hazy at best, Duvalier announced to onlookers and the press the airport project "was now a fact."<sup>24</sup> This event was folded into a day of pomp and circumstance to mark the first anniversary of Duvalier's election, which he declared a national holiday. The president and his entourage shuttled between construction sites, cutting ribbons and laying cornerstones. The day started at a market in a rural town outside of Port-au-Prince. His motorcade then snaked to Mais-Gaté, where a Haitian representative for the IHDC stood in an open field and declared the airport "one of the most vibrant symbols of the new Haiti."<sup>25</sup> The group then headed toward Port-au-Prince,

---

<sup>22</sup> Alain Sicé, "Du projet de contract entre le gouvernement haitien et un group américain et de l'accord Commerical franco-haitien," No. 311/ DE, June 6, 1958, 524 PO/B Box 159, CADN.

<sup>23</sup> Caspar Green, "Memo for the File," August 25, 1958, RG 286 Records of the Agency for International Development, Mission to Haiti Executive Office, Box 12, Folder Application Proposal, NACP.

<sup>24</sup> "President Duvalier's Speech to the Nation Sept," *Haiti Sun*, September 28, 1958.

<sup>25</sup> "Les Grands Discours du 22 Sept. 1959: discours du representant de la Starlite," *Haiti Journal*, September 26, 1958.

stopping to cut ribbons for the inauguration of new housing project called Cité Simone (see Chapter 2).

This day of ceremony was a prime example of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot calls Duvalier's "spectacle of government achievement," public performances meant to convey the illusion of efficiency and accomplishment.<sup>26</sup> Across the multitude of performative inaugurations and ribbon cuttings organized by the regime, the actual object of attention was almost irrelevant. What mattered was to "exhibit the Government itself."<sup>27</sup> The ceremony's materiality was intended to communicate messages of strength, since Duvalier's grasp on power had been shaken during the preceding twelve months. He had barely defeated multiple attempts to overthrow the government. The largest attack occurred in July, when a small group of disenchanted Haitian military officers piloted a boat from Miami, commandeered Jeeps upon landing in Haiti, and within twenty-four hours seized the military barracks hardly a hundred yards from the National Palace where Duvalier and his family lived. Loyal military forces eventually overpowered the rebels, but the attack strengthened the new president's sense of paranoia.<sup>28</sup> To counter threats real and imagined, Duvalier declared martial law, had the legislature grant him authority to rule by decree, formed a secret police force that terrorized the population, and arrested senators who criticized him. Countless people

---

<sup>26</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 177.

<sup>27</sup> Trouillot, 151.

<sup>28</sup> Mario Delatour, *Storming Papa Doc: The Siege of Haiti's Casernes Dessalines*, 2014.

were tortured in prison or disappeared. Turmoil continued to rock the country; many predicted that the president would not last long in power. Concrete structures, on the other hand, conveyed a sense of stability and solidity the regime did not possess.

The performance at the airport was also an effort to appease the Haitian commercial elite. The possibility of missing out on Pan Am's new network of jet service had filled them with a creeping sense of dread. Haiti would be at a distinct disadvantage when it came to the region's tourist industry, in which they had made enormous investments during the International Exposition a decade before. In October, a tourism council formed that included owners of the city's finest hotels. One of its members wrote with concern to Pan American Airways about the consequences its proposed changes would have on Haiti. The response came from the airline's Latin American division vice president, who said that the airline had been doing what they could to facilitate the project to no avail: "Until or unless that facility is available, we cannot serve Haiti with modern Jet equipment and I would suggest that all parties in your community interested in this matter actively participate to the end that it is provided at as early a date as possible."<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> William L. Morrison to Ben Shindler, November 20, 1959, RG 286 Records of the Agency for International Development, Mission to Haiti Executive Office, Box 12, NACP.

## ***The Runway as a Cold War Lynchpin***

As the pressure mounted, the government's plans for the airport fell apart. In January 1959, it canceled the agreement with the U.S.-based IHDC on the grounds that the company had not fulfilled contractual obligations.<sup>30</sup> The government again turned to the DLF, but efforts to reactivate the application were stalled by problems emerging from another DLF-backed project in Haiti: a massive irrigation and dam-building initiative in the Artibonite region, known as the Organization for the Development of the Artibonite Valley (ODVA).

Haitian-American relations began to break down when, in March 1960, the Haitian government unilaterally fired the head Haitian engineer working on the ODVA project. He was replaced with a former minister with few qualifications and who had recently been released from prison. The ODVA had been ongoing since 1949 and represented the U.S.'s biggest investment in Haiti's economic development since the end of the occupation in 1934. American aid administrators resented what they saw as the Duvalier regime's attempt to subsume the project into its growing system of political patronage and graft. In retaliation, the Americans suspended all ODVA funding.<sup>31</sup> Aid to the regime was becoming a theatre for debating the strength or limits of Duvalier's sovereignty and American control.

---

<sup>30</sup> Magloire and Theard, "Communique."

<sup>31</sup> Edward C. Burks, "Top U.S. Aid Plan to Haiti Halted," *The New York Times*, March 17, 1960.

Considering the ODVA controversy, aid representatives put any potential DLF funding for the airport on hold. Officially, the Fund's position was that its staff was too small to move quickly on the airport loan. Behind the scenes, officials reported that the agency felt the airport funding was "inopportune." "With the satisfactory resolution of the Artibonite problem, we hope for early action on the airport loan application," they concluded.<sup>32</sup>

American aid officials were concerned about more than personnel choices. In a series of memos, aid officer Caspar Green argued that the regime was too corrupt and inept to be sustainable. The regime's tactic of pursuing DLF funding for the airport at the same time that it was signing contracts with private developers was, he argued, evidence that the government was not serious about economic development.<sup>33</sup> At the ODVA and beyond, Duvalier was replacing competent officials with obsequious and loyal ones. Green lamented how the government's compounded inefficiency dramatically slowed American development projects and turned them into political patronage farms. Despite his technocratic language and concerns about efficiency, Green's memos did not pretend that U.S. aid to Haiti was apolitical, as it was often

---

<sup>32</sup> Norman Warner to Roy Rubottom and William Wieland, "Your Appointment with Mr. Oscar Chapman at 3:00 p.m. Today," Office Memorandum, April 29, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 2, Folder Political, NACP.

<sup>33</sup> Caspar Green, "Memorandum to: Mr. Yoe," March 16, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 2, Folder Political, NACP.

portrayed in public statements. Aid was supposed to be driven by the American—not Haitian—political agenda. He "had hoped our program would have the size, content and structure of a sort...to influence major politics and parties of the Haitian government." But given Duvalier's consolidation of control, Green advised Washington to stop investing the regime and to start preparing for its collapse: "The difficulties of such a period will be serious," he wrote, "but expenditures of funds in efforts to keep this Administration in power would, so far as events can be foreseen, not only be useless but would probably result in confronting the United States, eventually, with a situation even less manageable."<sup>34</sup> If it was not possible to control Duvalier, he reasoned, then the United States should not support him.

But, as was often the case, the perspective of Americans who were working directly with the regime differed from their counterparts in Washington. The State Department office assigned to design policy towards Latin America, the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (ARA), viewed Haiti as a single stage in a larger regional theatre that encompassed the U.S., Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and—at a distance—the Soviet Union. A guerrilla revolution led by Fidel Castro in Cuba had brought about the collapse of the authoritarian Batista regime on January 1, 1959. ARA officials looked on with alarm as Castro aligned his new government with the Soviet Union and began

---

<sup>34</sup> Caspar Green to Harry Yoe, "The Present State of the Duvalier Administration," Memorandum, May 13, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 11, NACP.

lending support to insurgencies throughout the region. Later that year, in June 1959, Cuban-trained Dominican insurgents invaded the Dominican Republic in a failed effort to overthrow the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo.

As regional political fractures broke open into violence, ARA officials feared instability in Haiti would generate a political vacuum that could be filled with communist sympathizers, or that the country would become a staging ground for further Cuban attacks on the Dominican Republic. Considering the expansionist ambitions of the new government in Cuba, the democratic activism of Betancourt in Venezuela, and the unpredictable violence of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Duvalier represented stability—at least on the international stage. To help maintain this stability, ARA officials actively helped the Duvalier regime by discouraging American journalists from publishing pieces critical of Duvalier and even relayed intelligence to the Haitian government regarding a possible attack from Cuba.<sup>35</sup>

Although ARA officials paid lip service to the frustrations of their colleagues in Haiti, this did not override their anxiety about communist expansion. They urged their Port-au-Prince counterparts to continue cooperating with Duvalier by moving forward with the airport project despite the ODVA and disagreement about the purpose of aid. In a March 1960 letter to U.S. Secretary of State Christian Herter, Assistant Secretary of

---

<sup>35</sup> Christian Alcindor, “U.S.-Haiti Relations from 1957 to 1963: Anticommunism, Nation-Building, and Racial Diplomacy in the Age of National Liberation” (Rutgers, 2002), 152.

State for Inter-American Affairs Roy Rubottom acknowledged "various abrupt, unilateral and seemingly irresponsible actions taken by the Haitian Government with respect to these economic development projects." But he advised "every effort must be made to salvage the development program and restore a satisfactory working relationship" because "from the United States point of view continued economic progress and political stability in Haiti are of special importance at this time due to mounting political tension elsewhere in the region."<sup>36</sup>

Duvalier, it seems, understood the hand he was now playing. A few short weeks after Rubottom urged the importance of maintaining the stability of the regime, the dictator delivered an address calculated to alarm the Americans. The speech, known as the *Cri de Jacmel*, was delivered at the inauguration of a new dock in the southern port city of Jacmel, replacing one which had been destroyed by a hurricane in 1958.<sup>37</sup>

Duvalier denounced U.S. aid as paltry and insufficient: "My government and its people have been living on promises, smiles, encouragements, recommendations, hesitations, slow waiting, and incomprehensions." His small country, he warned, was being "pulled between two great forces of attraction." He called for the Haitian people to pull themselves up in the absence of meaningful help from their more powerful northern

---

<sup>36</sup> Roy Rubottom, "Suggested Letter from President Eisenhower to Haitian President Duvalier Concerning Consultation on Cooperative Development Program," in *Foreign Relations of the United States Volume V, American Republics Microfiche Supplement*, ed. John Glennon (Washington D.C.: Department of State, 1991).

<sup>37</sup> "Les Degats Causes par le Cyclone Ella," *Le Nouvelliste*, September 3, 1958.

neighbor.<sup>38</sup> Both American and Haitian observers interpreted this as a barely-veiled threat that the Duvalier regime would seek assistance from Cuba or the Soviet Union.

The speech put the U.S. Embassy on the defensive. It responded by recalling its ambassador and issuing a statement outlining the \$40.5 million in aid that the U.S. had given Haiti since 1950.<sup>39</sup> But the moment also reveals a gap between Duvalierist rhetoric and practice: while the speech amplified nationalist rhetoric about Haitian autonomy and criticized American capriciousness, the wharf being inaugurated had been built by a private U.S. firm owned by the owner of the Dallas Cowboys, Clint Murchison Jr., with money from the U.S. mining company Reynolds.<sup>40</sup> Murchison was the same investor who, a few months before, also had recently opened HAMPCO. Duvalier used nationalist discourse that would play well among his supporters and alarmed skittish American officials, but in practice he dealt extensively with corrupt American companies.

The same week that Duvalier spoke in Jacmel, the Dominican autocrat, Trujillo, attempted to assassinate the Venezuelan president Betancourt in Caracas. In response,

---

<sup>38</sup> "Country at an Exhausted Stalemate," *Haiti Sun*, June 26, 1960.

<sup>39</sup> Gerald Drew to DOS, "No. 6," Foreign Service Dispatch, July 6, 1960, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 198, NACP.

<sup>40</sup> The reference to TECON, the company that built the wharf, can be found here: "Le Président Duvalier se rendrait à Jacmel," *Le Nouvelliste*, June 7, 1960. Murchison's ownership of the company was established during the Senate investigation into Bobby Baker, here: United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, *Financial Or Business Interests of Officers Or Employees of the Senate: Hearings Before the United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, Eighty-Eighth Congress, Second Session, on Jan. 23, 24, 1964. Part 9* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), 1433.

other members of the multilateral Organization of American States (OAS), including Haiti, unanimously agreed to cut diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic. With Cuba expressing expansionist ambitions, and the Dominican Republic in turmoil, the ARA rethought how to conduct relations when the new ambassador, Robert Newbegin, arrived in Haiti in November 1960. It was important "to obtain enough leverage in Haiti to counterbalance pressures from Trujillo and Castro."<sup>41</sup> Although Duvalier's autocratic style and casual use of violence was troubling, "President Duvalier's request for budget support and economic aid must be considered in this context." In preparation for Newbegin's arrival, the embassy's *chargé des affaires* wrote to Washington asking, with resignation, that the aid program to Haiti be expanded. "If we have decided that for political reasons we have to support and back Duvalier, whether he deserves it or not," he wrote, "the Ambassador had better be given more ammunition than just \$4,000,000."<sup>42</sup> Despite earlier misgivings, in December the new embassy announced a new \$11.5 million loan for the ODVA, malaria eradication, and other development initiatives.<sup>43</sup>

The idea of aid as a political tool would be given even great authority, when, shortly after his inauguration in January 1961, President John F. Kennedy proposed a

---

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Alcindor, "U.S.-Haiti Relations from 1957 to 1963: Anticommunism, Nation-Building, and Racial Diplomacy in the Age of National Liberation," 185.

<sup>42</sup> Philip Williams to Norman Warner, "No. 13," September 13, 1960, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 2, NACP.

<sup>43</sup> "\$11 Million Grant for Haiti," *Haiti Sun*, December 11, 1960.

large-scale economic development package for Latin America as an important tool of political influence in the region. Coined the Alliance for Progress, the initiative's mission aimed to counter the spread of communism by providing funds to spur economic growth through projects that would promote democracy and fight poverty and illiteracy. Kennedy and his advisors imagined that this inducement method would make social change through Communist Revolution, as had happened in Cuba, less attractive to other Latin American populations. A Puerto Rican businessman named Teodoro Moscoso was appointed the project's coordinator. In May, Congress authorized \$500 million dollars to be spent over ten years under the aegis of the Alliance for Progress.

Yet the goals of fighting the spread of communism and promoting democracy were often at odds with one another. On April 30, 1961, Duvalier held a sham election. Having included his name in the header of a ballot for local elections, afterwards he claimed that 100% of the voters had supported prolonging his term for another six years. He might have felt empowered to make such a duplicitous move by very public failure of the Americans, two weeks before, to overthrow Castro with the support of Cuban exiles, who were halted in Cuba's Bay of Pigs. American officials deplored the fake election's mockery of democratic practices, but were loathe to do anything that risked "goading him into excluding the U.S. presence from and facilitating the Castro-

Communist penetration into Haiti."<sup>44</sup> This included meeting with the Haitian opposition in exile to assess possible alternatives, lest word reach Duvalier.

Since the U.S. State Department, in the wake of the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion, considered it too politically dangerous to try to overthrow the Haitian dictator, Secretary of State Dean Rusk suggested they commit to helping him. Haiti "is the cesspool of the Western hemisphere, under a dictatorship whom we abhor," wrote Rusk, with rancor, to State Department officials in June of the same year, but he warned that the poverty and political decline made it vulnerable to a communist takeover.<sup>45</sup> To avert another Cuba-like situation, Haiti would have to be propped up despite the troubling domestic political circumstances. Rusk asked his staff to brainstorm ideas for aid projects they would like to see implemented in Haiti and consider what Duvalier might be willing to go along with. "Since we are already supporting the Haitian economy," he wondered, "why not do a good job?"

In Port-au-Prince, American diplomats and aid officers in Haiti were horrified by this new approach. Newbegin complained that the "new Haitian approach leaves me shuddering." Increasing aid to the regime would strengthen Duvalier's hand and discourage opposition forces in the country. He thought the inflamed political climate in the region was leading to bad policy for Haiti: "I am at a loss to understand why our

---

<sup>44</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. XII, American Republics (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996) Document 366.

<sup>45</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States* Document 368.

Government can not sometimes take a reasonable, middle course. We either have to go overboard, presenting our bounty on a golden tray or slapping people down unnecessarily hard. However, I know that this is an exceedingly difficult time to exercise moderation and I have little hopes thereof."<sup>46</sup> Newbegin was channeling a criticism of policy on Haiti as well as the Alliance for Progress more broadly.

### ***The Dirksen Amendment***

Despite their misgivings, U.S. diplomatic officials took ultimately took their orders from the State Department in Washington. But the U.S. Congress was empowered to act alone, and some of its key members were skeptical about fighting communism in Latin America with American tax dollars. To both implement and control the Alliance for Progress, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act in September 1961, which detailed how the U.S. could use international development funds around the world. Among other things, the bill phased out previous funding agencies and replaced them with a new independent entity called the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID. The bill also included a short provision, section 620(c), which disrupted the State Department's plans for the Duvalier regime. It declared that no assistance would be given to any country that owed money to private American citizens. Illinois Senator

---

<sup>46</sup> Robert Newbegin to Forest Abbuhl, "No. 16," April 26, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, Folder Official Informal, NACP.

Everett Dirksen deliberately introduced this clause to target Haiti.<sup>47</sup> Dirksen's brother-in-law, Flechter J. Lankton, had worked with the Magloire government on building the housing project next to Bowen Field—Cité No. 2—and the Duvalier government had ignored his efforts to collect on a \$290,000 debt.<sup>48</sup> At the same time that U.S. officials decried Haitian cronyism and corruption, the American legislative process was equally subject to the corruptive influence of private interests.

The Dirksen Amendment, as section 620(c) was called, brought to a sudden halt the State Department's efforts to "salvage the development program" by moving forward with the airport loan and other similar initiatives. There is a certain irony to this, considering that the construction of Cité No. 2 was one of the reasons aviation engineers found it necessary to relocate the airport in the first place. For Newbegin, the amendment was a "nasty problem" that caused him "a great deal of concern."<sup>49</sup> It would be difficult to communicate to the Duvalier regime that the State Department wanted to loan the regime money but was now blocked by Congress until they settled debts with private investors.<sup>50</sup> The embassy came across as unreliable and ineffective.

---

<sup>47</sup> Drew Pearson, "Dirksen Law Firm Attracts Business From Industrial Giants," *Alamogordo Daily News*, April 13, 1964.

<sup>48</sup> Caspar Green, "No. 31," Airgram, July 12, 1960, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, USOM to Haiti, Office of the Director, Classified Subject Files, 1950-1962, Box 22, NACP.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Newbegin to Edwin Vallon, September 21, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, Folder Claims, NACP.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Newbegin to Wymberley Coerr, July 5, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, Folder Official Informal, NACP.

In Washington, criticism of the regime and the support Kennedy gave it was mounting. In a U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing, Democratic Senator J. William Fulbright described Haiti as "one of the worst dictatorships that remain in Latin America." Fulbright said the Haitian opposition in exile was adamant that "our aid simply perpetuates this tyrannical government." Likewise, Democratic Senator Hubert H. Humphrey said, "the Haitian government is frightful, and I think that all the members of our government know it. Why then are we supporting it?"<sup>51</sup> Despite public outcry, at least one U.S. official was actively advocating for the Duvalier government. For reasons that are unclear, Democratic Congressman Victor Anfuso of New York had taken a special interest in Duvalier and traveled to Haiti independently on multiple occasions to meet with him. Much to the frustration of diplomats in Port-au-Prince and Washington, who thought these visits circumvented their control over communication with the dictator, Anfuso lobbied strongly for American money for a new airport in Port-au-Prince.<sup>52</sup>

On September 5, 1961, the ARA proposed a major expansion of aid to Duvalier. The specter of communism underpinned their policy. "I think we can agree," wrote Chester Bowles, the under-secretary of State, in explaining the new plan to Secretary

---

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Alcindor, "U.S.-Haiti Relations from 1957 to 1963: Anticommunism, Nation-Building, and Racial Diplomacy in the Age of National Liberation," 221.

<sup>52</sup> Forest Abbuhl to Robert Newbegin, April 27, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974 Box 3, Folder Relations US Haiti, NACP.

Rusk, "that it would have been worth billions of dollars to have avoided the Cuban tragedy."<sup>53</sup> It is unclear from context whether Bowles regretted not providing greater support the Cuban dictator Batista before he was overthrown by Castro, or whether he regretted failing to convince the latter to align with the United States against the USSR. The ARA proposal included ideas ranging from seed banks to road building. The airport was one of the main projects: "A new airport capable of handling jet traffic, to replace the present inadequate airport, is Haiti's highest priority need."<sup>54</sup> ARA envisioned approving the highest amount of aid, \$50 million, which would be contingent on concessions and reforms made by the Duvalier regime, a position U.S. diplomats in Port-au-Prince found unrealistic. In the absence of such concessions, they proposed a more modest package of \$14 million. Officials from multiple aid agencies and the embassy all submitted commentaries that rejected the ARA proposal. The ICA notes emphasized that aid looked very different in Haiti than in Washington, and that programs "would need to be refined in the field in the light of local conditions and first-hand experience."<sup>55</sup> They argued that not only would such a path provide support to a loathed dictator, but

---

<sup>53</sup> Chester Bowles to Dean Rusk, "Haiti Development Program," September 30, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, NACP.

<sup>54</sup> ARA and ICA, "Draft New Approach to the Haitian Problem" September 5, 1961, 9, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, NACP.

<sup>55</sup> Dennis A FitzGerald to Robert Woodward, "Proposed Action Program - Haiti," Memorandum, August 14, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, NACP.

the money would doubtlessly be used for graft and corruption. In the end, Bowles endorsed holding off on any major decisions until the disagreements between the ARA and the other agencies could be resolved.<sup>56</sup>

Newbegin, meanwhile, made his own decision. He resigned unexpectedly in September 1961. Although the exact circumstances behind his resignation remain unclear, his frequent criticism of policy coming out of Washington offers clear evidence that he adamantly opposed to the U.S. State Department's policy of accommodating Duvalier.<sup>57</sup>

Some Haitian government officials took steps to work through the implications of the Dirksen Amendment. "The business community is all agog with a story that the U.S. is not going to give Haiti any money until it pays its debts," reported a U.S. diplomat. "Most of them have not heard of the Dirksen amendment but indicate that the GOH reaction to this has been rather violent."<sup>58</sup> Minister of Public Works Louis Levêque shuttled back and forth to Washington several times over the winter of 1961-1962 to meet with aid officials with the goal of unblocking the airport loan.<sup>59</sup> Louis Mars, the

---

<sup>56</sup> Bowles to Rusk, "Haiti Development Program."

<sup>57</sup> Alcindor, "U.S.-Haiti Relations from 1957 to 1963: Anticommunism, Nation-Building, and Racial Diplomacy in the Age of National Liberation," 236.

<sup>58</sup> Philip Williams to Forest Abbuhl, "No. 79," December 21, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, Folder Official Informal, NACP.

<sup>59</sup> Forest Abbuhl, "Haiti--Discussions with Minister of Public Works Re Section 620 (c) and Airport Project," Memorandum of Conversation, December 15, 1961, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 3, Folder Memorandum, NACP.

Haitian Ambassador to the United States, joined these talks. They sought to establish a debt payment plan that would both satisfy the United States and be acceptable to the Duvalier regime. The debts in question included the money owed to Lankton—Senator Dirksen's brother-in-law—and several major American oil companies. Through these meetings, Levêque and American aid officials agreed that if the Haitian government could take steps towards paying its debts, then the State Department would consider declaring the Dirksen Amendment inapplicable to Haiti. This would be based on another amendment in the Foreign Assistance Bill, 614(a), that authorized the President to overrule any of the bills provisions and allocate funds provided it was in the interest of "national security."

### ***The 1962 OAS meeting at Punta del Este***

The dormant Port-au-Prince airport project became an object of hemispheric fixation in January 1962 at an OAS meeting at Punta del Este, Uruguay. The meeting was called to address member states' divergent approaches towards Cuba, whose growing affiliation with the Soviet Union alarmed the U.S. and some Latin American political leaders. The U.S. was eager to see sanctions placed on Cuba and have the country expelled from the OAS. Expulsion from the OAS would require a two-thirds majority vote, or fourteen of the organization's twenty member-states. But unlike during the organization's response to the Trujillo's attack on Betancourt in 1960, member states were starkly divided. Only twelve were in favor of the measure. Six countries—

Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico—opposed the expulsion as American overreach. Uruguay and Haiti were the potential swing votes.

Despite American anxieties and his speech at Jacmel, François Duvalier was not friendly towards Castro or communism. He used anti-communist rhetoric to violently persecute his rivals in Haiti. In April 1961, he had the communist author and activist Jacques Stephen Alexis tortured and killed in Port-au-Prince. He regularly expressed support for American efforts to discourage the spread of communism, which he described as "that common danger to the Western Hemisphere constituted by international Communism, which is on the brink of degenerating into a world conflagration."<sup>60</sup> But Duvalier's allegiances were frequently called into question by paranoid diplomats and State Department officials, given that some of his advisors joined the Communist Party during their college years in France. Keeping his major political interlocutors guessing about his intentions was one of Duvalier's most effective strategies. Sensing that the American imperative to punish Cuba gave Haiti new leverage, Haitian Foreign Minister René Chalmers gave a speech in support of Cuba at the OAS conference in Uruguay, demolishing any U.S. confidence that count of Haiti's vote to force Cuba's from the organization.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Wien Weibert Arthus, "The Challenge of Democratizing the Caribbean during the Cold War: Kennedy Facing the Duvalier Dilemma," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 3 (June 1, 2015): 510.

<sup>61</sup> Arthus, 512.

Robert Woodward, Assistant Secretary of State for ARA at the time and a member of the American conference delegation, recalled what happened next in an interview twenty-five years later. "I tried to find out why one Caribbean country, Haiti, was not inclined to take action unfriendly to Castro," he said. He met with Chalmers and Louis Mars, who told him "they felt they were being unfairly treated under the [foreign aid] legislation, that they had negotiated a loan for the improvement of the airport at Port au Prince, and that this was being stopped now because of the [Dirksen] Amendment."<sup>62</sup> The Haitian officials assured Woodward that their government was working on the debt payments, so he made some calls:

There was a little hand-operated radio that somebody had rigged up for communicating with Washington, like an old-fashioned telephone. I talked with Ted Moscoso, who was head of the Latin American branch of the [US]AID program, and Mike Barall, who was my economic deputy back in Washington. I said, "The Haitians assure me that they're doing their utmost to pay these bills. Can't you get the legal advisor to agree to raising this embargo caused by the [Dirksen] Amendment?" Well, they did it, and they called me up and said it was done. As a matter of fact, I got the word almost simultaneously from the Haitians that they'd received word from Port au Prince that the embargo had been lifted. They said, "Now we'll vote with you right down the line."<sup>63</sup>

Ultimately, the hastily concluded arrangement involved funding for the airport and the construction of a road from Port-au-Prince to Cayes, a city on Haiti's southern

---

<sup>62</sup> In his oral history, Robert Woodward remembers the Hickenlooper Amendment as the provision that blocked aid to Haiti. This is an error. It was, as I have shown, the Dirksen Amendment.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Woodward, Interview with Robert F. Woodward, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, transcript, May 5, 1987, Library of Congress, <https://memory.loc.gov/service/mss/mfdip/2004/2004woo03/2004woo03.pdf>.

peninsula. The United States agreed to pay for Port-au-Prince's runway. After both Uruguay and Haiti came around to the U.S. position, Cuba was expelled from the OAS.

Within weeks, U.S. newspaper began portraying the arrangement as a dishonest effort to trap the United States, under headlines such as "Haiti Attempted to Snarl OAS Parlay."<sup>64</sup> Then and in the decades since, this negotiation has received outsized attention in historical accounts of the Caribbean Cold War.<sup>65</sup> Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who was part of the American delegation in Uruguay, paints a portrait of Rusk at the conference nobly "turning away" from Chalmers's demand for aid, only to later inform him that the U.S. "did not associate economic aid and political performance, [but] now that Haiti itself had made the link, it had to understand that any future aid would be scrutinized" in light of the vote. The resulting agreement was described as "yielding to blackmail."<sup>66</sup>

The twin narratives of bribe and blackmail circulated widely at the time and continued to be cited in the decades since in scholarship on the period. The political imperative to contain Cuba's influence led the U.S. government to negotiate regularly with right-wing dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere. Unlike most policy, though, the Haiti airport deal unfolded at a conference in the international spotlight

---

<sup>64</sup> William Ryan, "Haiti Attempted to Snarl OAS Parlay," *Associated Press*, February 10, 1962.

<sup>65</sup> Accounts that cite this moment include: Rayford W. Logan, *Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (Oxford University Press, 1968), 155; James Ferguson, *Papa Doc, Baby Doc: Haiti and the Duvaliers* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1988), 42–44; Edwin M. Martin, *Kennedy and Latin America* (University Press of America, 1994), 201, 239; Federico G. Gil, "The Kennedy-Johnson Years," in *United States Policy in Latin America: A Decade of Crisis and Challenge*, ed. John D. Martz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 21–22.

<sup>66</sup> Arthur M Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston, 1965), 782–83.

where many journalists were present to comment on the proceedings. The publicity brought light onto the U.S. strategy of striking deals with anti-democratic authoritarians; ultimately the negotiation was profiled not as normal practice, but as the corrupting influence of a Latin American strongman whose unscrupulous methods tainted American principles. Eight years later, one of Rusk's colleagues would recall him talking about the accusations that he had "bribed the Haitians." "That was just diplomacy," he retorted.<sup>67</sup>

At the same time that ARA officials in Uruguay were offering to pay for Haiti's airport and southern road, their counterparts in Port-au-Prince were pushing a harder line with Duvalier officials. The issue at hand was, again, the ODVA irrigation project in the Artibonite Valley. Much to the frustration of aid officials, in the months following the 1960 confrontation over personnel, the Duvalier regime had found new ways to undermine the U.S.-managed project. Now, instead of placing political appointees in key positions, it was driving off with thousands of dollars worth of bulldozers, tractors, dump trucks, and other pieces of heavy construction equipment. Some of the equipment was taken to Mais-Gaté, where it was put to use clearing trees and flattening land. Other machines were driven to Cabaret, where Duvalier protégé Luckner Cambronne was

---

<sup>67</sup> Raymond Thurston, Raymond Thurston Oral History Interview, interview by Dennis J. O'Brien, transcript, June 9, 1970, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, <https://archive2.jfklibrary.org/JFKOH/Thurston,%20Raymond%20L/JFKOH-RYT-01/JFKOH-RYT-01-TR.pdf>.

overseeing the construction of a small modernist city called Duvalierville.<sup>68</sup> Operators complained that when the equipment was eventually returned to ODVA sites, it was often inoperable. U.S. Embassy officials were so frustrated by this that they entertained the idea of removing engine parts over the weekends so that the vehicles could not be turned on without supervision by U.S. employees.<sup>69</sup> The same week as the Punte del Este conference, Newbegin's replacement, Ambassador Raymond Thurston, wrote a stern letter to Chalmer's acting-head of the Haitian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, warning that continued unauthorized diversion of equipment could imperil the size and kind of aid Haiti would receive in the future.

So when news reached embassy officials of what the American delegation at Punte del Este had done, it must have seemed that State Department colleagues had thrown them under the bus (or in this case, the bulldozer). Thurston sent an outraged telegram to the ARA, to which the new Under Secretary of State, George Ball, replied, "Fully appreciate your concern and agree that US objectives in Haiti may be more difficult to achieve as a result of commitments USDEL at PUNTA DEL ESTE apparently felt obliged to make for overriding considerations."<sup>70</sup> Although documents from the

---

<sup>68</sup> Leonard Brooks to Earl O. Finnie, "Equipment," Memorandum, January 29, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, NARA, College Park, MD.

<sup>69</sup> Philip Williams to Raymond Thurston, January 26, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, NARA, College Park, MD.

<sup>70</sup> George Ball, "Telegram to U.S. Embassy Port-Au-Prince," 158, January 30, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Econ Aid, NACP.

period reveal Thurston's frustration at Washington circumventing his authority vis-à-vis the Duvalier government, looking back on the situation in an interview a decade later, he was more sanguine: "I realized that Rusk had to come back from Punta del Este with that. I mean he just had to for domestic political reasons if nothing else – congressional, Senate. He had to come back with that two-thirds vote in his pocket."<sup>71</sup>

While officials in Port-au-Prince were deeply invested in the outcome of the aid programs they were implementing, these concerns meant little to their colleagues in Washington who were preoccupied with Castro's government in Cuba. American policy towards Haiti was inextricable from larger regional dynamics. In his next meeting with François Duvalier a few days later, Thurston informed him that thanks to Levêque's hard work in Washington, the Dirksen Amendment (created specifically to target the Duvalier government) had been deemed inapplicable to Haiti.<sup>72</sup> The Lankton claim having been settled, the State Department would request a presidential exemption of the amendment, so long as the regime made good on promises to start paying off oil company debts. The airport loan would activate again as long as Haitians prioritized American private interests.

---

<sup>71</sup> Thurston, Raymond Thurston Oral History Interview.

<sup>72</sup> Raymond Thurston, "Telegram to State Department," February 2, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Econ Aid, NARA, College Park, MD; Raymond Thurston, "Telegram to State Department," February 23, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Econ Aid, NARA, College Park, MD.

On February 1, 1962, just a few days after the conclusion of the Punte del Este conference, Duvalier again held a ceremony breaking ground at the airport construction site. Local and international coverage did not mention Punte del Este—the agreement was probably not yet widely known. But more importantly, the ceremony framed the airport as an independent Haitian project run by a newly constituted "National Council for Economic Liberation," which was not connected to international funding. Regardless of the actual details, Duvalier would make the airport a symbol of autonomy— and not dependence on the Americans—and did not mention the similar ceremony that had taken place four years before. In a move bound to irk either the Americans or the Haitians, or both, in its coverage of the event, local Anglophone weekly *Haiti Sun* mentioned that the groundbreaking relied on "heavy machinery requisitioned from ODVA for the initial stage of the work."<sup>73</sup>

### ***Conflicting U.S. Positions***

For those in Washington who saw expanded financial aid as the means to deterring communism, the Punte del Este conference provided a new opportunity to sell their case. Shortly before leaving the ARA to become ambassador to Spain, Woodward warned that Cuban and Haitian communists would use perceptions of American stinginess to drive a wedge between Duvalier and the United States. Since the

---

<sup>73</sup> "Jet Airport By 'Self-Help,'" *Haiti Sun*, February 4, 1962.

government decided to move forward with the loans for the airport and the southern road, he wrote, "Nothing is to be gained by not moving ahead at the same time with the much-needed basic human and rural development without which Haiti cannot be expected to develop a more responsible citizenry and government."<sup>74</sup> Officials who found themselves in this contradictory position tried to separate to some degree promoting economic development in Haiti from helping the dictator that ruled it.

Although Thurston went along with policy originating in Washington, he objected to the proposal of taking a positive stance towards the Duvalier government. He warned Edwin Martin, Woodward's replacement as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, that the regime was irredeemable: "Quite apart from the politico-moral aspects of a regime as repressive and illiberal as the one in power here, it lacks those attributes of efficiency and orderliness which sometimes give a certain plausibility to defense of dictatorship." Duvalier had concentrated power so effectively in his person that the government was not capable of leading. Since reforming the Duvalier regime was impossible, Thurston urged his counterparts in the State Department to start seriously considering alternative leadership. "What is needed on our side, I believe, is a policy which will provide for an orderly, peaceful transition to whatever regime will follow that of Duvalier." In this light, ARA's paradoxical approach

---

<sup>74</sup> Robert Woodward to Teodoro Moscoso, "Presidential Determination on Release of AID Funds for Haiti," February 20, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Econ Aid, NARA, College Park, MD.

to Haiti was self-defeating, because continued aid to Haiti only discouraged any possible opposition movement. U.S. efforts to engage with opposition forces in exile had been half-hearted, and opponents of the regime within Haiti were cowed by political terrorism and uncertainty about the future. "There is the danger of a vicious circle here since, as long as an impression is created through our aid programs and otherwise that we are in league with the Duvalier Government, even the most courageous opponents hesitate to take on both their own and the United States Governments."<sup>75</sup>

On April 6, 1962, Thurston announced a \$7.2 million aid package to Haiti that would be used for agricultural projects and malaria eradication.<sup>76</sup> The money, which was to remain with USAID, was significantly less than the sums the ARA floated in the summer of 1961. Nonetheless Duvalier portrayed it as a sign of U.S. support for the regime, to the dismay of American officials. Ten days later, Duvalier gave a speech at the opening session of the Haitian legislature in which he equated increased American aid with support of his anti-democratic methods. He said that thanks to an American change of heart, the two countries were embarking on a "broad and fruitful cooperation, in reciprocal understanding and in respect and dignity." Duvalier portrayed American

---

<sup>75</sup> Raymond Thurston to Edwin Martin, March 23, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 51, Folder Limited Distribution, NARA, College Park, MD.

<sup>76</sup> "A Brief History of U.S. Experience in Providing Aid to Haiti," February 8, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50 Folder USAID, NARA, College Park, MD.

actions as recognition of his government as "a legitimate power, a strong power...a stable power, the only one upon which it is realistic to count tomorrow."<sup>77</sup> The dictator easily disrupted American efforts to portray economic investments as apolitical.

Thurston complained in a telegram to the State Department, "Duvalier message is cleverly formulated attempt to nail another US trophy onto his political wall." It was a "blatant public effort to create impression recent US decisions re economic assistance to Haiti show we back Duvalier's staying power on basis of last year's trumped-up elections."<sup>78</sup> America's policy regional policy demanded supporting the regime, undercutting the embassy's concurrent policy of not supporting it. This paradox was typical of the contradictions of U.S. policy towards authoritarian governments during the Cold War.

Despite these frustrations, the airport loan remained on the negotiating table largely because the United States Atlantic Command, the military circumscription in charge protecting the Atlantic against Soviet attack, determined that an extended runway in Port-au-Prince would be a useful resource in its contingency plans. Although the details of their regional military strategy remain unknown, there is no doubt the U.S. military, like Pan Am, wanted to be able to land larger and heavier aircrafts in Haiti. In

---

<sup>77</sup> David Thompson to DOS, "No. 405," Foreign Service Dispatch, April 20, 1962, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 145, NACP.

<sup>78</sup> Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 310," April 24, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Distribution, NACP.

February 1962, a representative of the Supreme Allied Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) wrote to Forest Abbdul, the Officer in Charge of Haitian Affairs at the ARA, to say that the military was "very interested in the new commercial airfield planned for Port-au-Prince" and to request copies of engineering plans for the airport.<sup>79</sup> After military officials examined the plans, it became clear that, for the military's purposes, the runway would need to be several hundred feet longer than specified in existing plans. In May, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Inter-American Affairs wrote to Moscoso recommending that USAID accommodate the military's needs only if the change to the engineering plans could be introduced "discreetly as a technical rather than a military matter" so as not to give Duvalier additional leverage.<sup>80</sup> Moscoso wrote back a few days later to confirm that the matter would be handled "discreetly," but pointed out that increasing the length of the runway would cost an additional \$50,000.<sup>81</sup> The following week, a Pan American executive arrived in Port-au-Prince to deliver a letter to the Haitian government that recommended the length of the runway

---

<sup>79</sup> V. Lansing Collins Jr. to Forest Abbdul, February 19, 1962, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 4, Folder Aid-Loans VI, NACP.

<sup>80</sup> Richard N. Goodwin to Teodoro Moscoso, "Haiti-DOD Interest in Proposed New Airport," May 11, 1962, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 4, Folder Aid-Loans VII, NACP.

<sup>81</sup> Teodoro Moscoso to Richard N. Goodwin, "DOD Request for Longer Runway in Haiti Airport," May 16, 1962, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, 4, Folder Aid-Loans VII, NACP.

be extended.<sup>82</sup> Over the months that followed, there was back and forth between the embassy and the aid agencies about whether or not they should make the Haitians pay the additional costs or whether the tightly controlled loan would be expanded.<sup>83</sup> Pan Am operated as a covert agent of U.S. military and political interests.<sup>84</sup>

Over the summer of 1962, the ARA began to come around to the embassy's view that Duvalier should be ousted from power. In July, Moscoso and Edwin Martin wrote a secret memo to Secretary Rusk proposing a significant shift in policy. The new plan aimed "to have Duvalier replaced by a more efficient, enlightened and friendly government before May 1963... but to avoid action by us that would bring about a premature showdown with him." They proposed a delicate ballet: slowly phasing out existing development projects and walking back promises of financial support, but at a slow enough pace "to avoid either strengthening Duvalier unduly or provoking him or his opponents to intemperate action prematurely." The airport loan, they said, would

---

<sup>82</sup> David R. Thompson, "Airport Negotiations between FOH and Pan American Airways," Memorandum of Conversation, May 23, 1962, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 4, Folder Aid-Loans VII, NACP.

<sup>83</sup> Raymond Thurston to DOS, Telegram, September 1, 1962, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 4, Folder Airport, NACP; Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 54," August 2, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, NACP.

<sup>84</sup> This was by no means unique to Pan Am or the United States. For more on Pan Am, see Vleck, *Empire of the Air*. For the case of British Airways and the United Kingdom, see Bhimull, *Empire in the Air*.

remain on the table while USAID withdrew the offer of the road loan, a strategy with the added benefit of meeting an "important (but not decisive) U.S. military requirement."<sup>85</sup>

Still, enthusiasm was tempered by the lack of an acceptable alternative. U.S. officials were deeply concerned that if they removed Duvalier, either Cuban forces or dormant communist sympathizers in Haiti would take charge and create "another Cuba." Any alternative would have to be acceptable to Haitians, which, from the U.S. perspective, meant that it would have to "seem to be independent of any foreign domination...favor certain progressive social and economic measures which might be criticized as leftist or socialist...[and] from time to time will have to bait the white race."<sup>86</sup> Officials were uninspired by their encounters with Haitian political leaders in exile, whom they considered too consumed by infighting and self-interest to be reliable partners in the fight against Duvalier.

### ***The Cuban Missile Crisis***

Another shift in the awkward calculus of Cold War Caribbean politics occurred in mid-October 1962, with a new conflict between the U.S., the Soviet Union, and Cuba. On October 16, U.S. spy planes discovered Soviet nuclear missile installations in Cuba.

---

<sup>85</sup> Edwin Martin and Teodoro Moscoso, "Certain Military and Economic Aid Problems in Haiti," Memorandum for the Secretary, July 21, 1962, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 4, NACP.

<sup>86</sup> "Action Program for Haiti," October 3, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 51, Folder Limited Distribution, NACP.

Kennedy demanded Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev have the missiles removed. The U.S. military implemented an air and naval blockade to prevent the transportation of additional missiles. A potentially catastrophic confrontation loomed.

Throughout this tense period, Duvalier actively supported the Americans. On October 23, he wrote a letter offering to open up Haiti's ports and airfields to U.S. military units involved in an air and naval blockade in the Caribbean to prevent the transportation of additional missiles, which the Kennedy administration accepted.<sup>87</sup> Sources are quiet on how exactly Haitian territory was used in actions against Cuba, but on October 26, Thurston told the State Department, "I believe this is the optimum time for concluding airport loan" and asked them to expedite instructions.<sup>88</sup> The crisis was still unfolding when Thurston made this request, implying that the runway was more tied up in the politics of the moment than we currently understand.

Despite Duvalier's aid during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and despite the U.S. military's interest in the runway, U.S. diplomats in Port-au-Prince were adamant that publicity should make no mention of Haiti's strategic importance for "hemispheric security." Thurston discouraged Duvalier's efforts "to present agreement on airport as

---

<sup>87</sup> William Brubeck to Bundy McGeorge, "Transmitting President Duvalier's Replies to Two Messages from President Kennedy on Cuban Situation," Memorandum, November 23, 1962, Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries. Haiti: General, September 1962-February 1963. JFKNSF-103-003., JFKPL.

<sup>88</sup> Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 216," October 26, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Airport, NACP.

important step in strategic defense of Hemisphere enabling US heavy military jet planes to make use of Haitian facilities which have been offered in connection with current Cuban crisis." Such a message, he feared, would discourage the ranks of Haitian opposition they hoped would soon overthrow Duvalier. The newly accelerated negotiations imply that the airport was significant for security reasons, but Thurston insisted that the Haitian government repeat the American message that the airport's military importance was secondary to its economic and tourist potential.<sup>89</sup> The U.S. wanted the runway to be seen as an investment in the country's well-being, but, "In characteristic fashion," Thurston complained, "[Duvalier] is trying convert fact that we are financing airport into generous offer by him of military facility to US."<sup>90</sup> It was proving impossible for the United States to both work with the Duvalier dictatorship and simultaneously maintain the facade of being above such politics.

The Secretary of State shared these concerns. As the two governments drafted a joint press release announcing the loan's revival, Rusk authorized Thurston to withhold his signature on the agreement if Haitian officials made any other talking points beyond the airport's economic benefits. "Statement re facilities benefiting hemispheric defense

---

<sup>89</sup> Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 247," November 16, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 51, Folder President Duvalier, NACP.

<sup>90</sup> Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 264," November 27, 1962, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 51, Folder Airport Loan, NACP.

and US economy not acceptable," he warned.<sup>91</sup> The contradictions of American policy towards Duvalier—both supporting him and not supporting him—were a constant frustration for officials. Nonetheless, the loan agreement negotiated at Punte del Este was finally signed on November 29, 1962, under the auspices of the Alliance for Progress.<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, American officials and diplomats continued hammering out plans they hoped would lead to Duvalier's overthrow by May 15, 1963, the end of his constitutionally elected term. Justifying to themselves the airport project as a framework for keeping open communication channels with Haitian officials, they imagined the loan would serve as pacifier to "reduce the risk that our negative attitude toward Duvalier might provoke him to intemperate action before we were prepared to deal with him."<sup>93</sup>

In the meantime, American officials reached out to other Latin American governments in the hopes of establishing a multilateral coalition that could work together to topple the Haitian dictator. Rusk wrote to the U.S. ambassador in the Dominican Republic to brainstorm the merits of multilateral versus unilateral action against Duvalier:

---

<sup>91</sup> Dean Rusk to Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 161," November 28, 1962, Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries. Haiti: General, September 1962-February 1963. JFKNSF-103-003, JFKPL.

<sup>92</sup> Raymond Thurston to Dean Rusk, "Telegram No. 270," November 29, 1962, 270, Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries. Haiti: General, September 1962-February 1963. JFKNSF-103-003, JFKPL.

<sup>93</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States* Document 375.

While some kind of OAS umbrella would be urgently sought for the direct involvement of US forces in any of the contingencies envisioned, it must be recognized that a variety of developments within Haiti could make it incumbent [sic] on us to move our forces much more rapidly than it would be possible to obtain any sort of OAS action. Should this prove to be necessary, it would be distinctly advantageous if our actions enjoyed the sanction (and possible participation) of as many as possible of the Hemisphere governments that share our interest in preventing a disaster in Haiti.<sup>94</sup>

It seems that, as the relationship between the Haiti and the United States deteriorated, aid officials in Port-au-Prince began to deliberately stall the loan process by making overtures designed to offend Duvalier's government. The very language of the negotiations became a vehicle for challenges to and assertions of Haitian sovereignty. USAID officials rejected documents from the director of the *Banque National de la République d'Haiti* (BNRH) on the grounds that they had not been written in English. In a letter to Minister of Finance Clovis Désinor, David Keogh, the Acting Director of USAID in Haiti, wrote, "I wish to point out to you and to the Government of Haiti, that the implementation of this loan can proceed without undue delays, now and in the future, only if all official instructions are meticulously followed."<sup>95</sup> Désinor retorted, "It should be noted and called to the attention of the officials of Your Government and of AID that the official language of Haiti is French and that any official communication of the Haitian State ... must be written and sent out in the official language of the country as required by the Constitution." The Duvalier government would not bend to American

---

<sup>94</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States* Document 376.

<sup>95</sup> Raymond Thurston to DOS, "Airgram No. 913," April 17, 1963, RG 286 USAID Mission to Haiti Central Subject Files Box 12 Folder Agreements HIDcon AIRP, NACP.

demands. "The translation in a foreign language of any letter, document or other," wrote Désinor, "is an act of courtesy to somewhat facilitate understanding to the foreign party eventually."<sup>96</sup>

As the last day of Duvalier's constitutional mandate approached, the domestic political situation destabilized rapidly. In early April 1963, the dictator caught wind of a plot being fomented against him in the Haitian army. He quickly purged the military, executing some officers and pushing others into asylum and exile. Later that month, Duvalier's former advisor Clement Barbot attempted to assassinate the Duvalier children on their way to school. Initially, Duvalier suspected a military officer named Lieutenant François Benoit. He sent the Presidential Guard to the Benoit residence, where they proceeded to massacre everyone inside, including children. Upon learning that the misidentified Lt. Benoit had escaped the carnage and fled to the Dominican Embassy, the soldiers penetrated the embassy and surrounded the ambassador's residence.<sup>97</sup> The lieutenant's brother was an employee of the U.S. Embassy, and Thurston hid him and his wife from the slaughter.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Clovis Désinor to David Keogh, April 4, 1963, RG 286 USAID Mission to Haiti Central Subject Files Box 12 Folder Agreements HIDcon AIRP, NACP.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard Diederich and Al Burt, *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005), 204–5.

<sup>98</sup> Raymond Thurston to DOS, "Telegram No. 427," April 23, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 51, Folder Haiti Situation, NACP.

Duvalier's reckless violence against his citizens led to a major violation of diplomatic protocol that nearly erupted into war between Haiti and its neighbor. Hundreds were arrested in Port-au-Prince, and untold numbers were killed or disappeared in the crackdown. Juan Bosch, the new president of the Dominican Republic, began massing troops along the border. Bosch, a progressive, had made challenging the dictator next door a fundamental part of his foreign policy, going so far as to say that he would count his presidency a failure if Duvalier remained in office by the end of his term.<sup>99</sup> Bosch urged fellow OAS member states to collaborate on a joint invasion of Haiti, a multilateral intervention beyond the scope of anything the OAS had done before, on the grounds that the organization was committed to defending democracy and human rights in the region.<sup>100</sup> Behind the scenes, the Americans were working to help Bosch form a multilateral coalition while quickly assessing possible replacements for Duvalier. The Dominican president's plan, if successful, would accomplish a significant American goal while minimizing the fingerprints of the U.S. government.

The much-anticipated coup never materialized. Juan Bosch lost the support of the Dominican military, whose conservative leaders were mistrustful of the left-leaning

---

<sup>99</sup> Alcindor, "U.S.-Haiti Relations from 1957 to 1963: Anticommunism, Nation-Building, and Racial Diplomacy in the Age of National Liberation," 302.

<sup>100</sup> Diederich and Burt, *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes*, 202–22.

president's intentions.<sup>101</sup> In addition, the multilateral coalition failed to come together.<sup>102</sup> Instead of invading Haiti, Dominican authorities dismantled a training camp of Haitian exiles on the Dominican side of the border.<sup>103</sup>

After the failed coup attempt, the airport loan—like U.S. policy towards Haiti more generally—was caught in a stalemate. U.S. officials were unwilling to move forward with it, but also unwilling to pull it entirely. They hoped that if a successor government could replace Duvalier, quick action on aid projects could be used to signal American approval and support.<sup>104</sup> On May 15, a State Department agent penned a note to USAID officials to "confirm our verbal understanding that no disbursements are to be made under the Haiti airport loan" until both the Port-au-Prince embassy and the State Department found it to be "politically expedient."<sup>105</sup> Martin, no doubt conscientious of military needs, proposed continuing with the airport loan despite the unsuccessful coup attempt. But Haitian officials read American hostility differently and "seem convinced US airport loan indefinitely suspended."<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Charles Le Genissel, "No. 251/ AM," May 29, 1963, 524 PO/B Box 87, CADN.

<sup>102</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States* Document 385.

<sup>103</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States* Document 387.

<sup>104</sup> "Action Program for Haiti."

<sup>105</sup> Kennedy Crockett to Philip Glaessner and Kennedy Lipincott, "Haiti Airport Loan," May 15, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964 Box 50, Folder Airport, NACP.

<sup>106</sup> George L. Moore, "Airport Loan - Conversation with PAA Manager, Mr. McElhannon," Memorandum for the Files, June 18, 1963, RG 286 USAID Mission to Haiti Central Subject Files Box 12 Folder Agreements HIDcon AIRP, NACP.

Trying to maintain local policies that ran countercurrent to regional policies ultimately resulted in a confused and unfocused American approach to the Duvalier dictatorship. Even President Kennedy seemed lost. At an Oval Office meeting on May 31, 1963, he told his national security advisor and a State Department representative, "I don't know quite what our policy is towards Duvalier... we've given up completely on him, that's to fair to say?"<sup>107</sup>

Kennedy may have been confused, but Duvalier made up his mind about Kennedy. Rather than allow the United States continued leverage over Haitian affairs, he opted to cut ties. He expelled Thurston and recalled Louis Mars.<sup>108</sup> When the remaining embassy officials got word that the regime was planning on publicly denouncing the airport loan as American overreach, the State Department moved quickly to get out in front of the story.<sup>109</sup> On July 3, officials issued a press release announcing that since the Duvalier government had defaulted on payments to the DLF and other agencies for prior loans, all payments on the airport loan had been suspended.<sup>110</sup> But it was Duvalier, and not the U.S. government, who lost interest in the loan. A few months later, the

---

<sup>107</sup> Sound recording, Tape 90. British Guiana and Haiti, 31 May 1963 [Portions Open]. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. President's Office Files. Series 13.1. Presidential Recordings: Meetings, Box MTG, Folder: "Meetings: Tape 90. British Guiana and Haiti, 31 May 1963". JFKPOF-MTG-090-002 JFKL. Streaming audio, 3:37. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKPOF-MTG-090-002.aspx>

<sup>108</sup> Edgar Ansel Mowrer, "Picture of Haiti Distorted by U.S.," *The Pantograph*, June 20, 1963.

<sup>109</sup> George Ball to Raymond Thurston, "Telegram No. 4," July 2, 1963, 4, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964 Box 50, Folder Haiti Financial, NACP.

<sup>110</sup> "Department of State Press Release No. 353," July 3, 1963, 524 PO/B Box 175, CADN.

airport loan was formally canceled, after the Duvalier government began to withdraw their own funds from monitored accounts that had been set up under the loan's auspices.<sup>111</sup> The airport loan negotiated at Punte del Este was dead. No payments had ever been made.

### ***Breaking Ground on the Airport***

In the aftermath of the dramatic events of the spring of 1963, the Haitian government moved forward with the airport without U.S. assistance. Duvalier's persistence was no doubt bolstered by the defeat of his opponents: Juan Bosch was overthrown in U.S.-backed military coup in September 1963; Kennedy was assassinated two months later. But there were economic concerns to attend to as well. Tourism in Haiti had come to a complete standstill, through surely this owed as much to the eruption of political terrorism as the lack of a jet-friendly airport. Not only were foreigners not coming to Haiti, but Haitians were leaving: Pan Am statistics showed departing planes were fuller than arriving planes, pointing to a net loss of Haitians, a process that accelerated in the spring and summer of 1963. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy reported that requests for visas doubled between 1962 and 1963.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Teodoro Moscoso to Raymond Thurston, "Action Memorandum for the Ambassador," September 27, 1963, RG 286 USAID Mission to Haiti Central Subject Files Box 12 Folder Agreements HIDcon AIRP, NACP.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Hill, "Haitian Foreign Exchange Difficulties in August and September," October 1, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Financial, NACP.

These factors were contributing to a rapid depletion of Haiti's foreign exchange reserves. New strategies were needed. In July, Minister of Commerce Clovis Désinor pitched the possibility of a public-private partnership on airport at a meeting with several hundred Haitian business leaders.<sup>113</sup> In November, the government decreed that the funds from a gasoline tax, contributions from government agencies, and "voluntary contributions from salaries" of state employees would be channeled to an Economic Development Fund. The Fund, the government claimed, would pay for the construction of the airport, the Port-au-Prince-Cayes road, and other development projects that had previously been under the international development umbrella.<sup>114</sup>

Although the U.S. government had formally ended its involvement in the airport, Pan Am did not. It is possible that the airline continued to covertly represent the political and military interests of the U.S. government, as they had done when the plans for the runway needed to be changed. The collapse of the loan agreement worried Pan Am. If the Duvalier government found another country to sponsor the airport, Haiti could become a foothold for another flagship carrier, such as Air France.<sup>115</sup> In August, Pan Am submitted to the Haitian government a pared-down engineering plan that

---

<sup>113</sup> V.E. Blacque to DOS, "Désinor Asks Businessmens' Aid for *Le Démarrage*," Airgram, July 16, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Economic, NACP.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Hill to DOS, "Economic Development: GOH Economic Development Budget Announced," November 30, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964, Box 50, Folder Haiti Economic, NACP.

<sup>115</sup> Moore, "Airport Loan - Conversation with PAA Manager, Mr. McElhannon."

would cost \$1.5 million to build a new runway; a terminal building and other non-essential facilities were excluded. The company refused to fund the project but agreed to participate in an advisory role.<sup>116</sup> American oil and gas company Texaco also continued as a partner, having agreed to finance the construction of the airport's fueling facilities.

To oversee the airport's construction, the regime tapped Haitian talent. The project was managed by Cambronne, the new Minister of Public Works, following Levêque's termination in January 1963. Cambronne recruited a team of Haitian architects and engineers. Maxime Léon oversaw the runway. Pierre St. Come took charge of the terminal facilities. Their teams included engineers Pierre Petit and Alix Cinéas. The experience gave them credibility; all four of these men would go on lead the Ministry of Public Works before 1987.<sup>117</sup> The cement came from Ciment d'Haiti, a French-owned cement plant about twenty-five miles north of the airport site, in Cabaret (see Chapter 5). To execute the project, the team relied on the construction equipment commandeered from the ODVA (see the equipment in the foreground of Figure 9).

---

<sup>116</sup> Edward Glion Curtis to DOS, "Telegram No. 232," September 10, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964 Box 50, Folder Airport, NACP.

<sup>117</sup> Pierre Petit, who we learn about more in Chapter 4, would also serve as Minister of Public Works after the collapse of the dictatorship in 1987.



Figure 9: Undated Photo from the runway's construction<sup>118</sup>

In November 1963, the local Pan Am representative reported to the U.S. Embassy that he had visited the site and "saw three bulldozers at work as well as a surveyor and linesman." Embassy officials were impressed that the construction "is being done completely without publicity," which they interpreted as "a sign that the Haitians are serious about it this time."<sup>119</sup> France's ambassador, Charles Le Genessiel, also remarked in his dispatches to Paris on the lack of publicity about the Duvalier government's progress, but speculated that this was due to the fact that to build the runway the

---

<sup>118</sup> Unknown, *Photo of Port-Au-Prince Runway under Construction*, CIDHICA.

<sup>119</sup> Robert Hill, "Haitian Work on the Airport," November 4, 1963, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Haiti U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Classified General Records, 1920-1964 Box 50, Folder Airport, NACP.

government had commandeered the construction equipment from the ODVA project.<sup>120</sup>

In June, he reported that a third of the runway was paved and that construction on the terminal building had begun under the supervision of Pierre St. Come.<sup>121</sup> Thurston's replacement in Haiti, Benson Timmons, opined in April 1964 that the Haitians' prevented them from gaining leverage over Duvalier by losing interest in the loan.<sup>122</sup>

To prepare for the airport's inauguration, Pan Am agents promised to launch a publicity campaign for tourism to Haiti.<sup>123</sup> In October, the government sent a delegation to a travel agents' conference in Miami to publicize the new airport. Agents were invited to sample Haitian rum and coffee while musicians and dancers performed at a conference hotel.<sup>124</sup> Local newspapers began carrying updates about the airport's imminent completion in the late fall of 1964. "At the project's current stage," boasted *Le Jour* on November 21, "a plane could land safely."<sup>125</sup> In early January, newspapers announced that the inauguration was scheduled for January 22, 1965, which was timed to coincide with the carnival festival. The Communal Council of Port-au-Prince asked

---

<sup>120</sup> Charles Le Genissel, "No. 8/ DE," January 9, 1964, 524 PO/B Box 159, CADN.

<sup>121</sup> V.E. Blacque to DOS, "Airgram No. 203," November 25, 1964, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 145, Folder Haiti, NACP.

<sup>122</sup> Kennedy Crockett to Benson E.L. Timmons III, April 6, 1964, RG 59 Bureau of Inter American Affairs / Office of the Director of Caribbean Countries, Records Relating to Haiti 1960-1974, Box 7, Folder Official Informal Outgoing, NACP.

<sup>123</sup> Charles Le Genissel, "No. 250/DE," June 19, 1964, 524 PO/B Box 159, CADN.

<sup>124</sup> V.E. Blacque to DOS, "Airgram No. 337," February 27, 1965, 337, RG 166 Records of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Narrative Reports, Haiti, Box 145 Folder Haiti, NACP.

<sup>125</sup> "Les travaux s'activent à Maïs Gâté," *Le Jour*, November 21, 1964.

residents to decorate their houses and cars in preparation for the occasion.<sup>126</sup> A carnival group, advised by macoute leader Webert Guerrier, formed under the name "Delmas Jet."<sup>127</sup> That year's carnival theme song was "Jet Rampa" by Wébert Sicot, a cheerful *kompas* tune about the airport whose bridge repeated the line "Men jet-la!" ("There's the jet!") festively over and over.<sup>128</sup>

### ***Inauguration of François Duvalier Airport***

On the morning of Friday, January 22, 1965, thousands of people headed to Mais-Gaté. The road to the airport was festooned with portraits of François Duvalier.<sup>129</sup> The government declared three days of holiday to mark the inauguration of both the airport and Duvalierville, the model city erected near Cabaret.<sup>130</sup> Official government estimates said the crowd included approximately 60,000 people; non-official accounts confirmed a large attendance. Around noon, the Duvalier family and entourage arrived. Together they all awaited the arrival of a Pan Am Boeing 707 that had departed that morning from New York City's recently renamed John F. Kennedy Airport. The plane, captained by a pilot named Lawrence M. Holloway, carried 100 passengers, including Pan Am officials,

---

<sup>126</sup> "Administration Communale de Port-Au-Prince Communiqué," *Panorama*, January 10, 1965.

<sup>127</sup> "Un comité est formé pour inaugurer le 22," *Le Matin*, January 16, 1965.

<sup>128</sup> Using a passing reference (Gage Averill, *A Day for the Hunter, a Day for the Prey: Popular Music and Power in Haiti* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 92), I was able to locate the 1965 Carnival song online. It can be found here: <https://soundcloud.com/devolcy/webert-sicot-kanaval-1965-jet-rampa>

<sup>129</sup> "Les Grandes Manifestations d'Inauguration de Duvalierville et de l'Aéroport International," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 25, 1965.

<sup>130</sup> "Arrete de Chomage," *Panorama*, January 17, 1965.

American journalists, travel agents, and employees of Haiti's U.S.-based tourist offices.<sup>131</sup> The group included journalists from travel magazines and mainstream outlets such as the Associated Press, United Press International, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, as well as African-American publications including the Associated Negro Press and *Ebony*.<sup>132</sup> Before landing in Port-au-Prince, the plane looped above northern Haiti, offering its passengers an impressive view of the Citadelle.<sup>133</sup> The pilot circled over Port-au-Prince, showing off the enormous plane to the city's residents below.

One of the passengers, a journalist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, an African-American newspaper, described the scene:

Like the first creatures to debark from a flying saucer, we landed before a throng of 60,000 Haitians who lined the new jet runway, crowded the nearby hill-tops, oozed out onto the landing field and sat crammed in temporary stands erected in the skeleton of what was to be a new airport terminal... Something like a jet plane could create this much of a stir? Then, it was that we, the visitors, began to understand the meaning of the whole thing. This new jet airport was a tremendous source of national pride. Not only was it one of the few, if not the only one, to be built in Latin America without outside aid, but it was to be the means of bringing Haiti back into the mainstream of tourism.<sup>134</sup>

After the passengers disembarked onto the 8,200-foot runway, a stage was positioned near the plane. The archbishop of Cap-Haïtien blessed the jet. Francois Duvalier's wife, Simone, christened it by smashing a bottle of rum on its nose.<sup>135</sup> Three

---

<sup>131</sup> United Press International, "Haiti Makes Bid for U.S. Tourists," *The Odessa American*, December 10, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> "Nos hôtes étrangers pour le 22 Janvier," *Le Matin*, January 15, 1965.

<sup>133</sup> Richard Joseph, "Haiti Welcomes Carnival and New Jet Service," *Chicago Tribune*, February 21, 1965.

<sup>134</sup> Phyl Garland, "Haiti Offers Tan Tourists Special Appeals: Thousands Herald New Jet Service," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 13, 1965.

<sup>135</sup> "Programme des fêtes des 22, 23, 24 Janvier," *Le Matin*, January 18, 1965.

hours of speeches began. Speakers included William F. Raven, Pan Am's Latin American Division Manger; Gérard de Catalogue, Haiti's General Director of the National Tourism Office; and Luckner Cambronne.



Figure 10 Photo of Raven (center) and Cambronne (right) at inauguration<sup>136</sup>

In a speech that typified the era's peculiar blend of nationalism and personality cult, Cambronne groveled that Duvalier's god-like leadership perpetuated the values of the Haitian Revolution: the airport was "a symbol of a community faithful to the creative virtues of the heroism of Vertières, symbol of the loyalty of a nation and of a Leader to

---

<sup>136</sup> Puoto Dietz, *Cambronne and Raven at Inauguration of the Runway*, December 22, 1965, CIDHICA.

the flame of action and combat that yesterday rekindled the passions on high of our saga, and that today revives the will to overcome obstacles..."<sup>137</sup>

The orations culminated in a speech by Duvalier himself, who took personal credit for the runway's completion:

With you, People of my Country, I built this airport that will remain for the future a monument of dignity and national pride. Each sack of cement, each rock, each grain of sand will teach tomorrow's generations that in the year of grace 1965, one Man, DUVALIER, one government, That of DUVALIER, recovered the dignity of a Community of men, reaffirmed the Haitian's capacities, proved that HAITI can raise itself to the highest technical level.<sup>138</sup>

Most of the foreign press coverage of the airport's inauguration was positive—probably part of the publicity package promised by Pan Am. The articles made no mention of the way the project was folded into the cult of personality surrounding the dictator. Accounts such as the one that appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier* offered variations on the Duvalierist theme of underdog country fighting against the odds to modernize itself. For the most part, the articles obligingly extolled readers to visit with descriptions of charming, simple inhabitants and clean, pretty hotels. Shortly thereafter, Pan Am began to feature trips to Haiti in its advertisements in American newspapers with the tag line, "Charmingly French. Independently Haitian. And gloriously uninhibited. Beach it by day; revel by night."<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> "A l'Inauguration de l'Aéroport International," *Panorama*, February 3, 1965.

<sup>138</sup> "Le Message Présidentiel Du 22 Janvier à l'Aéroport," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 25, 1965.

<sup>139</sup> Pan Am [advertisement], *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1965, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, J. Walter Thompson Company Archives, Competitive Advertisements, 1965 Box 25, folder Pan Am, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the government and Pan Am's efforts at publicity, the runway's completion did not immediately lead to a major increase in tourism—suggesting it was limited as much by the fearful reputation of Duvalier's repressive police state as the length of the runway. In 1967, approximately 12,000 passengers arrived in Haiti by plane; three years later, that number had increased to 32,100.<sup>140</sup> Jamaica, by comparison, had more than 345,000 arrivals in 1966.<sup>141</sup> But the airport's construction was as much about building the regime's reputation within Haiti as it was about building the country's reputation abroad. On September 22, 1967, two years after the runway's completion, the government inaugurated a new terminal building built by Pierre St. Come. Funding for the structure is unclear, but may have ultimately come from Pan American Airways despite their initial reluctance. Like the celebration of the runway, the opening of the terminal building was turned into a “spectacle of government achievement.” People poured into the building, lining the road and balcony, which was decorated with red-and-black Haitian flags (See Figure 11). By pairing the inauguration of Port-au-Prince construction projects with the anniversary of Duvalier's election, the regime symbolically laced together the city and regime that ruled it.

---

<sup>140</sup> IMF, “Haiti-Recent Economic Developments” (International Monetary Fund, June 15, 1972), 58.

<sup>141</sup> “Tourism.”



Figure 11: Inauguration of Terminal Building <sup>142</sup>

This practice began in the first year of the regime, when Duvalier presided over an abortive effort to begin airport construction with an American firm. In that moment, there had been no actual plans, just a drive to portray stability and solidity the regime otherwise lacked. But nine years later, Duvalier no longer had to prove his grasp on power. Nearly all his opponents, both within Haiti and abroad, were dead or defeated. The airport carried a strong ideological message that Duvalier both protected the country's historical legacies and carried it into modernity. They fed into a Duvalierist mythology in which urban transformation, construction, and growth were both a sign of

---

<sup>142</sup> Unknown, *Inauguration of Terminal Building*, September 27, 1967, Miami News Photograph Collection, Box 126, Folder 59, History Miami Museum. Thanks to Jennifer Garçon for sharing this image with me.

and a basis for the regime's progressive stance. By playing up these gestures as regime-defining accomplishments that perpetuated a glorious history of Haitian exceptionalism, the regime projected a tenuous narrative of success that belied its history of violence.



**Figure 12 1971 Haitian 25g coin<sup>143</sup>**

For the regime, the airport remained a key symbol of François Duvalier's accomplishments. In 1971, the government commissioned a new special edition 25-gourde coin (worth \$5 at the time) which bore the image of a jet sailing over the airport, with mountains receding into the distance (see Figure 12). On the opposite face of the coin were the Haitian national arms. It is unclear whether François Duvalier commissioned the coin in the last year of his life as a sign of his accomplishments or if it was minted after his death in April, in which case it would be a government tribute to the former leader.

---

<sup>143</sup> Numismatic Guaranty Corporation, "Haiti 25 Gourdes KM 88," World Coin Price Guide, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.ngccoin.com/price-guide/world/haiti-25-gourdes-km-88-1971-cuid-1131053-duid-1415371>.

In 1980, the Haitian magazine *Dialogue*, the official organ of the Ministry of Information, paid tribute to the deceased president and the airport in a feature article that narrated the airport's construction. The article cast the airport as François Duvalier's ultimate accomplishment, achieved despite the hardships and opposition the regime confronted abroad. Duvalier, the piece said, had rejected urgent offers of aid from American capitalists because he dreamed of the airport as "a monumental construction, conceived and realized by Haitian minds and specialists, made for the benefit and glory of the Haitian."<sup>144</sup> In Duvalierist mythology, the extensive process of trying to secure American aid disappeared, the complex negotiations that linked Haiti, the United States, and Cuba, were forgotten, and instead the airport stood as "a herculean feat comparable to the Citadelle of King Christophe." The politics of the period fell away, and the airport stood as Duvalier's large-scale contribution to the on-going project of Haitian independence.

In a period rightfully remembered for violence and social destruction, the airport is an anomaly with the potential to illuminate more about the dynamics within Haiti during the regime. It reveals that the regime felt compelled to deliver results to groups within Haiti whose fortunes were tied to the tourist industry. It also reveals the complexity and contradictions of Haitian-American relations during the height of the

---

<sup>144</sup> "L'Aéroport François Duvalier: un motif de fierté pour le peuple haïtien," *Dialouge: Organe Officiel du Ministre de l'Information et des Relations Publiques*, October 1980, 23–27.

Cold War. In most narratives of the period, the airport stands in as an allegory for the unscrupulous compromises Americans made in fight against communism. But within Haiti, the airport was folded into a hero narrative of triumph over adversity.

## 4. “And We will be Devoured”: Urbanization and the Consumption of Resources

In a 1973 interview with the architect and planner Albert Mangonès, historian Roger Gaillard remarked that there had been "a kind of implosion of the capital... especially over the last year." The architect concurred that the city was in the throes of a profound transformation. He and Gaillard shared anxieties about signs of urban change: streets blocked with unbearable traffic and beggar children, and sidewalks overrun with vendors hawking their wares. Poor people were concentrated in dense and filthy slums at the center of the city. The sewers, clogged with garbage, were unable to evacuate the rainwater that flooded the streets at each downpour. The forces of transformation were ravenous, consumptive, and destructive. "The state no longer controls Port-au-Prince," Mangonès warned. Without strong intervention, "this city becomes a monster, and we will be devoured."<sup>1</sup>

Whether the Duvalier regime controlled Port-au-Prince, the rapid transformation of the city observed by Mangonès and Gaillard bore its fingerprint. In this chapter, I describe how a specific configuration of political and economic dynamics surrounding the transfer of power from François Duvalier to his son Jean-Claude in April 1971 contributed to a watershed moment in the city's material history. These dynamics

---

<sup>1</sup> Roger Gaillard, "Port-au-Prince en passe de devenir un monstre: Une interview d'Albert Mangonès," *Conjonction*, no. 119 (March 1973): 11.

propelled a massive construction boom, driven by the development of middle and upper-class housing in the areas of Delmas, Pétionville, and Montange Noir. Public discussion of city's urbanization process tends to focus almost exclusively on rural-to-urban migration, but I show that the building of elite neighborhoods contributed to a growth pattern directly implicated in the environmental degradation of the city, especially erosion, flooding, and the reduction of the city's water supply. Government officials, as I will show, had a hard time directing the city's material transformation, but the patterns of transformation nonetheless were influenced by the politics of the period.

### ***Albert Mangonès and Urban Marronage***

On September 22, 1967, the same day François Duvalier inaugurated the terminal building of the new airport, he also laid a cornerstone to mark the beginning of construction on a monument near the National Palace on the city's central plaza, the Champs de Mars. It was to be a larger-than-life figure of a bare-chested man stretched into a low lunge, his muscular torso arching backwards as he blew into a conch shell. Broken irons dangled from his ankles and his right hand grasped a machete. The statue was called *Le Marron Inconnu*, or "The Unknown Runaway Slave." Completed a year later, in 1968, it represented the founders of independent Haiti, revolutionaries who, having broken the chains of slavery, trumpeted their cause to others.

Mangonès designed and built the statute. As an artist, architect, and urban planner, he operated as one the primary visual interpreters of Duvalierist Haiti. He

designed the country's first psychiatric hospital in 1958 and the Haitian Museum of Art in 1972. He directed the restoration of the historical sites of the Citadelle and Sans Souci in the late 1970s. He also worked in the mid-1970s as one of the lead directors of a collaboration between the United Nations and Haitian government to design an urban master plan for Port-au-Prince. His relationship with the regime is complex: late in life, he expressed anxieties about his associations with it, and asserted that, although it was commissioned by Duvalier, *Le Marron Inconnu* carried a subversive anti-authoritarian message. He was uneasy about the compromises he made taking commissions to design buildings and private homes for Duvalier and his allies. His family suffered directly from political violence: in 1963, Mangonès's sister was imprisoned along with her husband in Fort Dimanche, assaulted, and exiled.<sup>2</sup> And yet he became the country's most famous and prolific architect and planner of the Duvalier era.

Albert Mangonès was born in 1917, a son of Edmond Mangonès, the fiery Mayor of Port-au-Prince who lobbied for greater communal autonomy, as outlined in Chapter 1. Albert was a cousin of the leader of the *indigeniste* movement, Jacques Romain, and a grandson of a president. While he was studying architecture at Cornell University in the early 1940s, the faculty awarded him a prize for his construction of a model Haitian

---

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Antonin, *Albert Mangonès: L'espace Public*, Documentary (Le Centre Pétion-Bolivar, 2004). Her husband, Duvalier's first Minister of Public Health Auguste Denizé, provided medical care to his friend Clement Barbot after the latter had gone into hiding and was working to overthrow the dictatorship. The pair was arrested and held in Ft. Dimanche before being released and fleeing into exile in the United States.

village made entirely out of materials native to the island. Haiti "has two classes of people," he told the student paper at the time. "The great majority are peasants, who own small plots of land and live in poverty and ignorance. Ruling them are a small, wealthy, highly-educated aristocracy who, thus far, have been able to do little to improve the lot of the great majority."<sup>3</sup> His comment echoes the binary conception of Haiti in which privilege was organized along the rural-urban divide. Non-elites, were, by definition, rural peasants. Urban poverty represented a subversion of this framework. This viewpoint, shared widely among educated Haitian elites, framed his approach to urbanism throughout his career.

Back in Haiti, Mangonès received his first big break when he worked under German architect August Ferdinand Schmiedigen to help design modernist pavilions for the 1949 International Exposition in Port-au-Prince. One of the major outcomes of the project was the clearance of the low-income neighborhoods along the central waterfront. Mangonès, an early-career professional, probably had little authority over the project, but his writings suggest that he was generally supportive of these slum-clearing projects. In 1955, he published an article in the journal *Reflects d'Haiti* in which he complained that "we"—presumably an elite urban reading audience—had become inured to the sight of Port-au-Prince's slums. He described watching a "ruffian" being

---

<sup>3</sup> "Medal Awarded to Mangones '43," *The Cornell Daily Sun*, January 16, 1943.

brought into the Palace of Justice, but opined that the jury was oblivious to the true crime: "there will not be an hour, a minute, a second of the true trial: the slum, this brew where the yeast of promiscuity, of disenchantment, and of crime, ferments." The jury, he said, did not see that just outside the courtroom sat "the CAUSE of evil," the "authentic, unspeakable slums."<sup>4</sup> In this context, the low-income neighborhood represented a vector of society's moral degradation. He advocated for slum clearance.

At the time that Mangonès wrote that article, Port-au-Prince was still a relatively small city. The population in 1950 was estimated at 143,500. At the time of his interview with Gaillard twenty years later, the population was around 500,000.<sup>5</sup> Much of this new group lived in zones such as La Saline and Cité Simone, densely populated low-income neighborhoods along the city's shore (See Chapter 2). Others inhabited the courtyards and ally-ways between buildings downtown, densifying the old colonial quarter—especially on the north end near Croix-des-Bossales. Meanwhile, emigration from Haiti to North America and Europe—an important consequence of the Duvalier dictatorship—was much more common among the city's wealthy and middle classes.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Albert Mangonès, *En toute urbanité* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Éditions Mémoire, 2001), 50–51.

<sup>5</sup> Uli Locher, "The Fate of Migrants in Urban Haiti: A Survey of Three Port-Au-Prince Neighbourhoods" (Yale University, 1978), 50.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," HAI/ 74 R. 40 (Port-au-Prince: UNCHBP, August 1976), 25, S-1075-0553, UNARMS.

As a result of these dynamics, the population of the urban poor grew at a rate that vastly outpaced the city's other socioeconomic groups.

Despite the rapid pace of demographic growth, Port-au-Prince's low-income neighborhoods had a relatively small geographic footprint and high population density. In 1976, La Saline was estimated to house 1,250 people per hectare, or .003 square miles. By comparison, in the wealthier neighborhood of Pétionville, only 210 people lived in the same amount of space.<sup>7</sup> Increasingly crowded conditions decreased the overall quality of life, as residents competed for limited water, shelter, and economic opportunities. Nonetheless, inhabitants around Croix-des-Bossales paid more in rent per square meter than anyone else in the city. Like low-income neighborhoods in other major cities around the world, the population pressures generated such a high demand for housing that the land near the market became the most valuable in the city, worth four times that of waterfront property in the remodeled Bicentennial quarter and ten times more than nearly everywhere else in the metropolitan area.<sup>8</sup>

These transformations took place in and around the original city center, leading the wealthier inhabitants to decamp to higher elevations. Mangonès, in a 1990 journal article titled "Architecture in Question," speculated that there was an architectural

---

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, 23.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 2," HAI/ 74 R. 40 (Port-au-Prince: UNCHBP, August 1976), S-1075-0553, UNARMS Figure 22.

expression to the country's legacy of *marronage*: "the need to protect, to defend against every possible aggression, occult or evident, is always present and even affirmed in the manner of building the home in Haiti."<sup>9</sup> Tellingly, Mangonès is not referring to homes in areas like La Saline, but rather the barricaded homes in Delmas and Pétionville. But this reveals more than it obscures, and has implications that extend beyond architecture and was a fundamental theme in the material development of the city. Although scholarship on the period focuses on rural-to-urban migrations as the main motor of the Port-au-Prince's material transformation, I argue that the migrations of elites farther from the city center had an equally important role in the city's physical changes. Describing this trend, Gérard Barthélémy writes: "What is *marronage* if not the reaction of a threatened social group that looks for its survival not in violent opposition or in submission-miscegenation, but in rupture, in distance: in putting itself beyond the reach of the aggressor."<sup>10</sup> Given the historical context of the urban-rural divide (explored in Chapter 1), elites interpreted people from the countryside claiming urban space for themselves as "territorial aggression."<sup>11</sup> Like the *marrons*, they fled into the mountains, constructing gated enclaves to protect themselves from the threat unfolding below.

---

<sup>9</sup> Albert Mangones, "Architecture in Question," trans. Paulette Richards, *Callaloo* 15, no. 3 (1992): 846.

<sup>10</sup> Gérard Barthélémy, "L'extension des lotissements sauvages à usage populaire en milieu urbain ou Paysans, Villes, et Bidonvilles en Haiti: Aperçus et réflexions," June 1996, 25–26.

<sup>11</sup> Barthélémy, 26.

Unlike the *marron* honored in Mangonès's 1968 sculpture, the urban *marrons* of 1970s Port-au-Prince were not challenging the structures of oppression; they were fighting to preserve them. As new elite neighborhoods went up in the mountains around Pétienville, and stretched into Delmas, they consumed disproportionate amounts of the city's resources. They ensured that municipal funds paved their roads. Not only that, new construction led to deforestation of the mountain slopes and covered the earth's porous surface with impermeable concrete, which threatened the low-lying neighborhoods below. The clogged sewers and flooding that Mangonès and Gaillard warned about in their 1973 interview were linked more to elite *marronage* and consumption practices than the migration of the rural poor into the capital.

### ***The 1976 Port-au-Prince Urban Master Plan***

The set of documents that makes it possible to observe the spatial dimensions of class in Port-au-Prince also bears Mangonès's name: the 1976 *Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine*. These materials also make visible the conflicts of interpretation over centralization and decentralization. This urban master plan merged from a three-year, \$1 million effort funded by the United Nations Center for Housing Building and Planning (UNCHBP) and co-sponsored by Haitian government agencies *Conseil National de Développement et de Planification* (CONADEP)

and the Ministry of Public Works and Communication (TPTC).<sup>12</sup> Launched in 1973, the aim of the initiative was to produce an urban master plan that would lay out the city's medium-term infrastructure and basic housing needs across all sectors of society.<sup>13</sup>

Mangonès was one of three Haitian co-directors on the project; the others were an engineer named Louis Jadotte and an architect-violinist named Fritz Benjamin.

According to interviews with people involved in the project, Mangonès role was mainly as a figurehead, and he did not oversee the day-to-day operations of building the Master Plan. He was much more occupied with a concurrent historical preservation project to restore the Citadelle, the independence-era fortress in Milot built by Henri Christophe.<sup>14</sup>

But Mangonès's thoughts about low-income areas are evident in the *Plan de Développement*, likely because this attitude may have been shared by others involved in the project. The *Plan de Développement* is a complicated document full of internal contradictions that reflect contested ways of interpreting Port-au-Prince's urban transformations.

In 1973, the United Nations contracted Planning and Development Collaborative International (PADCO) to execute the project.<sup>15</sup> The Washington, D.C.-based firm,

---

<sup>12</sup> \$1 million in 1976 is the equivalent of \$4.4 million in 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Simon M Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 235.

<sup>14</sup> "L'OEA Transmet à Haiti le Project de Restauration de 'Citadelle Henri Christophe,'" *Panorama*, March 7, 1974.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Dorin to Michel Jobert, "No. 1028/ DE," December 14, 1973, 524 PO/B Box 266, CADN.

founded in 1965, focused on urban and regional development in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and worked closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).<sup>16</sup> PADCO specialized in the issue of low-income housing. The company sent a team to Port-au-Prince to work with a United Nations representative—a German regional planner named Paul Walter Bouda—and CONADEP. PADCO staff carried out much of the actual on-the-ground research, with support from CONADEP employees.

The plan's production was a fraught affair, with acrimonious disagreement breaking about between Bouda, the co-directors, and the PADCO staff about the project's methodology and goals. The plan became a battleground between people who wanted to use it to think up ways to slow or stop urban migration and people wanted to use it to plan a city that would be more accommodating to migrants. For instance, Bouda and the representatives of the Haitian government wanted to design proposals to improve the city by stemming migration from the countryside through a regional economic development plan. Jean-Claude Duvalier had espoused such a position in 1974, when he mentioned in his annual January 2 Ancestors' Day speech the need "to avert the danger of an exaggerated growth of the capital" by building up regional cities

---

<sup>16</sup> "Aujourd'hui comme hier, il s'agit de la conquête de droits fondamentaux et inaliénables de la personne humaine," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 4, 1974.

through employment opportunities that would keep the provincial workforce out of Port-au-Prince.<sup>17</sup>

The urbanists working with PADCO approached massive urban migration as an unavoidable reality, and argued that city improvement could be achieved by making low-income neighborhoods more functional with better access to services. They were neither interested in nor prepared to tackle these issues through national economic development. Intellectual disagreements about urban planning and decentralization became personal ones, and shortly after the project began, another United Nations envoy, Evner Ergun, came to Port-au-Prince to mediate. He reported back to headquarters:

What the Project will and will not produce? I have the impression that the image created for the Project is somewhat bigger than the actual objectives of the Project. Since there is a Governmental policy of “decentralization” – which, I presume, should be interpreted as the decentralization of economic activities – there is a discussion related to the Project, on whether or not “decentralization” should be supported.

It would be a serious misinterpretation of the objectives of the Project if such a position is expected from the Project. Port-au-Prince Development Plan is NOT a national physical development strategy to determine the prospective spatial patterns of economic activity. Nor is it a set of regional planning studies to indicate what can be done for the development of the regions of the country.

The Project will not formulate what the government should or should not do for the decentralization of economic activities. The Project aims at the preparation of a development plan for the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area within the context of its region.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> “Aujourd’hui comme hier, il s’agit de la conquête de droits fondamentaux et inaliénables de la personne humaine.”

<sup>18</sup> Evner Ergun, “Report on the Mission to Haiti (Project: ‘Planification Physique, Habitation et Construction’) 11 October-13 October 1974” (New York, November 1974), S-0175-0555-02, UNARMS.

In principle, the concept of more evenly distributed economic development had much to offer. Haiti's resource distribution was highly skewed, which meant that people outside the Port-au-Prince area struggled to access education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Regionalists supported, for example, building an airport and larger port facilities in Cap-Haïtien—infrastructure that would facilitate greater trade and industry in the north.<sup>19</sup> But it is difficult not to see the regionalization policies within the context of historical geographies of power in Haiti. The economic development of mid-level cities such as Cap-Haïtien or Jacmel would mean little without a simultaneous decentralization of political power. As we saw in Chapter 1, the economic centralization of the country into Port-au-Prince was inextricably connected to the consolidation of power into the hands of a strong central government. But the planners advocating economic regionalism were silent of the issue of political centralization and authoritarianism. At one point, Bouda even edited PADCO's research to reframe the circumstance of "President-for-Life" — the apotheosis of political centralization— as an "opportunity" for rather than a "limitation" of greater regional development.<sup>20</sup> Without

---

<sup>19</sup> Dubois, "Des chiffres qui font peur," *Le Matin*, March 12, 1974.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Walter Bouda, "Commentaires et suggestions concis sur le rapport: 'Strategie de developpement de Port-au-Prince et de sa zone métropolitaine, dans le cadre d'un schema de developpement national' (Rapport de la Phase I: 10/1 au 31/10/1974)," Project Planificaiton Physique, Habitation et Construction, HAI/SD - 0970 (United Nations, November 1974), 3, S-0175-0555-02, UNARMS.

being willing or able to address the political underpinnings of the country's economic centralization, their approach to the issues were cosmetic at best.

Given these circumstances, it is possible that the regionalization expressed more the desire to clear the city of low-income neighborhoods than to reduce the inequalities created by uneven geographies of power on a national scale. The push for regionalization under Jean-Claude Duvalier echoed the anti-peasant discourses of earlier decades. Although it may have emerged from a different intellectual tradition, its depoliticized aims were ultimately the same. At its core, it was based on the premise that urban migration was destroying Port-au-Prince through the creation of unsightly slums, what Mangonès had called "the CAUSE of evil" in 1955. There was little substantial discussion in the plan's materials of the root causes of peasant poverty. If peasants had to leave the land, preferably they would go to one of the Haiti's other cities, not the one that was inhabited by the majority of the city's political and commercial elite and remained the national hub of international tourism.

The *Plan de Développement*, published in 1976, was rife with methodological and ideological tensions. It focused on immense disparities within in the metropolitan region including uneven access to housing, incomes, and basic resources. It begrudgingly entertaining national regionalization strategies with caveats such as: "If it is considered inevitable that demographic and economic growth will have an urban origin, up to what point can the goal of decentralization of Port-au-Prince towards smaller urban centers be

realized?"<sup>21</sup> It depicted Haitian society as lacerated by stark disparity dividing a small elite and a poor majority. Simon Fass, who worked as a PADCO specialist, recalled, "The reports painted a picture that was worse than anyone imagined, and they implied that public policies, priorities, and institutional incapacities were largely responsible for the situation." Unsatisfied, or threatened, the government promptly rejected the reports and kept them from circulation in the donor community.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the conflicts inherent in its production, the *Plan de Développement* offers an important window into Port-au-Prince in the 1970s. It portrayed a city whose wealth and resources were concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority. Their disproportionate consumption of land, water, electricity and municipal resources made it impossible for the city's expanding classes of urban poor to maintain their minimal standard of living. This was compounded by the fact that the total supply of some resources, like water, was dwindling—in part, as we will see later, because the building practices of urban *marronage* endangered fragile water reservoirs. The authors stated that success in addressing the impoverishment of the urban poor depended not only on increasing their access to resources, but also on a reduction in elite consumption.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 9.

<sup>22</sup> Simon Fass, "The St. Martin Project: A Decade of Pain and Progress in the Evolution of an Urban Development Institution," in *Politics, Projects, and People: Institutional Development in Haiti*, ed. Derick W. Brinkerhoff and Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 235–36.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 62.

To illustrate the point, the plan's authors created a sociological scheme dividing the city's population into three fundamental groups based on factors including occupation, monthly revenue, size of residential property, house size, and water and electricity consumption (See Tables 1 and 2). The poor majority was Group I: the 65% of the population whose households earned less than \$40 a month and occupied an average of eleven square meters of land. People in this group earned their income primarily through micro-commerce, manual labor, artisanal labor, and personal services (such as domestic work, etc.). The families displaced by the August 1972 fire in La Saline, as explored in Chapter 2, would have fallen into this group. Group II represented Haiti's fragile middle class, estimated to be about a quarter of the city's population, and consisting of low-level functionaries, employees in local businesses, and merchants who earned between \$40 and \$100 a month. The wealthy consumer class was Group III, which included successful merchants and industrialists, government officials, and professionals. This top group comprised just ten percent of the city's population; its member households all earned more than \$100 a month, and the majority made more than \$180 a month.<sup>24</sup> In addition to occupying nearly half of the city's inhabitable land, this wealthy sliver consumed nearly half its water supply and more than three-fourths of its electricity (and by extension, the vast majority of the country's).

---

<sup>24</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, 18.

The plan's creators used this social framework to depict the spatial-social dimensions of Port-au-Prince's urban dynamics. They also produced a volume of maps that located these groups and their consumption practices across the landscape of Port-au-Prince (See Figure 13). They divided the urban landscape into thirty different

**Table 1: Characteristics of Socioeconomic Groups, 1976**

	Monthly income from work	Residential Space	Electricity	Professional Group
Group 1	\$4 - 40	11 m <sup>2</sup>	14	Workers, artisans, microcommerce, personal service
Group 2	\$40-100	30m <sup>2</sup>	76	Employees, Merchants, Public servants
Group 3	More than \$100	100m <sup>2</sup>	250	Ranks of commerce and Industry, Functionaries, Liberal Professions

**Table 2: Consumption of Resources by Socioeconomic Group, 1976**

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
% of population	65	25	10
% of residential land	29	30	41
% of habitable surface	26	30	44
% of total domestic water consumption	18	35	47
% of total domestic electricity consumption	3	18	79

"microzones" that they claimed represented "relatively homogenous neighborhoods from the point of view of land use and accessibility."<sup>25</sup>

This scheme, which aggregates the variety and dynamism of individual experience into groups and sub-groups, is a blunt instrument for teasing out the city's social and economic organization. As a document originating among international development experts and intended to impose order onto the city to make it legible to international donors, the *Plan de Développement* represents the power of systematizing social science expertise to determine reality in postcolonial contexts.<sup>26</sup> Yet this kind of rationalizing knowledge also had the potential to counter existing forms of internal class domination based on mystifying the sources of power. Fass speculated that there was significant opposition among elites to documenting the details of wealth and land ownership. "Too many powerful individuals would oppose public revelation of their extensive land holdings," he wrote. "Since urban land is the source of great wealth for many families, it is understandable that they should wish to keep their holdings secret."<sup>27</sup> Even when situated within the frameworks of knowledge and power from which it emerged, this document remains a critical entry point for understanding the

---

<sup>25</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> Simon Fass, "Port-Au-Prince: Awakening to the Urban Crisis," in *Metropolitan Latin America: The Challenge and the Response*, ed. Wayne Cornelius and Robert V. Kemper (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978), 155–80.

spatial organization of classes in Port-au-Prince and will form the foundation of my analysis in this chapter.

### ***The Construction Boom***

The devastating fires described in Chapter 2 compounded a growing problem in Port-au-Prince: an inadequate supply of available housing. Following the August 1972 fire, 8,000 people were suddenly pushed into the housing market, leading to increased pressure on city's housing stock even in areas well outside the slums. An editorial appeared on the pages of *Le Nouvelliste*, likely written by Editor-in-Chief Lucien Montas, complaining the fire had not only displaced thousands of the city's most impoverished residents, but also made life more difficult for the wealthy by increasing rent all over the city. "It is, we understand it well, a situation that must be taken into account given the negative consequences it will have on the state of affairs in general and perhaps on the national economy itself."<sup>28</sup> To address the situation, Montas urged Haitian and foreign investors to increase the city's housing stock through development as soon as possible.

Montas was clearly not the only one who thought this way. Beginning around 1972, Port-au-Prince experienced a building boom that would transform the physical city, and in the process make significant contributions to the Haitian national economy. Construction stimulated a diverse array of economic activities, including the production

---

<sup>28</sup> "Le Problème de Lodgement: une solution s'impose," *Le Nouvelliste*, August 25, 1972.

of building materials such as steel rebar, sand, rocks, and cement, and provided job opportunities in manual labor, engineering, and architecture.<sup>29</sup> The demand for cement looked so good that in February 1972, the French-owned cement company Ciment d'Haiti agreed in to expand its facilities to quadruple the supply of cement to the domestic market (See Chapter 5).<sup>30</sup> In 1973, Minister of Commerce Emmanuel Bros announced that although growth in both the tourism and manufacturing sectors had slowed, the construction sector was showing "the most spectacular results."<sup>31</sup> *Institut Haitien de Statistiques et d'Informatique* (IHSI) announced the sector's portion of the gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by eighteen percent in 1972 and an additional thirty percent in 1973.<sup>32</sup> Two years later, in 1975, economists estimated that construction made up a full eight percent of Haiti's total GDP.<sup>33</sup> Chapter 5 explores the how the growing demand of cement fed into Duvalierist corruption in more detail.

The material production of Port-au-Prince turned the construction industry into one of the country's most dynamic and lucrative, placing it alongside tourism and assembly manufacturing. Scholars, interested in situating Haiti firmly in the global

---

<sup>29</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Developpement de Port Au Prince et de Sa Region Metropolitaine Volume Phase II Volume II Les Secteurs Economiques et Sociaux" (UNCHBP, May 1975), 33.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Corcoran, "President Duvalier's Annual Ancestor's Day Address," January 5, 1974, 1974PORTA00020\_b, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974PORTA00020\\_b.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974PORTA00020_b.html).

<sup>31</sup> Jacques Guepratte, "No.760 / DE," September 18, 1973, 524/PO Box 266, CADN.

<sup>32</sup> "Le Budget de Developpement de l'Exercice 1974-1975," *Le Nouvelliste*, August 22, 1974.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Developpement de Port Au Prince et de Sa Region Metropolitaine Volume Phase II Volume II Les Secteurs Economiques et Sociaux," 30.

economy, frequently invoke the manufacturing industry under Jean-Claude Duvalier.<sup>34</sup> The role of construction in Haiti's material and economic life tends to be left out of scholarship on the period. Unlike export-oriented assembly manufacturing, construction in Port-au-Prince was not linked to the fickle U.S. market's ability to absorb imported goods. Although there were some substantial public works projects in this period that contributed to the rising importance of the construction industry—such as road building—observers at the time reported that the industry was being driven primarily by housing construction in Port-au-Prince.<sup>35</sup> Since it was not based heavily on imports and was linked to a growing urban population, construction benefited from what authors of the *Plan de Développement* called "the double advantage of being both stable and constantly growing."<sup>36</sup>

Densification of the slums was not driving the construction boom in Port-au-Prince. In *Political Economy of Haiti: The Drama of Survival*, Fass studied St. Martin, a Port-au-Prince slum near La Saline whose residents were marginally better off than their neighbors. Fass observed that over thirty percent of households lived in dwellings with cinderblock walls and metal roofs; the rest either lived houses made of mud, straw, and

---

<sup>34</sup> Alex Dupuy, *Haiti in the World Economy: Class, Race, and Underdevelopment since 1700* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); Yasmine Shamsie, "Export Processing Zones: The Purported Glimmer in Haiti's Development Murk," *Review of International Political Economy* 16, no. 4 (October 22, 2009): 649–72.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port Au Prince et de Sa Region Metropolitaine Volume Phase II Volume II Les Secteurs Economiques et Sociaux," 31.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, 29.

reclaimed materials, or slept on the street.<sup>37</sup> It is improbable that this minority of slum-dwellers able to afford only the cheapest of building materials was driving a construction boom that changed the shape of the whole Haitian national economy. What materials people could afford were likely purchased with remittances sent from family living abroad. Homes in these areas were not built with expensive poured concrete or under the supervision of engineers and architects. Instead, the construction boom was driven by the expansion of wealthier neighborhoods, whose residents could afford such materials. In a study of economic trends since 1970, IHS observed that the increasing importance of construction to the national economy was driven in no small part by "the growth in private construction" driven by "the middle and superior classes of Port-au-Prince who have been the principal beneficiaries of the growth of national revenue these last years."<sup>38</sup>

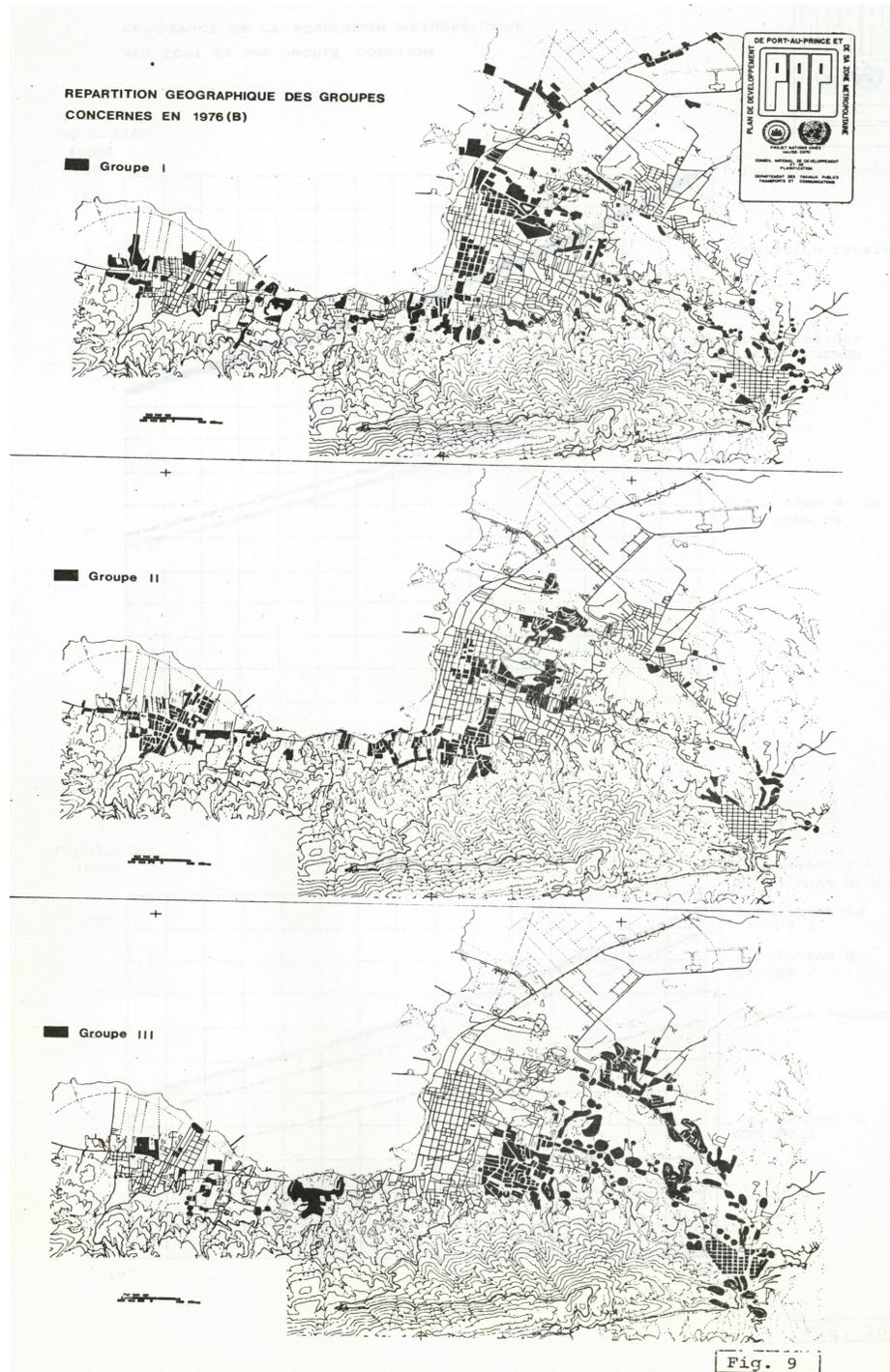
A close reading of the materials included in the *Plan de Développement* further reveals the difference between the growing population of the urban poor and the city's expanding physical footprint. The city extended outward across the landscape, particularly in Delmas and Pétionville, two zones dominated by the Haitian middle classes and elites. Even as the poor increased their share of the city's population, the majority of the city's land remained in the hands of well-to-do residents. The *Plan de*

---

<sup>37</sup> Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti*, 190.

<sup>38</sup> Institut Haitien de Statistique, "Les Tendances de la Conjoncture depuis 1970: La Conjoncture de l'année 1976 - 1977, Projections à Court-Terme 1978-1979," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 10, 1979.

*Développement* includes one map in particular that illustrates the inequality of land in Port-au-Prince, which shows that the 65% of the city who were poor (e.g. Group I) lived



**Figure 13: Map of land occupation in Port-au-Prince by socio-economic group.**

on less than one-third of its inhabited land.<sup>39</sup> Most were located in densely packed districts such as Poste Marchand, La Saline, and St. Martin that surrounded the main commercial district. Conversely, the wealthiest ten percent occupied 41% of the city's inhabited land. Between the middle classes and the elites, the wealthiest 35% of the population consumed 71% of the city's residential land. In other words, one person from the city's elite consumed as much space as ten people from the poor majority. City resources were directed toward infrastructure in these neighborhoods, such paved roads, the power grid, and clean water. These highly unequal consumption patterns had important consequences on the city's physical development and environmental degradation, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

***Factors Motivating the Boom***

The construction boom and increased elite consumption of land reflected social and political dynamics specific to the Duvalier period. First and foremost was the wave of people who returned to Haiti following the death of François Duvalier in April 1971. While the fundamental political machinery that Duvalier had assembled over his fourteen years as president remained intact, one of Jean-Claude's first acts was to announce that he would ease up on some of his father's regime's repression. He publicly

---

<sup>39</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 20.

extended an invitation to Haitian exiles to return, provided they were not communists or opponents of the regime—concepts that sometimes collapsed together in the Cold War context.<sup>40</sup> He also promised to end human rights violations and promote economic development. Some exiles responded positively to both these pronouncements and the uptick in Haiti's economic activity. Although the exact number is unknown, a small but significant wave of elite Haitians returned. Many invested in land and built houses. In an overview of economic trends of the 1970s, IHS observed, "Haitians returning to the country after 1971 under the new government with a certain amount of capital have contributed to the dynamism of construction."<sup>41</sup> Michel Laguerre, a Haitian ethnographer who wrote about Port-au-Prince in the early 1980s, described how local elites, "now compete for housing with newly promoted government officials, foreign businessmen, employees of international organizations and the returnees."<sup>42</sup>

Additionally, Haitians who remained abroad sent money home in the form of remittances, which were often invested in real estate in the capital. The authors of the *Plan de Développement* observed, "The construction industry is dominated by mid-sized enterprises that rely heavily on manual labor. These past few years have seen a great

---

<sup>40</sup> Philippe Koenig, "No. 318/AM," May 19, 1971, 524/PO Box 265, CADN.

<sup>41</sup> Institut Haitien de Statistique, "Les Tendances de la Conjoncture depuis 1970: La Conjoncture de l'année 1976 - 1977, Projections à Court-Terme 1978-1979."

<sup>42</sup> Michel Laguerre, "Migration and Urbanization in Haiti," *Sociologus Zeitschrift Fur Empirische Soziologie Sozialpsychologische Und Ethnologische Forschung A Journal for Empirical Sociology Social Psychology and Ethnic Research* 37 (1987): 129.

expansion in the domain of residential construction, of which a large part is financed by Haitian savings repatriated from abroad."<sup>43</sup> Laguerre argued that because of the housing shortage, families in Haiti were turning to relatives abroad to help them colonize newly developing zones: "Because of the severity of the problem, several Haitian immigrants in North America have found it necessary to build homes for the remaining members of their families in zones like Delmas and Fond Tamara [sic]."<sup>44</sup>

The constant expansion of the city's population assured that urban property was a safe form of investment for Haitians with capital to spare. Real estate proved an especially critical alternative in the early 1970s when an international oil crisis destabilized financial markets globally. In Port-au-Prince, journalists at the newspaper *Panorama* stated in March 1974 that more and more people in the city were investing surplus capital in land and construction because of uncertainty about other investment opportunities and the absence of other feasible options. By then, increased demand for construction materials had even prompted a chronic shortage of cement, which I explore in Chapter 5.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the tax code encouraged land speculation. Because the Administration Général de Contributions (AGC) collected property tax on buildings but not on undeveloped land in urban areas, open urban land served as a kind of tax-free

---

<sup>43</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 32.

<sup>44</sup> Laguerre, "Migration and Urbanization in Haiti," 129.

<sup>45</sup> "Dans La Cité: Penurie de Ciment d'Huile de Savon Etc," *Panorama*, March 16, 1974.

investment. The value of undeveloped land went up, increasing speculation and encouraging certain owners to keep their properties off the market, creating an artificial shortage in the Port-au-Prince land market.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Pétionville and Delmas***

The acceleration of elite land consumption in this period occurred in specific patterns that forecasted two of city's most distinctive physical transformations: the growth of Pétionville and the establishment of Delmas.

Pétionville was founded in 1831 by President Jean-Pierre Boyer and named in tribute to his immediate predecessor, Alexandre Pétion. The downtown district is laid out on a street grid that indicates the original city was planned with care. For most of Haiti's history, Pétionville was a small town seven miles away from Port-au-Prince, nestled in the mountains to the south. The area, originally called "La Coupe," or "the pass," occupied a strategic location on the route connecting the capital with the southern part of the country.<sup>47</sup> The city suffered greatly during the civil war of 1869, after its residents sided with the original *Caco* rebels against the government in Port-au-Prince, but was resurrected as a summer retreat for the capital's wealthier inhabitants.<sup>48</sup> There was only one road connecting Port-au-Prince to Pétionville—known at the time as

---

<sup>46</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 85.

<sup>47</sup> "Plan de Développement de Port Au Prince et de Sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," HAI/ 74 R. 40 (Port-au-Prince: UNCHBP, August 1976), 62, S-1075-0553, United Nations.

<sup>48</sup> Georges Corvington, *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*, vol. 2 (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007), 355.

Chemin Lalue, today called Avenue Pan American, or Bourdon—and it took more than an hour on horseback to travel between the two. The route was paved in 1929, during the American Occupation.<sup>49</sup> With the invention of the automobile, it became possible for those who could afford it to live full-time in Pétionville and commute by car to work in Port-au-Prince in only fifteen minutes (a detail that seems unbelievable today, considering that the same commute in 2016 can easily take an hour or more depending on traffic).<sup>50</sup> Technology collapsed the distance between Port-au-Prince and Pétionville, and the village began to serve as a residential suburb. Increasingly, elites purchased land on the surrounding slopes of Montagne Noire, Kenscoff, and Morne Calvaire to enjoy the area's cool climate and impressive views. Technically, these zones were rural sections in the commune of Pétionville, but no doubt the social standing of their inhabitants exempted them from the strictures of the *Rural Codes* (described in Chapter 1). The land around Pétionville and Laboule was sold in particularly large lots, with the average lot sizes of 30 square meters, compared to the smaller lots of older elite districts in Bois Verna and Turgeau, where properties were divided into lots less than half that size.<sup>51</sup>

Pétionville became even more accessible after the construction of a second road linking the area to Port-au-Prince: Autoroute Delmas. This thoroughfare was constructed

---

<sup>49</sup> Georges Corvington, *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*, vol. 3 (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007), 535.

<sup>50</sup> Candelon Rigaud, *Promenades dans les Campagnes d'Haiti* (Paris: L'Édition Française Universelle, 1927), 11.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 82.

between 1949 and 1952 as part of a series of urban planning projects initiated by Estimé in preparation for the 1949 Bicentennial Exposition. It also transformed the city by opening a large swath of relatively flat and uninhabited private land in between Port-au-Prince and Pétionville to development. This zone, named Delmas after its colonial proprietor, was known in the 19<sup>th</sup> century merely for thirty *carreaux* of agriculture of *herbes de guinée* and a lime kiln.<sup>52</sup> In recent decades, Delmas has emerged as one of Port-au-Prince's major demographic and economic centers. According to a 2018 World Bank report, 37% of the revenue generated by tax collection in Port-au-Prince metropolitan area came from Delmas.<sup>53</sup> Major landowners in the 20<sup>th</sup> century included the Malval and Lamothe families, who subdivided their plots and developed wealthy communities as the road passed through their properties. At least one source reported that the Malval family was close to President Estimé, which may have influenced his decision to construct the road.<sup>54</sup> In a 1958 study published by the Haitian Center for Research in Social Science, Cité Malval is listed as one of the city's most socially prestigious neighborhoods.<sup>55</sup> Cité Lamothe was another early developments in Delmas, inaugurated

---

<sup>52</sup> Sémexan Rouzier, *Dictionnaire Géographique et Administratif d'Haiti*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Brevetée Charles Blot, 1892), 300.

<sup>53</sup> "Haitian Cities: Actions for Today with an Eye on Tomorrow" (Washington D.C.: The World Bank Group, January 1, 2018), 179, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/709121516634280180/Haitian-cities-actions-for-today-with-an-eye-on-tomorrow>.

<sup>54</sup> Frantz Voltaire, personal communication, May 21, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> "Le Public Manifeste Son Intérêt à l'Entreprise Willy Lamothe, à Delmas," *Le Nouvelliste*, February 10, 1958.

in 1958. The *Plan de Développement* describes the residents of Cité Lamothe as members of the wealthiest strata in 1976. A 1974 ad published in *La Nouvelliste* for properties in Cité Lamothe described two-story lovely houses with three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a kitchen, living room, office, garage and a balcony.<sup>56</sup>

In the 1970s, Haitians and non-Haitians alike began referring to Delmas as "the new Port-au-Prince."<sup>57</sup> This echoed the Duvalierist ideology of social regeneration and the creation of a "new Haiti." Visually and socially, Delmas was the urban analogue to the ideological project of the dictatorship. The modernist "international style" style that dominated Delmas—muscular concrete homes with the clean lines and horizontal roofs—took its cues from Duvalierville, a model city built in 1965 that was based on Brasilia, the ultramodernist capital of Brazil, inaugurated five years before. Major residential development in Delmas, such as Cité Lamothe, began in the first years of the Duvalier regime. Its earliest residents were members of the new class of black elites who had risen into greater wealth and prominence under François Duvalier.

The importance of Pétionville and Delmas is apparent on a map from the *Plan de Développement* depicting various social groups' consumption of land across Port-au-Prince's (See Figure 13). The map and accompanying chart argue that while a fourth of

---

<sup>56</sup> "A Vendre," *Le Nouvelliste*, August 7, 1974; United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 144.

<sup>57</sup> "L'Édilité doit agir à Delmas," *Le Matin*, September 26, 1972; United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 107; Georges Corvington, *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*, vol. 4 (Montréal: CIDHCA, 2007), 64.

the population of elites still lived in the traditionally chic neighborhoods of Bois Verna and Turgeau, just outside the boundaries of the colonial city, this group was also leading the city's expansion in Delmas and Pétionville. While the map itself is static in time, additional information contained in the *Plan* stated that the majority of all land transactions in the mid-1970s occurred on the crescent of Delmas and Pétionville and its environs—Peggy-Ville, Morne Calvaire, Montagne Noir, and Laboule—as well as in Diquini, near Carrefour. Although discourse about urban transformation tended to emphasize the transformative, if not destructive, role of poor rural-to-urban migrants, the greatest expansion of the urban fabric was being led by the city's elite.

Although the *Plan de Développement* shows that the city's wealthiest groups occupied most of the land under Pétionville and Delmas in 1975, they were not most of the demographic population. For example, the *Plan* estimates that 7,100 poor people from Group I and 7,600 elites from Group III lived in downtown Pétionville. These are nearly equal numbers of people, and yet the land was almost entirely occupied by Group III, who took up 74 hectares at a density of 100 people per hectare. The area's poor, on the other hand, got by on only thirteen hectares of land. Although they were relatively equal in terms of population, the poorer group lived on seventeen percent of the space take up by the wealthier group. In Montagne Noire, a growing residential area above downtown Pétionville, the distribution of land was even more unequal: 2,100 poor people shared five hectares, resulting in 420 people per hectare. In contrast, 3,100

elites shared thirty-five hectares, with a density of 90 people per hectare.<sup>58</sup> Unequal land use in Port-au-Prince reflected and perpetuated the society's profound social divisions.

These tiny pockets of dense poverty located far from the slums near the city's commercial center reflected two urban realities. The first was that some of the city's most impoverished families found employment and shelter working as servants the homes of the wealthy. One study of Haitian society from 1965 reported that a family in Pétienville might have a family of five or six servants living under their roof.<sup>59</sup> While the authors of the *Plan de Développement* observed poor people living in wealthy areas as servants, it is unclear how their household data accounted for domestic arrangements where servants occupied the same houses as their employers. The second urban reality is that some parts of the mountainous areas were dangerously steep and difficult to access; those who could afford better land considered the areas uninhabitable. Poor families would construct shelters in these liminal spaces, and their proximity to wealthier residents sometimes allowed them to benefit from the latter's access urban infrastructure. For example, some families received or purchased water directly from private residents with

---

<sup>58</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 77.

<sup>59</sup> Roland Wingfield and Vernon Parenton, "Class Structure and Class Conflict in Haitian Society," *Social Forces* 43, no. 3 (1965): 338.

access to *Centrale Autonome Métropolitaine d'Eau Potable* (CAMEP), the public service that oversaw Port-au-Prince's municipal water system.<sup>60</sup>

### ***Environmental Issues: Erosion and Water Supply***

These specific patterns of elite and middle-class land use directly aggravated some of the city's most pressing environmental issues. In particular, the growth of neighborhoods in the mountains around Pétionville—such as Morne Calvaire, Montagne Noir, and Peggyville—contributed to dangerous flooding in the city below by degrading the watershed of Morne l'Hôpital. The original colonial city was nestled on low-lying land at the foot of the mountains, as if on the stage of a geological amphitheater. The water table underneath the low-lying coastal land was very high. For much of the city's history, this was not a problem because surrounding mountains had adequate tree cover to hold soil in place and absorb the rain that fell regularly in the area. But increased human activity on the mountain had begun to denude the slopes and reduce the topsoil layer, ultimately threatening poorer, more vulnerable populations living below.

Haitian officials had long recognized the importance of the mountains' integrity to Port-au-Prince's overall health. In 1936, President Vincent established the first laws banning construction in certain areas of Morne l'Hôpital to preserve the integrity of the

---

<sup>60</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 76.

water supply.<sup>61</sup> François Duvalier's *Rural Code* of 1962 placed detailed strictures and regulations on the felling of trees, which preserved the water supply by holding in place an absorbent topsoil layer. In August 1963, the government appropriated a large area of land as *Domaine Privé de l'Etat*, effectively prohibiting construction, farming and grazing in the mountains above Pétionville.<sup>62</sup> Yet these laws were weakly enforced. Alex Bellande writes that although the new *Code* was progressive on paper, "In the social and political context of the era, these "control" measures would lead more often to accentuate extortion and corruption than the conservation of forest cover."<sup>63</sup>

Increased construction on the watershed reduced the amount of permeable area where water could seep into the earth, which increased the magnitude of the torrents that flowed down the mountain in each heavy rain. Construction also dislodged rocks, sands, and dirt that clogged the twelve decantation tanks that dotted the slopes. These structures had long operated as fortifications to protect the city below from mud and debris. But by 1974 worried observers reported that a single downpour could push enough material into the tanks that they overflowed.<sup>64</sup> The debris—along with garbage and human waste—also overflowed the city's drainage canals. Without these

---

<sup>61</sup> "Loi constituant en zone réservée le bassin d'alimentation des Sources Plaisance et Cerisier," *Bulletin des Lois et Acts* An 1936 (February 3, 1936): 246–47.

<sup>62</sup> "Loi décrétant 'Zone sous Protection' le bassin hydrographique du Morne l'Hopital," *Le Moniteur*, September 5, 1963.

<sup>63</sup> Alex Bellande, *Haïti déforestée, paysages remodelés* (Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2015), 297.

<sup>64</sup> "L'Exposé circonstancié du Secrétaire d'Etat aux Travaux Publics, l'Ingénieur Pierre M. Petit," *Le Nouvelliste*, October 10, 1974.

fortifications, water, mud, debris and trash washed down the mountain and into the city. The flat terrain reduced gravity's ability to pull the water and debris into the sea. The result was that these materials washed into the low-lying neighborhoods like La Saline.

The construction boom also aggravated the city's erosion crisis by increasing the demand for the sand, rocks, and limestone that were mined in quarries along the slopes of Morne l'Hôpital. The concrete that went into these new houses was produced by mixing cement with sand and rocks, materials known as aggregates. The mountain's east side contained large deposits of high-quality limestone, mined in quarries located in Laboule and Grenier. These mines were valued because of the fine grain of the sand, which reduced the cost of production.<sup>65</sup> The west side of the mountain—the side facing Port-au-Prince—had lower quality limestone deposits with a high clay content, which was nevertheless mined in independent small-scale operations.<sup>66</sup> Despite their importance to the Haitian construction industry, the mines were an ecological disaster. These large punctures on the surface of the earth contributed to environmental calamity not only by reducing the mountain's forest cover and topsoil but also by bleeding sand and rocks – through dangerous landslides – into the city below. These materials further

---

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Holly, *Les Problèmes Environnementaux de la Région Métropolitaine de Port-au-Prince* (Port-au-Prince: Commission pour la commémoration du 250<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la fondation de la ville de Port-au-Prince, 1999), 31.

<sup>66</sup> Holly, 69.

clogged the decantation basins, ravines and drainage canals and ultimately made it impossible for rainwater to drain easily into the ocean.

Housing developments in the mountains were also beginning to compromise Port-au-Prince's fragile supply of potable water. The city's water infrastructure, CAMEP, depended on natural springs located on the slopes of Morne l'Hôpital: Plaisance and Cerisier Springs near Pétionville, Turgeau Spring near Turgeau, Leclerc Spring, and the Chaudeau and Diquini Springs near Carrefour. These springs emerged on the mountain's slopes in locations where the flows of water that passed easily through the limestone deposits on the eastern side of the mountain encountered the clay deposits on the western side, surging upward to the surface.<sup>67</sup> CAMEP also tapped groundwater via tunnels dug directly into the mountainside at Carrefour-Feuilles, Bourdon, Freres, and Diquini. There were additional four reservoirs that fed water into the distribution system: Bourdon, Bel-Air or Nord Alexis, Bellevue, and Bolosse.

Overall, the CAMEP water system was completely inadequate for the needs of a growing population. City water only reached 23% of Port-au-Prince households that connected to CAMEP through both legal and illegal connections. There were twenty-seven public fountains in Port-au-Prince, which provided water for only nine percent of

---

<sup>67</sup> Metcalf & Eddy, "Report on the Water Supply of Port-Au-Prince, Part 1: Existing Sources of Supply and Distribution System" (Boston, MA: Republic of Haiti Hydraulic Services, International Cooperation Administration, February 25, 1960), RG 286 Records of the Agency for International Development, Mission to Haiti Executive Office, Central Subject Files, Box 7, NACP.

the population and were often controlled by macoutes who demanded fees.<sup>68</sup> The rest of the residents either purchased water at exorbitant prices from private vendors or collected runoff from leaks in the CAMEP system.<sup>69</sup> According to the *Plan de Développement*, households in Group III, the wealthiest ten percent of the city, represented nearly half of the city's water consumption.

But these sources were drying up. Newspapers repeatedly published articles about the dwindling water supply in the springs around Pétionville. The expanding urban footprint of the mountain reduced the layer of topsoil, and this, along with the other factors noted above, reduced the amount of permeable surfaces for water absorption. In March 1973, the government mouthpiece *Panorama* denounced the continued expansion of housing into the protected areas of Morne l'Hôpital: "Sumptuous villas now rise up [in Morne Calvaire, Pétionville, and Kenscoff] where once hikers would contemplate a sea of vegetation ... Concerning the Plasiance in Pétionville, we can only speak of it in the past, yet even in 1935 it flowed through this area like a silver brook! The wild urbanization of Pétionville and the Capital is quickly destroying these 'forests.'"<sup>70</sup> In October 1974, a writer in *Le Matin* observed the city's main ecological problem was that the official "reserved zones" on the mountains were

---

<sup>68</sup> Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti*, 180.

<sup>69</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 105.

<sup>70</sup> "Arretons de Massacrer 'Les Mornes,'" *Panorama*, March 12, 1974.

not being respected. "The State had the wisdom to delimit 'reserved zones' as much to prevent erosion as to preserve the sources of the drinking water supply. These zones were ransacked, parceled out and sold to private individuals. Result: The concrete replaced the trees and the springs dried up."<sup>71</sup> In 1975, *Le Nouvelliste* published an article mentioning that yet another fresh water spring in Pétionville, Millet, had dried up because of housing construction and deforestation on Morne Calvaire. Urban *marronage* was depleting the city's access to fresh water.

### ***The Flood***

In the mid-1970s, agents of the Duvalier government attempted to exert control over the uncontrolled urban expansion in the mountains. The catalyst occurred the night of October 3, 1974, when Port-au-Prince was convulsed by a major storm whose floodwaters ravaged the city: killing several people; washing away cars; destroying the homes of at least two thousand people; and leaving streets all over the city blocked with mountains of mud, rocks, and fallen trees.<sup>72</sup> The water severely damaged the low-lying coastal low-income neighborhoods. More well-to-do areas also suffered considerable damage when drainage channels as Ravine Pintade and Bois-de-Chênes overflowed because they were blocked with garbage and eroded materials from the mountains.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> "Port-au-Prince et ses Problèmes l'Echeance," *Le Matin*, October 7, 1974.

<sup>72</sup> Heyward Isham, "GOH Showing Greater Decisiveness," October 25, 1974, 1974PORTA02099\_b, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974PORTA02099\\_b.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1974PORTA02099_b.html).

<sup>73</sup> "La pluie a laissé des ruines et emporté dans la mort Ninon Germain," *Le Matin*, October 9, 1974.

The Haitian Red Cross reported that the floods also led to a spike in typhoid fever, which is caused by eating or drinking contaminated food or water.<sup>74</sup>

Jean-Claude Duvalier, reportedly humiliated by the city's vulnerability, even took the unusual step of touring the stricken areas in the company of his mother, Simone.<sup>75</sup> Local newspapers applauded the government for sending its military and militia units—the Leopards and Tontons Macoutes—to join forces with Haitian firefighters and municipal employees in clearing the streets after the storm.<sup>76</sup> Duvalier's embarrassment was perhaps compounded by the fact that only two months prior he had launched a reforestation project on Morne l'Hôpital known as "Operation Kombit."<sup>77</sup>

The government, led by Minister of Public Works Pierre Petit, used the storm to take an aggressive approach to the underlying problems. Petit, trained as a civil engineer, had worked on the airport and was a head engineer on the construction of the Péligre Dam. Under Jean-Claude Duvalier, he served two terms as Minister of Public Works. Despite working as a lead technocrat for the regime, he was not an apologist for it, and in the wake of the 1974 flood he made a public speech blaming the city's vulnerability on the political structures of corruption (See Figure 14). American

---

<sup>74</sup> "Mieux Vaut Prevenir," *Le Nouvelliste*, October 8, 1974.

<sup>75</sup> Isham, "GOH Showing Greater Decisiveness."

<sup>76</sup> "Quatre Coins de Haiti," *Le Matin*, October 18, 1974.

<sup>77</sup> "Au Morne de l'Hôpital Aide à l'Action Gouvernementale Création du Premier Conseil d'Administration Rurale pour le Reboisement," *Le Nouvelliste*, August 18, 1974.

Ambassador Heyward Isham thought that Petit's surprisingly active leadership on the city's crisis pointed to a turning point in the Haitian government's leadership style:

In an unprecedentedly candid speech televised October 9, Petit minced no words: the city was imperiled by years of civic irresponsibility, penny-pinching budgets for vital urban services, disregard of elementary common sense, and a prevalent spirit of illicit gain tacitly condoned by public authorities. Petit reviewed various laws passed since 1936 to protect water catchment areas in the mountains overlooking the city—laws blithely disregarded by private home builders and public authorities.<sup>78</sup>

This kind of approach from a government official was refreshing to the public, and in the months following the storm, Haitian newspapers were filled with articles about Petit's campaign to stem the flooding as well as editorials weighing in on the crisis of development on mountains surrounding Port-au-Prince. The minister's leadership in confronting the urban disaster made him unusual among Duvalierists, more known for their corruption and quest for personal power than for their desire to govern well. According to Ambassador Isham, Petit's "tough-minded defense of the public interest and scathing condemnation of past corruption in permitting deforestation of Port-au-Prince's watershed made him a local hero."<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Isham, "GOH Showing Greater Decisiveness."

<sup>79</sup> Heyward Isham, "Recent Haitian Cabinet Changes Arouse Concern About Presidential Leadership," May 7, 1976, 1976PORTA01200\_b, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976PORTA01200\\_b.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976PORTA01200_b.html).



Figure 14: Pierre Petit explaining the environmental consequences of urbanization.<sup>80</sup>

Joseph Wainwright, a Haitian agronomist who had combatted development on the mountains since at least 1959, wrote in *Le Nouvelliste* the week after the storm that one of the main problems facing the city was the erosion caused by "this seizure of the lands of Morne l'Hôpital by citizens for the purpose of residential construction ... the anarchic exploitation of this site results tragically in the quasi-irreversible degradation of the countryside with inestimable tourism potential, a worrisome reduction in certain sources of Port-au-Prince's potable water supply, and the threat of avalanches and flooding in this city."<sup>81</sup> Experts and officials had long been aware that building in that area had a multitude of negative consequences for the city as a whole, but the state was unable or unwilling to curb construction practices and enforce existing legislation.

---

<sup>80</sup> "L'Exposé circonstancié du Secrétaire d'Etat aux Travaux Publics, l'Ingénieur Pierre M. Petit," *Le Nouvelliste*, October 10, 1974.

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Wainwright, "Considerations sur le Morne l'Hôpital," *Le Nouvelliste*, October 16, 1974.

Petit's energetic leadership was unable to disrupt this pattern and stop the expansion of development around Pétionville, Morne Calvaire, and Montange Noire. As I will explore in Chapter 5, the foundation of the regime's stability was to reward loyalists and allies with extra-legal wealth or opportunity at the expense of the wider public. Over the years, individual ministers such as Petit may have criticized or tried to reform institutions they oversaw to better serve the needs of the population, but these attempts could not be anything more than superficial without compromising the regime itself.

Consumption of fragile lands continued unabated. The floods in subsequent years only became worse. Perhaps Duvalier had been interested in keeping Petit on as minister because his willingness to publically denounce corruption lent it an aura of reform. He was removed from the cabinet in 1976, after butting heads with a more powerful official, Henri Sicilat. As I will explain in Chapter 5, Henri Sicilat was the director of the *Régie du Tabac et Allumettes*, a tax office that functioned as the regime's main organ of extractive corruption. Petit had alerted officials at the World Bank when Sicilat maneuvered to accept a high-priced contract for a thermal power station in exchange for a sizable kickback.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Heyward Isham to DOS, "Haiti's Governmental Shakeup Removes Powerful Duvalierist Advisor," September 10, 1976, 1976PORTA02441\_b, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976PORTA02441\\_b.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976PORTA02441_b.html).

Ultimately, efforts by Petit and other officials to lead effective environmental stewardship and urban regulation clashed with the government's underlying infrastructures of corruption. Hillside mansions constructed atop a critical water reservoir are the environmental manifestation of this deeper tension.

## **Conclusion**

Urban growth in Port-au-Prince in the 1970s was defined by highly stratified access to basic resources, including land and water. As more and more migrants inhabited areas around the old colonial city, urban elites retreated to higher elevations, building enclosed compounds in the hills around Pétionville. These new areas enjoyed the greatest access to infrastructure and utilities, such as paved roads and water, but they were the least densely populated regions of the city. Elites had the influence to demand that resources be spent on provisioning their neighborhoods, even when they lived in difficult terrain high in the mountains that were costly to service.<sup>83</sup> According to the *Plan de Développement*:

The residential zones of Group III have the tendency to extend without densifying normally; the networks are then stretched out and economically inefficient and pose a heavy burden on the general infrastructure of the city. In addition, the tendency of [these zones] to develop along steep slopes where the climate is pleasant and the view is spectacular aggravates the problem of erosion and urban drainage by multiplying the impermeable surfaces above the city. This problem of erosion is not inevitable, it is provoked by the inobservance of the rules of minimum security.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> *Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince*, Volume I, 86.

<sup>84</sup> United Nations, CONADEP, and DTPTC, "Plan de Développement de Port-au-Prince et de sa Région Métropolitaine Volume 1," 86.

The movement of elite and wealthier groups out of the downtown area was an urban interpretation of what Barthélémy and Mangonès called Haiti's legacy of *marronage*, the escape and disengagement from a perceived threat. But unlike the revolutionaries portrayed in Mangonès's 1968 statue, these marrons were trying to preserve rather than destroy social hierarchies. The threat in this instance was the densifying low-income neighborhoods that Mangonès thought of as "the CAUSE of evil." Given the historical use of a formal urban-rural divide as a tool for allocating social and economic privilege, it is not surprising that Haitian elites would interpret migration from the countryside as an unwelcome invasion since the country's history was threaded through with the idea that cities were the fortresses of the privileged. The *Plan de Développement* threatened this paradigm by pointing out that a net reduction of elite consumption of resources would be necessary if the city's poorest would be able to maintain their already diminished standards of living.

When Mangonès, in 1973, complained that the government no longer controlled Port-au-Prince, he was saying that the state had lost the ability to assert control over this mobility. "This city becomes a monster," he warned "and we will be devoured."<sup>85</sup> He and his colleagues advocated a depoliticized form of regionalization as the best way to address the "urban problem," one that would reduce the population of the poor but

---

<sup>85</sup> Gaillard, "Port-au-Prince en passe de devenir un monstre: Une interview d'Albert Mangonès."

intact the centralized authoritarian system that had led to their impoverishment. This approach reiterated, indirectly, the anti-poor, anti-rural discourses prevalent since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But in the 1970s, the most destructive form of consumption came from elite urban marrons who, to distance themselves from the social ills they associated with rural people inhabiting urban spaces, built neighborhoods in the mountains with little concern for how their developments affected the larger community. The public had been aware for decades that building on the slopes of the mountains above Port-au-Prince compounded the city's vulnerability to disaster by aggravating erosion and contributing to environmental destruction. Regardless, the construction continued unabated.

The city's patterns of transformation in this period may not have been controlled by the state, but nonetheless they reflected its dynamics. The consumption of the majority of the city's resources by an elite few was an urban expression of the logics of the Duvalierist state. Despite Petit's efforts to curtail unchecked development on environmentally fragile land, the state was unable or unwilling to reign in construction on the slopes of Morne l'Hôpital because permissiveness and the ability to ignore the law was one of the main benefits it offered its supporters and loyalists. Unlike La Saline, these zones were repeatedly protected by agents of the government. More driven by the desire to rule than the desire to govern, the regime would allow elites to do what they wanted to the city—especially when the main victims of their irresponsibility were the

city's low-income residents. Even civic-minded Petit was inspired to action after the 1974 storm led to flooding in the wealthy neighborhoods of Turgeau and Bois Verna.

The sand and rock quarries above Port-au-Prince symbolize a central paradox of the city. As the it grew, the physical conditions that facilitated its expansion also imperiled it. By extracting materials from the mountain to make cement, it became possible to build new neighborhoods, especially in Delmas and Pétionville. Yet this same demand also destabilized the city by putting different districts at greater risk for natural disaster. In a sense, urbanization in Port-au-Prince was simultaneously an act of creation and an act of destruction. The city ate itself.

## 5. “The Price of Power”: Urbanization and Infrastructures of Corruption

The paradox that Port-au-Prince was consumed by its own consumption mirrored a paradox at heart of the Duvalierist state. Urbanization not only transformed the city’s environment, it transformed the country’s economy as well. The construction boom gave new importance to building materials such as cement. As rural producers left behind agriculture, more and more became urban consumers. These structural transformations reshaped the possibilities for extraction available to the Duvalierist state. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues, "State forms are constantly being created, reproduced, maintained and modified, and these processes of reproduction and change are intertwined with the historical evolution of the particular society and culture within which the state functions."<sup>1</sup> Building on this insight, I contend that officials’ efforts to maintain and adapt the form of the Duvalierist state was also intertwined with the production of the urban environment.

This chapter uses the political economy of cement to illuminate the Duvalier regime’s strategies for extraction, what I call its “infrastructure of corruption.” I argue that the 1979 nationalization of Haiti’s only cement factory, French-owned Ciment d’Haiti, marked the beginning of a transition from an infrastructure of corruption focused on taxes to one focused on state control of domestic industries. To demonstrate

---

<sup>1</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 18.

the significance of state-run industries, I compare them to the institution emblematic of the earlier tax-based extraction model, the government monopoly office, the Régie du Tabac et Allumettes.

I contextualize the shift between two infrastructures of corruption within the wider national and international contexts of the Jean-Claude Duvalier era. Trying to break from his father's legacy of violence and isolationism, the younger Duvalier embarked on a wave of reforms and renewed Haiti's global ties by seeking out international aid. But increased dependence on foreign loans made his government more vulnerable to demands from ascendant multilateral development institutions and the United States. Organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank pushed Duvalier to implement domestic fiscal reforms that aligned with their interests. The main target of their pressure was the Régie. As condemnation of Haiti's fiscal system mounted, regime officials began to explore other possibilities for extraction. In a time of rapid urban expansion, the cement factory's profits seemed like a feasible alternative source of illicit funds. But economic policy was subject to dramatic global events, such as the oil crises of the 1970s, that were beyond the control of officials or manufacturers. Shaped from below by urban change, the dictatorship's efforts to reproduce itself were also constrained from above by its increasingly vulnerability to the demands of the global financial community and fluctuations in the global market. By revealing the overlap between material urban space, political economy, and the

structure of the dictatorship, I demonstrate that urbanization was an overarching dynamic profoundly linked to the contradictions at the heart of the regime.

### ***The Régie du Tabac et Allumettes***

The Régie du Tabac was founded on February 18, 1948, as a state tobacco monopoly, during the presidency of Dumarsais Estimé.<sup>2</sup> In 1958, a year after he came to power, François Duvalier expanded its monopoly: first to matches, then to dozens of other commodities, including cement, condensed milk, laundry soap, gasoline, sugar, cheese, denim, alcohol, margarine, cosmetics, and toothpaste. The office functioned by purchasing the entire supply of a particular product from importers or domestic producers at a fixed price. Then it would add a fee in the form of a "distribution commission" and re-sell the marked-up goods to retailers and wholesalers around the country. This monopolization allowed the state to control large sections of the local market.

Monopolies and state-run enterprises were not inherently destructive or corrupt. They had been part of the global lexicon of international development since at least 1949, when the United Nations sent its first technical assistance mission to Haiti.<sup>3</sup> What set the Régie apart was that almost none of the revenue it collected was integrated into the

---

<sup>2</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments" (International Monetary Fund, June 7, 1971).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, *Mission to Haiti Report of the United Nations Mission of Technical Assistance to the Republic of Haiti* (Lake Success; New York: United Nations, 1949).

budget of the national government. Instead, the money was transferred into personal accounts controlled by the Duvalier family. For example, records show that when the Régie took over the distribution of cement and flour in 1964, Régie Director Henri Sicilat promptly opened up new accounts—not in the *Banque Nationale de la République d’Haïti* (BNRH), where government resources were banked, but in a private commercial bank recently opened by Duvalier's close associate Clémard Joseph Charles. Rare receipts recovered by historian Leslie Péan indicate that François Duvalier drew these accounts in 1967 to buy personal property, pay for his children's travel expenses, and provide a cash gift to his son, Jean-Claude, for his sixteenth birthday. The family also used the money to buy and maintain loyalty through cash and gifts.<sup>4</sup>

The regime also drew from Régie accounts to fund a nationwide paramilitary militia network called the *Volontiers of Sécurité Nationale* (VSN), also known as the Tonton Macoutes. Describing the structure of the VSN in 1979, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti William Jones said, "The VSN are paid largely from the resources of the Régie du Tabac. Some more prominent members of the VSN report receiving regular monthly salaries. Others hold down one or more sinecure positions within the government. Still others receive case grants or other favors for services rendered."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Leslie Péan, *Haïti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*, vol. 4 (Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 2007), 276–79.

<sup>5</sup> William Jones to DOS, "Haitian Volunteers for National Security," April 18, 1979, Case No. F-2014-13440 Doc No. C05844329, U.S. Department of State FOIA.

The Régie became the central organ of a complex system of extraction and patronage that the Duvalier family depended on for support. Trouillot has argued that this system of wealth redistribution became the social foundation of the regime's legitimacy:

Direct political patronage, participation in governmental projects or in the military and paramilitary forces— every sign of political allegiance to the regime had economic consequences for the person who showed that allegiance. And since the net monetary value of the compensation was not necessarily correlated with the social origins of the individual being compensated, the system gave the impression of being accessible to everyone.<sup>6</sup>

Prior Haitian governments had used extractive methods to accumulate illicit gains, but none had used them so effectively to control the national political world. Although earlier Haitian presidents had also relied on secret police and paramilitary forces, Duvalier, by using the funds collected through the Régie, was able to transform this into a political network that encompassed the entire country.

Scholars debate the historical roots of extractive government strategies in Haiti. Most agree that its origins lie in the poisonous dynamics of the French slave state, which, being premised on the theft of human bodies, was the ultimate kleptocracy. But scholars have different understandings of how it was perpetuated across postcolonial Haiti. Simon Fass argues that independent Haiti maintained a “colonial” state, meaning that power rested in the hands of a tiny few who “who did not hear the will of ordinary

---

<sup>6</sup> Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 154.

people, and did not need to hear it in order to rule."<sup>7</sup> According to Péan, social tensions embedded in postcolonial geographies of power (see Chapter 1) pushed the majority of the population to try to escape the reach of the state, generating an ethic of self-preservation based on a "populist order of loyalty to one's self as the ultimate morality."<sup>8</sup> Over time, this order nurtured a political culture that prioritized individual gain over public service: "This framework of state-building became a vicious cycle in which corrupting practices are reiterated as rituals that end up becoming inherent to the functioning of governments."<sup>9</sup> Political scientist Robert Fatton summarizes two centuries of Haitian history as *politique du ventre*: a pattern, born of material scarcity, that turned politics into "nothing but the prebendary acquisition of public resources for individual gain."<sup>10</sup> While there is nothing unique to Haiti about a kleptocratic regime, the form it took on the island reflected the island's specific historical context.

The Régie du Tabac was but the latest iteration of a predatory system of taxes that the Haitian state created to extract resources from the peasantry once it was clear that resurrecting plantations would be impossible. Coffee was the most important commodity, harvested on independent peasant farms and passed along a series of middlemen until it reached the custom houses in port cities and ultimately consumer

---

<sup>7</sup> Simon M Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Péan, *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*, 4:28.

<sup>9</sup> Péan, 4:28.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Fatton, *The Roots of Haitian Despotism* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 5.

markets in Europe and North America.<sup>11</sup> At each step, the government tried to levy fees, a fiscal strategy that weighed heavily on the growing peasantry. When the state raised fees and duties on coffee at the customhouses, authorized middlemen passed these expenses onto the peasant by reducing the amount they were willing to pay for the crop. “Because of the demands of other chapters of the national budget,” reported the authors of the United Nations Technical Assistance Mission in 1949, “little of this revenue returns as a benefit to the peasant producer of coffee, and the curve of production of coffee shows a consistent downward trend.”<sup>12</sup> Distracted by the possibilities of extraction, historically the Haitian state invested little in the agricultural economy that their wealth was predicated on. This system became increasingly turbulent and unreliable throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1954, three years before Duvalier’s election, Hurricane Hazel decimated the fragile coffee crop and Haiti’s global market share fell to zero.

By shifting more of the onus of the country’s tax system from agriculture to urban consumer markets through the Régie, it is possible that the Duvalier administration was adapting the country’s infrastructure of corruption to the realities of urbanization. As more producers became consumers, the tax system shifted. Political

---

<sup>11</sup> Georges Anglade, *Atlas Critique d’Haïti* (Montréal: Groupe d’études et de recherches critiques d’espace. Département de géographie, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1982), 31; Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation*, 60.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, *Mission to Haiti Report of the United Nations Mission of Technical Assistance to the Republic of Haiti*, 92.

and economic elites were still building structures to profit off the poor majority. Increasingly in the 20th century, cities became the sites of extraction themselves. The burden of the system fell disproportionately on the burgeoning population of the urban poor. In 1974, World Bank officials observed that "imports of luxury foodstuffs, consumer durables, and other goods consumed by the higher income classes have increased but are not taxed at proportionate rates."<sup>13</sup> Some goods were even taxed twice, once by the Régie and once by another government revenue service, forcing Haitians to pay far above the average rates of the global market for basic goods.<sup>14</sup>

Although the Régie never reported its revenue, the IMF estimated that, by 1972, its earnings had reached more 55 million gourdes, equivalent to \$54 million in 2017 currency.<sup>15</sup> Economists at different development agencies estimated that, in the 1970s, the Régie's profits ranged between twenty and forty percent of the Haitian national government's entire budget.<sup>16</sup> These profits were culled from the economic dynamics of Port-au-Prince's explosive growth. For example, the demand for cement grew continuously as the city expanded. Between the fees extracted by the Régie and the

---

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, "Current Economic Position and Prospects of Haiti," Central America and the Caribbean Series (Washington D.C.: World Bank, April 18, 1974), 65.

<sup>14</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments" (International Monetary Fund, July 14, 1977), 10.

<sup>15</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments" (International Monetary Fund, June 27, 1974), 10.

<sup>16</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments" (International Monetary Fund, May 31, 1973), 17; IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments" (International Monetary Fund, June 24, 1975), 10.

production costs claimed by Ciment d'Haiti, Haitians were obligated to purchase cement at prices significantly higher than the global market.

These higher prices represented enormous profits for the Duvalier inner circle. Bringing together IMF statistics on Haiti's national cement production and the Régie's taxes levied on individual bags of cement, I calculate that between 1968 and 1978—Port-au-Prince's first major building boom—the ruling family embezzled the equivalent of \$37 million in 2017 dollars from the sale of cement alone. The total amounts rose every year, reflecting the steady increase in the demand for construction materials.

Considering that cement sales were only a fraction of the total transactions conducted by the Régie, this represents only a small amount of the wealth transferred to the Duvalier family through its infrastructure of corruption. Table 3 below represents the how the growing production of cement translated directly into growing profits for the regime.

**Table 3: Cement Production and Taxes Collected by the Régie**

Year	Tons of Cement produced at Ciment d’Haiti <sup>17</sup> (in thousands)	Estimate of Régie cement revenue put into special accounts in 2017 dollars <sup>18</sup> (in millions)	Estimate of Régie cement revenue put into national accounts in 2017 dollars <sup>19</sup> (in millions)
1968	40.6	2	n/a
1969	54.8	2.57	n/a
1970	64.9	2.9	n/a
1971	72.6	3.08	n/a
1972	85.7	2.24	1
1973	111.3	3	1.3
1974	130.2	3.2	1.4
1975	145.5	3.3	1.4
1976	232	4.9	2.1
1978	258	5.1	2.2
1979	253.3	4.67	2
Total	1,448.9	37.1	11.4

---

<sup>17</sup> Source: IMF Reports “Haiti: Recent Economic Developments” 1970-1980

<sup>18</sup> Régie tax on cement between 1968-1972: 1.5 gourdes per 42.5 kg bag. Between 1972-1979, 1.05 gourdes. Converted into 2017 dollars using [www.usinflationcalculator.com](http://www.usinflationcalculator.com)

<sup>19</sup> Tax was introduced in 1972, 0.45 gourdes per 42.5 kg bag. Converted into 1970s-dollar value and then into 2017 dollars using [www.usinflationcalculator.com](http://www.usinflationcalculator.com)

## ***Ciment d'Haiti***

Almost all the cement sold by the Régie originated in one place: the Ciment d'Haiti factory thirty miles north of Port-au-Prince, at site known as Fond Mombin along the coast near the town of Cabaret (known after 1965 as Duvalierville). When the factory first opened in 1954, the government's heavily regressive tax system was part of the business model that attracted foreign investors. High import tariffs meant that cement shipped into Haiti in the early 1950s was nearly three times more expensive than cement sold in Europe. While there were transport and other costs involved, Frères Lambert, a French manufacturer of building materials, estimated that these tariffs accounted for at least 20% of the price of cement on the domestic market. The Lambert family saw an opportunity: by opening a factory in Haiti, it could manufacture the product locally, mark up the price significantly, and still offer consumers a better price than the imported competition.<sup>20</sup>

Haiti possessed most of the natural resources necessary for the manufacturing of cement, which were melted together at extremely high temperatures in giant rotating kilns. Next to the factory lay large deposits of limestone and gypsum. Silica was obtained through sand mined either from riverbeds or the slopes of Morne de l'Hôpital. Alumina was available from Haitian bauxite. The one key material necessary for the

---

<sup>20</sup> "Le Ciment d'Haiti," 1952, 524/PO Box 207, CADN.

fabrication of cement that Haiti did not possess was the petroleum needed to run the furnaces that heated the kilns.

When then-President Paul Magloire inaugurated the new Ciment d'Haiti factory on April 9, 1954, newspapers celebrated the new industry as an opportunity to keep more of Haitian wealth in Haitian hands. Such well-publicized openings were essential to Magloire's political project of projecting Haitian economic vitality. In its coverage of the grand opening, *Le Nouvelliste* praised the new factory as a significant step "on the country's march towards progress." The factory, the newspaper wrote, "is going to greatly reduce the flow of our money towards foreign shores and facilitate the urban development project undertaken by our government."<sup>21</sup> But as with many economic initiatives in Haiti, control lay in foreign hands. The company's majority ownership lay with Frères Lambert. The Haitian government, through its agency Institut de Developpement Agricole et Industriel (IDAI), owned just 16.5%.<sup>22</sup>

As François Duvalier's reign of terror discouraged local and international investment, Haiti's economy contracted dramatically, and with it the demand for cement. The factory languished, barely producing above half-capacity for most of the decade. Much of its output was put toward a few government projects, including Duvalierville, the international airport, and the repaving of downtown Port-au-Prince's

---

<sup>21</sup> "L'Inauguration Du Ciment d'Haiti," *Le Nouvelliste*, April 10, 1954.

<sup>22</sup> "L'Inauguration Du Ciment d'Haiti."

major thoroughfare. Labor conflicts broke out regularly at the plant. In 1964, one French factory director was ousted by both French and Haitian employees who complained that his "petty and 'dictatorial' fantasies" were generating "intolerable" working environment and "gives substance to criticisms of neocolonialism."<sup>23</sup> These incidents, along with run-ins with government agencies over unpaid debts, gave the company a very poor public reputation among the Haitian public.

When the city's physical and demographic expansion accelerated in the early 1970s, the public's demand for cement surged, surpassing that of the 1950s. After functioning at half-capacity for most of the 1960s, the plant reached its maximum output in 1972.<sup>24</sup> Under pressure from the government, the management of Frères Lambert agreed to enlarge the plant's facilities.<sup>25</sup> Over a multistage renovation, cement production nearly quadrupled, from 80,000 tons in 1972 to 300,000 tons in 1978.<sup>26</sup> The government held this up as a tangible indicator of Haitian economic development.<sup>27</sup> Both the government and Frères Lambert anticipated the increased capacity would not only fulfill the needs of the domestic market but also allow Haiti to become a net exporter of cement. The IMF looked at the plant's expansion approvingly: "The

---

<sup>23</sup> "Petition from French and Haiti Employees of Ciment d'Haiti Requesting Ducroiset's Dismissal," October 17, 1964, 524/PO Box 207, CADN.

<sup>24</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments" (International Monetary Fund, June 15, 1972), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Xavier Azais to Edouard Francisque, April 11, 1973, 524 PO/B Box 207, CADN.

<sup>26</sup> Xavier Azais to Bernard Dorin, April 19, 1973, 524 PO/B Box 207, CADN.

<sup>27</sup> "Le message présidentiel du 2 janvier: 'La Bataille Economique que livre mon Gouvernement--et que j'ai juré de gagner doit s'épanouir dans un cadre adapté et propice à la renaissance de la confiance dans les rapports entre citoyens, nationaux et étrangers' a déclaré le Chef de l'Etat," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 4, 1973.

expansion of the cement plant by Ciment d'Haiti is of considerable importance to Haiti because it will eliminate a bottle-neck now affecting the construction industry and will generate foreign exchange earnings."<sup>28</sup>

Yet the company's French management was worried. The expansion required them to make a significant financial investment, and the dictatorship's erratic track record—including high ministerial turnover and the refusal to pay debts—did not inspire confidence.<sup>29</sup> Most troubling was the government's reluctance to honor an agreement, drawn up in 1972, to index the price of cement to the cost of the oil needed to produce it.<sup>30</sup>

Those fears were validated when, in October 1973, a year and a half after the plant began expanding its facilities, the global economy went into a tailspin. Across the world, a war in the Middle East led the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to declare an oil embargo, provoking an energy crisis that quadrupled the price of petroleum in a matter of weeks. This spelled disaster for Ciment d'Haiti, as oil was the one material necessary for cement production that was not found naturally in Haiti. The company estimated that each dollar increase on a barrel of oil raised the production cost of an individual bag of cement by five cents.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments," June 27, 1974, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Azais to Francisque, April 11, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> Xavier Azais to Emmanuel Bros, November 6, 1974, 524 PO/B Box 207, CADN.

<sup>31</sup> "Inauguration Des Nouvelles Installations Ciment d'Haiti" (Le Matin, n.d.), 524/PO Box 207, CADN.

To fight inflation in the early 1970s, the government regulated the economy through a system of price controls. Since the Haitian government was Ciment d'Haiti's only client, any increase in the sale price had to be authorized by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Reluctantly, the regime provided the company some reprieve by incrementally increasing the price it paid for cement in March 1975 and February 1976.<sup>32</sup> But to Frères Lambert, these concessions were insufficient to cover skyrocketing production costs. They warned that the company could spiral into insolvency.

At the same time, the expansion also generated discontent among the factory workers. From their perspective, the very factors that worried management—especially the rising price of their product—looked like signs of success. The enlarged facility had increased employees' daily workload, yet they had not enjoyed a corresponding wage increase. On May 13, 1976, Ciment d'Haiti factory workers staged a one-day strike, demanding a thirty percent increase in their wages. A young journalist with the *Le Petit Samedi Soir* named Gasner Raymond published two feature pieces covering the strike. His reporting exposed dangerous conditions: in the course of their day workers might be exposed to temperatures as high as 365 degrees Fahrenheit. They lacked adequate respiratory protection and were exposed to particulate matter that caused lung disease and breathing problems. They resented that their work was valued less than that of their

---

<sup>32</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 404/AM," April 9, 1975, 524 PO/B Box 267, CADN.

French counterparts, some of whom made three times as much as the plant's higher-ranking Haitian management.<sup>33</sup>

Ciment d'Haiti's public image did not improve when, two weeks after the May 1976 strike, Raymond's strangled and bloodied body was found face down in a roadside ditch outside Port-au-Prince. City police immediately opened an investigation, but their findings were never released and the murder remains unsolved.<sup>34</sup> It was widely perceived as an attack on Haiti's budding press freedoms and nascent human rights and democracy movements that had begun to mature after François Duvalier's death. A large crowd attended Raymond's funeral, including hundreds of artists, writers, and students, along with representatives of foreign embassies and the National Palace. Many associated the crime with his fearless reporting on the strike. Suspicion fell heavily on Ciment d'Haiti.<sup>35</sup>

The push for improved wages, safety conditions and dignified treatment continued for two more years. In November 1977, the union forced the expulsion of yet another European factory director amid charges of virulent racism.<sup>36</sup> Finally, in the summer of 1978, Ciment d'Haiti agreed to a sixteen percent wage increase, after a

---

<sup>33</sup> Gasner Raymond, "Le Ciment d'Haiti Trouver Une Solution," *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, May 22, 1976.

<sup>34</sup> Dieudonné Fardin, "Justice et Verité," *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, June 12, 1976.

<sup>35</sup> Clitandre, "Funerailles Des Gasner Les Derniers Moments," *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, June 19, 1976; "Human Rights in Haiti," *The Washington Post*, February 5, 1978; Rony Gilot, *Au Gré de La Mémoire: Jean-Claude Duvalier Ou l'ingénuité Captive* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Le Béréen, 2006), 301-2.

<sup>36</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 1227/AM," December 16, 1977, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

government investigation into the state of their finances determined that profits were higher than officially reported.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Liberalization and Compromise***

Gasner Raymond's coverage of the Ciment d'Haiti strike and the outcry surrounding his death are both notable because they reflect the changing political climate of Jean-Claude Duvalier's Haiti in this period. Urban elites in Port-au-Prince increasingly expected a degree of personal liberty and freedom of the press. This was in large part because the most visibly arbitrary and repressive aspects of François Duvalier's authoritarianism had diminished. The economy showed signs of reviving. Haitian and American investors opened assembly plants in Port-au-Prince, sewing bras and baseballs for the U.S. market. After years of decline, the tourist industry began to grow as visitors once again came to enjoy the island's beaches and cultural attractions.<sup>38</sup>

But by steering the country away from diplomatic isolation and increasing Haiti's bilateral and multilateral agreements, Jean-Claude Duvalier and his advisors opened the country's domestic finances to international pressure in a way his father's regime had rejected. Through brutal isolationism, François Duvalier had managed to successfully shut out foreign influence over Haitian politics and domestic finances. His

---

<sup>37</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 978/AM," September 20, 1978, Box 208, CADN.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank, "Current Economic Position and Prospects of Haiti," Central America and the Caribbean Series (Washington D.C.: World Bank, May 3, 1972), World Bank Documents and Reports.

son's interest in international aid reopened the door, making the country vulnerable to donors' demands for structural adjustment and fiscal "rationalization."

Under François Duvalier, IMF efforts in the late 1960s to extend loans failed when the organization had demanded a full accounting of the country's finances that included unbudgeted accounts such as those of the Régie.<sup>39</sup> But shortly after the death of Duvalier père, his son's regime tripled the money the Régie transferred to the national budget—controlled by the Ministry of Finances—from \$1.8 million to \$5.5 million a year in 2017 dollars.<sup>40</sup> The offer of incremental change satisfied IMF demands for increased accountability. In 1973, the organization extended its first stand-by loan to Haiti.

Bilateral aid to Haiti began around the same time. In 1972 and 1973, Haiti received a few million dollars for agriculture and road building projects from Israel, Canada, Germany, and the United States. To coordinate development efforts, the Duvalier government began, in 1975, to organize annual meetings of a Joint Commission for the Implementation of External Cooperation in Haiti. Participants included the IMF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Development Bank (IDB), and Organization of American States (OAS). These multilateral institutions were joined by representatives of Haiti's major bilateral aid partners: the United States,

---

<sup>39</sup> Philippe Koenig, "Mission Du Fond Monétaire International En Haiti," April 1, 1968, 524 PO/B Box 166, CADN.

<sup>40</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments," June 15, 1972. The amount in gourdes was 1.5 million and 4.5 million, respectively. Converted into 1971 dollars and adjusted to 2017 equivalencies with [www.usinflationcalculator.com](http://www.usinflationcalculator.com)

Canada, and France.<sup>41</sup> By this time, foreign aid to Haiti had reached \$57 million; the following year it jumped twenty percent to \$69 million.<sup>42</sup> Through the Joint Commission meetings, the U.S., IMF, and World Bank coordinated to pressure the dictatorship to reform its internal finances. Their objections focused on the Régie.

On one hand, pressuring the government to abolish the Régie was an attempt at reducing corruption. On another, these reforms sought to return all Haitian revenue to international oversight. In 1976, the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, Heyward Isham, reported: "We have consistently made known to senior Haitian government officials our view that extensive, unaccountable and secret Régie takings were difficult to reconcile with other evidence in recent years of a serious governmental intent to mobilize resources for national development." Isham said, "The World Bank has been even more pointed, and the present IMF representative had echoed the theme," indicating that the pressure was coordinated between the United States and multilateral financial institutions.<sup>43</sup>

The demand to abolish the Régie was only the most recent chapter in a long history of foreign interference in Haitian domestic finances: As seen in Chapter 1, during the U.S. Occupation of 1915-1934, Marines restructured Haiti's tax system and forced the

---

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Pierre Piquois, "No. 669/MC," November 10, 1976, 524 PO/B Box 177, CADN.

<sup>42</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 718/AM," July 19, 1977, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

<sup>43</sup> Heyward Isham to DOS, "Haiti's Governmental Shakeup Removes Powerful Duvalierist Advisor," September 10, 1976, 1976PORTA02441\_b, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976PORTA02441\\_b.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976PORTA02441_b.html).

country to prioritize debt repayment to U.S. banks over domestic investments in development. But Isham dismissed Haitian hostility toward renewed American oversight over their domestic finances as a sentimental issue that could be diffused with gestures of respect for Haitian sovereignty: "External manipulation of Haitian finances, which is what both U.S. and IMF requirements look like to many Haitians, carries for historical reasons a very negative emotional charge here."<sup>44</sup>

Isham used that strategy effectively in March 1976, when a food-aid agreement meant to offset a drought almost stalled on a condition that the Régie transfer its "distribution commission" on donated flour to an economic development fund monitored by the United States. Initially, Haitian representatives rejected the proposal, arguing that "the government of Haiti, for reasons of sovereignty, would not be willing to make public commitments to another government as to how it would report on the use of tax funds."<sup>45</sup> But after three hours of negotiations, American officials agreed to make formal requests for information to the Minister of Finance, satisfying the regime. Immediately, Isham cabled to Washington asking for permission to sign the food-aid agreement since "the effort to reduce the Regie's extrabudgetary status is a major

---

<sup>44</sup> William Jones to DOS, "Haiti's Troubled Progress - Taking Stock," April 4, 1979, 1979PORTA01460\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01460\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01460_e.html).

<sup>45</sup> Heyward Isham to DOS, "P.L. 480 Title 1," March 12, 1976, 1975SURABA00289\_b, Wikileaks, [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975SURABA00289\\_b.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975SURABA00289_b.html).

objective" and the regime's agreement represented the "first success in a long term effort to crack the Regie's wall of secrecy."<sup>46</sup>

Efforts to challenge Haitian infrastructures of corruption were inseparable from deep legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The new models of development and fiscal reform advocated by Western powers framed advancements of their influence as efforts help Haiti recover from its internal excesses. But the system of political corruption they proposed to reform had emerged out of these powers' own histories of exploitation: slavery and colonialism. Isham dismissed the Duvalier regime's defense of its sovereignty as emotional and irrational while defending demands for expanded U.S. influence as rational economic science.

The Duvalier administration's defense of its infrastructure of corruption was essential to its stability, since the structure of the Haitian economy was inextricably connected to its political formation. Demands to reform the Régie or abolish it altogether called into question the infrastructures of corruption upon which the Duvalier regime rested. In his notes on the 1978 Joint Commission Meeting, the French Ambassador to Haiti, Louis Deblé, described the Régie as the fulcrum around which the rest of the dictatorship revolved:

The famous Régie du Tabac et des Allumettes, which is never mentioned as such, but which is on everyone's minds, an original institution peculiar to the Republic of Haiti, drains a percentage that some estimate to be 40% of all taxes collected and that feeds into hundred of "special accounts" opened at the BNRH.

---

<sup>46</sup> Isham to DOS.

This system, which was limited in the beginning but was expanded over the years, permits the Head of State to demonstrate largesse towards certain sectors of his civil and military administration and to be generous towards his loyal friends. It is the very base of presidential power.

Thus, any allusion to the Régie is interpreted as an interference in the domestic affairs of the State, which makes it particularly complicated for those who, like the United States, the World Bank, and the IMF, have been pushing for years, if not its elimination, than at least its absorption into the normal budgetary system.<sup>47</sup>

A new opportunity to challenge the power of the Régie appeared when Henri Sicilat, the long-time Director of the Régie, fell from grace under unknown circumstances in September 1976. Reporting on this unexpected turn, Isham described Sicilat—and by extension the office he controlled—as the embodiment of Duvalier corruption: “[He was] a notoriously corrupt and shadowy Machiavellian eminence” whose influence was pervasive. As the director of the Régie, Isham wrote in a cable to Washington, Sicilat “was the power behind the throne.”<sup>48</sup> Two months later, the delegate of France’s *Fonds d’Aide et de Coopération* (FAC) to the Second Joint Commission meeting reported that the Haitian delegation had addressed “the delicate problem of the reorganization of the Régie” by announcing that Duvalier advisor Henri Bayard would lead a government team to investigate the Régie and propose methods of reform. “This declaration,” noted FAC representative, was “clearly made to reassure, was noted with satisfaction by the delegates.”<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Louis Deblé, “No. 807/ AM,” July 19, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>48</sup> Isham to DOS, “Haiti’s Governmental Shakeup Removes Powerful Duvalierist Advisor.”

<sup>49</sup> Piquois, “No. 669/ MC.”

But as the months passed and Bayard's commission did not release any of its findings, observers of the regime began to suspect it had been a performance.<sup>50</sup> By appearing to make concessions to international concerns but moving slowly towards implementing them, the Duvalier government attempted appease its critics while preserving its central structure. But Sicilat's political collapse threw open a window into the extent of the Régie's corruption. The injustice of the indirect Haitian tax system historically had been invisible to the population—due both to the nature of indirect taxes and because of government censorship of the press.

When the extent of Sicilat's personal wealth was revealed to the public—valued at than \$21 million in 2017 currency, including thirty houses, six cars, and a yacht—the more outspoken Haitian journalists expressed their horror that government officials could accrue so much wealth amid so much poverty.<sup>51</sup> Bob Nérée, the publisher of *Hebo Jeune Presse*, warned that the population was getting fed up with the blatant inequity: "One can imagine with what feeling the Haitian people, who know the pangs of misery, the destitution of hunger, learn that a man in power for fifteen years...had at his disposal more than six million dollars in Haiti alone, without taking into account money in foreign bank accounts."<sup>52</sup> Nérée used his platform to attack the infrastructure of corruption symbolized by the Régie, writing in his newspaper that "the case of Henri

---

<sup>50</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 2/AM," January 5, 1977, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

<sup>51</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 80/AM," January 21, 1977, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

<sup>52</sup> René Justice, "No. 129/ IP," February 4, 1977, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

Siclait is only a prototype of the illicit enrichment perpetuated under the Duvalier's government."<sup>53</sup> The relaxation of press censorship at this time made it possible for the Haitian public to grapple with the regime's predatory nature.<sup>54</sup>

At the next meeting of the Joint Commission, in June 1977, representatives from the IMF and the U.S. ratcheted up the pressure on the Haitian government. IMF officials declared that fiscal reform was a condition of continued aid and offered to assist the administration with the "delicate" and "extremely sensitive" task.<sup>55</sup> Government officials acquiesced to transferring half the income collected through the Régie into accounts devoted to economic development projects.<sup>56</sup> The next year, during negotiations with United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the regime finally agreed to complete a three-year financial overhaul that would bring all non-fiscal accounts under the national budget; effectively a promise to abolish the Régie altogether.<sup>57</sup> Following the meeting, new U.S. Ambassador William Jones celebrated its success: "As a result of negotiations with the IMF for an Extended Fund Facility, reinforced by our Title

---

<sup>53</sup> Heyward Isham to DOS, "Journalistic Brinkmanship Continues: Regime Corruption Denounced," February 2, 1977, Case No. F-2015-01622 Doc No. C05765123, U.S. Department of State FOIA; Justice, "No. 129/ IP."

<sup>54</sup> This would not last long: Bob Nérée and his father Luc were interrogated by military officers after this article ran; the following year Luc Nérée would be beaten almost to death by two macoutes.

<sup>55</sup> IMF, "Staff Report for the 1978 Article IV Consultation" (International Monetary Fund, September 8, 1978).

<sup>56</sup> IMF, "Haiti-Recent Economic Developments," July 14, 1977; Ambassade de France en Haiti, "Ephemerides Mois d'Avril 1977," May 6, 1977, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

<sup>57</sup> Secretary of the IMF and Members of the Executive Board, "Haiti-Extended Arrangement," EBS/78/561, October 30, 1978, International Monetary Fund.

III negotiations, Haiti has taken substantial steps to reform its budget process, dismantle the tax power of the Régie du Tabac, and rationalize its fiscal affairs."<sup>58</sup>

### ***A New Image for the Regime***

While the regime moved slowly towards restructuring its internal finances, it was eager to transform to its public image. Since taking power in April 1971, Jean-Claude Duvalier had tried to create the impression that his dictatorship embraced modernity and democracy. By removing key personalities from power, reducing the VSN's influence, and releasing some political prisoners, his administration tried to shed the legacy of repression and arbitrary violence it inherited from François Duvalier. Jean-Claude redoubled these efforts in 1978. In January, he formally rebranded the philosophy of the dictatorship as "Jean-Claudisme," explaining that the concept represented the liberalization of the regime while at the same time, paradoxically, continuing his father's legacy.<sup>59</sup>

In April, he rolled out a new political organization dedicated to Jean-Claudisme, the Comité National d'Action Jean-Claudiste (CONAJEC).<sup>60</sup> He announced his support for the organization of local elections scheduled for February 1979. The drive to reform reshaped the Cabinet as well. On November 3, 1978, Jean-Claude appointed a new

---

<sup>58</sup> William Jones to DOS, "US Goals and Objectives-Haiti," December 8, 1978, 1878PORTA05047\_d, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PORTA05047\\_d.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PORTA05047_d.html).

<sup>59</sup> "Message présidentiel du 2 Janvier 1978: 'Je ne cesserai de proclamer mon attachement inaltérable aux principes de et de libéralisation'," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 2, 1978.

<sup>60</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 765/ AM," July 5, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

Cabinet that reflected his interest in reform.<sup>61</sup> Six major politicians were replaced, including three with strong ties to the François Duvalier administration. Their successors were, for the most part, younger technocrats with foreign graduate degrees and few direct links to the previous regime.

The Cabinet's new makeup seemed promising to many observers. Ambassador Jones reported to the Department of State, "The changes ... ease out some of the old-time, crustier Duvalierists."<sup>62</sup> *Petit Samedi Soir* optimistically remarked that the new generation of technocrats gave "seeds of hope" for a new and more vigorous administration.

Ambassador Deblé was less enthused. One casualty of the new cabinet was Minister of Foreign Affairs Edner Brutus, a long-time ally and architect of French-Haitian relations. After praising the youth and professional qualifications of the new appointees, Deblé observed that although the individuals changed, the fundamental structure of authoritarianism remained the same:

The young President, by dramatically upsetting his team, and placing it under the aegis of Jean-Claudisme, wanted to make a political act! It is probable, however, that, as in the past, nothing positive will emerge from this reshuffle. Men change, but administrative structures remain ... absent. New ministerial leaders, like the previous ones, deprived of financial and human resources, will continue to depend on the good will of the President for their smallest decisions. Men of great quality, for the most part, their first declarations

---

<sup>61</sup> William Jones to DOS, "Haitian Cabinet Changes," November 4, 1978, 1978PORTA04565\_d, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PORTA04565\\_d.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PORTA04565_d.html).

<sup>62</sup> Jones to DOS.

were limited to servile and disappointing oaths of allegiance to Jean-Claudisme, adorned with the most overwrought qualifiers.<sup>63</sup>

The new cabinet included a relatively unknown economist named Guy Bauduy, appointed to lead the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. A scion of a wealthy family from Pétionville, Bauduy had spent most of the François Duvalier years pursuing his studies in the U.S. He affiliated with progressive causes: while a student at Texas Southern University, he became a civil rights organizer fighting segregation in Houston. The following year, he taught mathematics to students in postcolonial Gabon.<sup>64</sup>

Between 1963 and 1971, Bauduy studied economics at the New School for Social Research in New York City with professors who criticized the impact of multinational corporations on the global economy.<sup>65</sup> After returning to Haiti in 1971, he became an associate of Duvalier's close advisor, Henri Bayard. Just a few months before his appointment to the Ministry of Commerce, Bauduy represented Bayard's energy office, *Institut National des Ressources Minerales* (INAREM) on the labor committee that had investigated ongoing labor conflicts at Ciment d'Haiti.<sup>66</sup>

On December 4, 1978, journalist Jean Dominique broadcast an interview with the new minister on his program *Radio Haiti Inter*. The segment nominally covered the

---

<sup>63</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 1131/AM," November 9, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

<sup>64</sup> "Guy Bauduy Resume," n.d., 524 PO/B Box 151, CADN.

<sup>65</sup> Carmen Hendershott to Claire Antone Payton, "Guy Bauduy," January 18, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Gérard Michel et al., "Rapport de la Commission Interministerielle sur le Ciment d'Haiti," December 22, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

government's interest in opening a new, technologically-advanced cement plant in the region of Gonaïves. But Bauduy used the occasion to air his frustration with companies in Haiti that reflexively tried to push increasing production costs onto consumers:

The other day I received three letters from three large companies announcing to me a price increase that had to be sanctioned with my department's authority, as is done. But they announced the price increase to me, they didn't solicit our authorization to increase their price. And at the time, I replied "put me in a position to justify this increase in front of my public, in front of my government, and I will grant it to you." Justify it first, if your raw materials went up, the price of gasoline went up, or something else. You can transmit this augmentation directly into the consumer price, but it's possible that the profits you earn could absorb, if not the totality of this price increase, then at least part of it! ... Certain companies will tell you from the start that they are bankrupt and so they need a price increase to get themselves afloat. Yet we know very well from investigating that this is not always true.<sup>67</sup>

Although he did not mention the company by name in the interview, Bauduy was referring to the labor investigation into Ciment d'Haiti he had participated in a few short months before. During that investigation, the minister had become convinced that the cement factory was making far more money than it report to the government had lied about its inability to pay its workers more.

The same day his interview with Jean Dominique went on the air, Bauduy announced that, rather than authorizing Ciment d'Haiti's request to raise the price of cement, he would lower the price by seventeen percent.<sup>68</sup> The decree also prohibited all exportation of cement from Haiti on the grounds that the factory had not adequately

---

<sup>67</sup> Jean Dominique, "Cimenterie, Gonaïves. Ministre du Commerce Guy Bauduy, introduction et entretien par Jean L. Dominique.," *Radio Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Radio Haïti, December 4, 1978), Radio Haiti Archive, Duke Library, [https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-RR-0123\\_01](https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-RR-0123_01).

<sup>68</sup> "Le prix du Ciment Communiqué," *Le Nouvelliste*, December 4, 1978.

satisfied domestic demand. The Régie's "distribution commission," however, remained unchanged.

Company management and diplomats at the French Embassy were outraged, but few others were sympathetic to their plight. Over the years, Ciment d'Haiti had gained a reputation as exploitative, racist, and possibly deadly. Before expanding its facilities, the factory's inefficiency was blamed for stifling Haiti's economic revival; after the renovation, critics complained it sold cement at a higher cost domestically than abroad.<sup>69</sup>

Following the price reduction, Claude Lambert, Frères Lambert's president, met with U.S. Ambassador Jones to garner support. Jones was skeptical: "Lambert ... stated that the two-tiered price system permitted Ciment d'Haiti to be price competitive in the export field because all the amortization costs for the factory are covered by the domestic price. Present amortization costs are 12 dollars per tons with total product costs at 30 dollars a ton. Nonetheless, Lambert claims to be losing money at the new wholesale price of 42 dollars per ton."<sup>70</sup> Jones's cool reception of the French executive might attest to the company's reputation for corruption, but no doubt it also reflected some degree of pleasure in seeing one of the U.S.'s biggest rivals in Haiti rapidly losing influence.

---

<sup>69</sup> William Jones to DOS, "GOH Partly Nationalizes French Cement Company," March 23, 1979, 1979PORTA01279\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01279\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01279_e.html).

<sup>70</sup> William Jones to DOS, "Haiti Bans Cement Exports," December 26, 1978, 1978PORTA05280\_d, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PORTA05280\\_d.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PORTA05280_d.html).

After two weeks of failed negotiations with Bauduy, Lambert and factory director Bernard Maréchal retaliated. On December 18, the directors fired 118 of the factory's 300 employees.<sup>71</sup> Lambert informed the remaining staff that they would be running operations twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, until they had saturated the local market to the regime's satisfaction.<sup>72</sup> Lambert notified the employees that under present conditions, the company was losing \$10,000 per day. "We are therefore obliged to take a certain number of survival measure in order to be able to continue to purchase essential primary materials, particularly fuel oil."<sup>73</sup> In the eyes of the Haitian public, the mass firing confirmed Ciment d'Haiti's callous and unethical reputation. The fired workers became a *cause-célèbre*. A women's committee formed to raise money for the dispossessed factory workers and their families. One newspaper reported that even Jean-Claude Duvalier contributed \$10,000 to their aid fund.<sup>74</sup>

The conflict quickly became a microcosm for evaluating Haiti's international relationships. *Le Petit Samedi Soir* described a nationalist struggle to defend Haitian independence from the encroaching domination of foreign capitalists. Although the conflict seemed small, the stakes were high: "If the government yields in order to save its image with foreign investors it will have created a terrible precedent that will, from now

---

<sup>71</sup> Claude Lambert to Guy Bauduy, December 18, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

<sup>72</sup> Claude Lambert, "Letter to Ciment d'Haiti Staff," December 18, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

<sup>73</sup> Lambert.

<sup>74</sup> "Appui Au Président Duvalier Dans l'affaire Du Ciment d'Haiti," *Nouveau Monde*, January 4, 1979, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN; Louis Deblé, "No. 258," December 23, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

on, deprive the country of all means of negotiation with the multinationals established in Haiti."<sup>75</sup> This analysis served the interests of the regime by portraying it as the population's best defense against exploitation. *Le Nouveau Monde* published a letter comparing the president-for-life's steadfastness to the heroic acts of the Haitian Revolution: "Please remember: the world is watching You and the progressive sector of the real country supports you totally in this matter. History is on Your side and will honor You."<sup>76</sup> By situating the government takeover as retribution for centuries of abuse at the hands of foreigners, the government got to play the hero in a familiar drama of resistance, and in the process deflect criticism from itself. But the continuation of the Régie's "distribution commission" illustrates how the officials' outrage about exploitation did not apply to the regime.

The ideologically-charged discourses imbuing the conflict shaped subsequent negotiations. Minister of Foreign Affairs Gerard Dorecelly tried to assure the French Ambassador that Bauduy's actions did not symbolize hostility toward France, but he acknowledged it would be hard to change course since the takeover played extremely well with the public. "Do you believe that the President could back down from the popular December 4 measure?" Dorecelly asked. "He risks losing all credit domestically

---

<sup>75</sup> "L'Épreuve de Force," *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, January 5, 1979.

<sup>76</sup> "Appui Au Président Duvalier Dans l'affaire Du Ciment d'Haiti."

and internationally."<sup>77</sup> Deblé wondered if the company was not becoming casualty of the president's public relations campaign:

What explanation is there for this intemperate decision by the Chef de l'Etat, so contrary to his temperament and to how things are habitually done in Haiti? The desire to appear as a "third worldist" leader, modern and progressive, like some of his homologs in the world? The conviction that Ciment d'Haiti abuses its monopole-de-fait? The demagogic concern to present this measure like an action in favor of the most unfortunate in the name of "Jean-Claudisme rénovateur"?<sup>78</sup>

Negotiations dragged on. On January 21, the company backed down, announcing that it would bring back the fired workers, but this did little to reduce tension.<sup>79</sup> The regime formed another commission to investigate Ciment d'Haiti, which included Bauduy and his mentor, Bayard. The commission's findings, published in early January 1979, reiterated the conclusions of the labor investigation a few months before: the company was hiding profits and any financial hardship was the fault of the factory's administration. The commission upheld Bauduy's price reduction.

After three months of manufacturing cement at the reduced price, Lambert and Maréchal announced that Ciment d'Haiti could no longer afford fuel and would shut down production within the month.

---

<sup>77</sup> "Affaire du Ciment d'Haiti Reintegration des 118 Ouvrieres: Sombres Perspectives d'Apres la Direction du Ciment d'Haiti," *Le Nouvelliste*, January 21, 1979; Louis Deblé, "NR 253," December 21, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

<sup>78</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 1237/ AM," December 8, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

<sup>79</sup> "Affaire du Ciment d'Haiti Reintegration des 118 Ouvrieres: Sombres Perspectives d'Apres la Direction du Ciment d'Haiti."

## ***Nationalization of Ciment d'Haiti***

If this was a bluff to force the Haitian government to compromise, it did not work. On March 22, 1979, the Duvalier regime seized control of Ciment d'Haiti.

Bauduy invoked article 163 of the Haitian Constitution, which authorized the government to take over businesses to guarantee the continued availability of essential services.<sup>80</sup> Jones, recounting these developments to Washington, remarked that it was the first time they knew of the government invoking this article in any situation.<sup>81</sup>

At a press conference the next day, Bauduy took pains to distinguish between "*nationalisation*" (nationalization) and "*étatisation*" (state-ization). The two terms seemed synonymous, but he tried to reassure the public—and more importantly, the United States—that he had overseen *étatisation*, which he insisted carried none of the Cold War political valence of a nationalization.<sup>82</sup> He argued that the latter was impossible in Haiti because it would contradict the purportedly pro-business, pro-investment ethos of the regime.

Naturally, the French were frustrated.<sup>83</sup> Jones was unpersuaded but unalarmed. "No amount of dissembling by the GOH can disguise the fact that it has to some extent nationalized Ciment d'Haiti," he mused. "Even if the GOH later attempts to prove that

---

<sup>80</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 349/AM," March 23, 1979, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

<sup>81</sup> William Jones to DOS, "GOH Partly Nationalizes French Cement Company," March 23, 1979, 1979PORTA01279\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01279\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01279_e.html).

<sup>82</sup> "Conférence de Presse Au Dpt. Du Commerce," *Le Nouvelliste*, March 25, 1979.

<sup>83</sup> Deblé, "No. 349/AM."

its action was based on the constitution, it will have created a very unfavorable image."<sup>84</sup>

It is striking that the U.S. ambassador was relatively nonchalant about an official known for his radical political views leading the nationalization of Haiti's largest industry. The tenor of the Caribbean Cold War had changed considerable from the early 1960s, when Jones' predecessors had done what they thought was necessary to save Haiti from communism. That same year that U.S. operatives were fighting covertly against the socialist reforms of the Manley government in Jamaica, which included the nationalization of foreign-owned bauxite mines. Perhaps he was sanguine because, in this instance, the victim was a French enterprise. Or maybe he was so deeply convinced of the ideological vacuousness of the Duvalier regime that a flurry of socialist posturing did not alarm him.

The Haitian reactions that made it into print were mixed. *Petit Samedi Soir* framed it in terms of a historical struggle for Haitian survival. By uniting left and right against the common enemy, "wielders of multinational power," it said, the Duvalier regime had advanced the larger historical project of Haitian liberation. "It is necessary to strike hard when the occasion calls for it. Because no one has hesitated to strike hard at the country until it has been reduced to the shameful situation of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere."<sup>85</sup> Other coverage was more circumspect, particularly with regard to the

---

<sup>84</sup> Jones to DOS, "GOH Partly Nationalizes French Cement Company."

<sup>85</sup> "Haiti Nationalisation," *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, April 6, 1979.

implications for other businesses in Haiti. Another article in *Petit Samedi Soir* warned that Ciment d'Haiti's woes were occurring in part because of large-scale structural limitations, such as the global price of oil that affected other businesses. Strong government intervention alarmed business circles. Would all businesses struggling to keep up with rampant inflation be nationalized?<sup>86</sup> *Le Matin* contended that the cost of cement production was rising all over the region and so the government's price control measures were ill-advised. "In informed circles, it is known that the cost of cement production is well above the price fixed by the Department of Commerce ... Why in Haiti must we risk bankruptcy and scarcity, and maybe the closure of the useful Fond Mombin enterprise?"<sup>87</sup>

French officials were studiously tone-deaf to Haitian discourses concerning historical legacies of imperialism. Ambassador Deblé portrayed the conflict as the toxic product of the president's personal ill-will and "the 'left third-worldist' brand image he now intends to give himself," he wrote.<sup>88</sup> Nothing in Deblé's correspondence with Paris suggests that he considered the influence of lingering memories of enslavement and colonialism. Like the Haitian government, the French embassy was adept at crafting self-serving historical narratives that served their purposes: a year earlier, the French Embassy composed a stunning account of Haitian-French relations that began in 1874

---

<sup>86</sup> "Affaire Ciment d'Haiti: L'Intervention de l'Etat," *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, April 6, 1979.

<sup>87</sup> "Le Drame Du Ciment Est Inquietant," *Le Matin*, April 18, 1979.

<sup>88</sup> Deblé, "No. 349/AM."

and made no mention of Haiti as a former French colony scarred by 150 years of slavery.<sup>89</sup>

Jones, an African-American diplomat with prior experience at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), sensed the importance Haitians assigned to patterns of the past but considered their hostility toward foreign influence immature. He reported to Washington that the conflict with Ciment d'Haiti erupted "mainly because many Haitians think [the company] has been looting the country."<sup>90</sup> After describing Lambert's concerns about long-term solvency, Jones said, "the GOH objectives are somewhat murkier. The selling price of cement is the ostensible issue but appears to be a less important consideration than the widespread and poorly articulated Haitian propensity to resent any large foreign organization."<sup>91</sup> Ultimately, Jones attributed the conflict as a personal failing of the President. "Duvalier has not displayed the type of leadership or understanding that is needed to pull Haiti up economically."<sup>92</sup> Jones's comment is illustrative of the common narrative that the regime so highly centralized in the figure of Duvalier that policy was most effectively interpreted through the president's personality traits. But, as I show below, the Ciment

---

<sup>89</sup> Louis Deblé, "No. 43," January 26, 1978, 524 PO/B Box 269, CADN.

<sup>90</sup> Jones to DOS, "GOH Partly Nationalizes French Cement Company."

<sup>91</sup> Jones to DOS.

<sup>92</sup> William Jones to DOS, "Title III - Conversation with Antonio Andre," March 27, 1979, 1979PORTA01323\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01323\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA01323_e.html).

d'Haiti episode was indicative not of personal failings in leadership but of a slippage in the deeper underlying infrastructure of corruption that held up the dictatorship.

### ***Infrastructures of Corruption in Transition***

Three months before Bauduy nationalized Ciment d'Haiti, the international donor community had successfully pressured the government into an agreement to shut down the Régie. The government propped itself up not through popular support, but through the paramilitary VSN network and patronage relationships among elites—expensive relationships that would not fit into the program of "fiscal rationality" or "national development" supported by the international community. As they lost ground in aid negotiations to international donors who insisted on having a hand in the country's domestic finances, regime officials sought new strategies to find the money it needed to survive.<sup>93</sup> As the producer of the commodity underwriting Port-au-Prince's explosive growth, Ciment d'Haiti appeared full of potential: rumored to generate immense revenue for its French owners, the factory also fell outside the purview of IMF audits.

The timing is but one link connecting the two. Certain individuals were involved both in investigating Ciment d'Haiti and the Régie. Key among them was Duvalier's close advisor, Henri Bayard. Following the political demise of Sicilat in September 1976,

---

<sup>93</sup> Alf Bergesen to Secretary of State, "The Dinosaurs Strike Back," December 12, 1980, Case No. F-2014-12609 Doc No. C05617558, U.S. Department of State Freedom of Information Act Website.

Bayard headed the government team charged with investigating the Régie and proposing reform. He knew its centrality in the regime's infrastructure of corruption. When officials investigated Ciment d'Haiti in the summer of 1978, his protégé Bauduy had participated on the commission. Afterwards, Bauduy became convinced that Ciment d'Haiti was laundering large profits out of Haiti while simultaneously warning of possible bankruptcy. The new cabinet that came to power in November 1979 bore Bayard's fingerprints, with many of the appointees personally or professionally connected to him. It is unclear whether Bauduy proposed taking over Ciment d'Haiti because he was convinced of the merits of centralized planning, or whether his mentor used his reputation as a political firebrand as progressive ideological camouflage while he attempted to restructure the regime's system of extraction.

Kleptocracy was not a condition intrinsic to Haiti, but rather a tenuous form of government in constant need of modification and upkeep. But it was essential to the Duvalier regime: officials knew that without access to illicit funds to pay its supporters, it would collapse. IMF and USAID efforts to change Haiti economically but not politically were misguided because there was no Duvalier regime apart from its infrastructures of corruption.

But if nationalization was intended as a solution that would both meet international demands for fiscal reform and preserve the Duvalierist state, officials were mistaken. While taking over the company might have provided a source of funding

outside the purview of IMF-mandated audits, it increased the regime's exposure to violent fluctuations in the global market. In April 1979, a few weeks after the government took control of the plant, conflict in the Middle East led to a second global energy crisis. Between April and May 1979, the price of fuel on the global market increased by twenty percent.<sup>94</sup> Now the burden of purchasing ever-more expensive gas fell to the Haitian government. Bauduy appropriated much of the country's limited supply of foreign currency to purchase fuel while continuing to sell cement at the lower rate. By mid-May, the company's new administration and an advising technical council agreed that the plant's solvency and continued operation depended on raising prices.<sup>95</sup> On May 25, the minister authorized a moderate price increase that managed to disappoint both the Lambert Group, who thought it was too little, and the government's nationalist supporters, who thought it was too much.<sup>96</sup> At no point did the Régie reduce or remove its "distribution commission."

By August, fuel prices rose to almost twice what they had been before the government took over.<sup>97</sup> With the global energy crisis showing no signs of abating, on

---

<sup>94</sup> "Crude Oil Prices - 70 Year Historical Chart," accessed September 26, 2017, <http://www.macrotrends.net/1369/crude-oil-price-history-chart>.

<sup>95</sup> René Justice, "No. 539/AM," May 17, 1979, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN; "Evaluation de La Cimenterie d'Haiti Mission Complémentaire à Celle de Février 1979 Rapport Complémentaire de M. P.F Janssen (10 Mai 1979)," *Le Nouvelliste*, July 7, 1979.

<sup>96</sup> It is worth mentioning that Bauduy appears to have issued the decree only after demanding a \$250,000 bribe from Claude Lambert, which records suggest Lambert was happy to pay. See Justice, "No. 539/AM."

<sup>97</sup> "Crude Oil Prices - 70 Year Historical Chart." Prices were \$15.85 in March and 26.50 in August; Converted into 2017 dollars, these amounts were \$55.14 and \$87.21.

August 13 the government reversed course. It returned control of the company to the Lambert Group and raised the sale price of cement from \$2.60 to \$3.30 per sack.<sup>98</sup> The new prices retained the \$0.50 Régie tax, which accounted for twenty percent of the consumer cost.<sup>99</sup> Journalists at *Le Petit Samedi Soir* and Ambassador Jones suggested that diplomatic pressure from France had played an important role:

“GOH concern over effect its fight with cement [sic] was having on official French relations is probably significant factor in settlement which appears to favor French company.... in that sense it is probably most serious defeat to be suffered by inflation-busting Minister of Commerce Bauduy.”<sup>100</sup>

Returning the plant to the control of the Lambert Group seemed to reestablish the status quo, but the conflict had permanent ramifications that could not be undone with a decree. It is unclear if the factory would have in fact supplemented the revenues of kleptocracy had the second energy crisis not disrupted production. But it is clear that the affair sent shock waves through the Haitian business community, whose members suddenly felt uncertain of the government's support for the business-friendly politics they had come to expect under Jean-Claude. Following the nationalization, Jones remarked that Bauduy's "undiplomatic and rather emotional tactics" had alienated commercial elites. "The local business community is in a state of shock and Bauduy's tactics have caused business leaders to fear they may be next on Bauduy's hit list," he

---

<sup>98</sup> William Jones to DOS, "GOH Comes to Agreement with Ciment d'Haiti: Cement Price Rise to 25 Percent," August 15, 1979, 1979PORTA03632\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA03632\\_e.htm](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA03632_e.htm).

<sup>99</sup> Jones to DOS.

<sup>100</sup> Jones to DOS.

said.<sup>101</sup> A few months later, in June 1979, Jones reported that since conflict, "business confidence fell noticeably" and that some investors were pulling their money out of the country.<sup>102</sup>

The nationalization of Ciment d'Haiti had opened fissures in the alliance between the dictatorship and the country's commercial and industrial elites. Their sense of alarm became even more acute over the summer of 1979 when Bauduy began threatening Haitian-owned industries with a fate similar to Ciment d'Haiti's. The minister publicly accused the Haitian commercial class of being "a source of ruin" in Haiti.<sup>103</sup> In response, industrialist Serge Villard published an open letter to Bauduy in *Le Nouvelliste* in May, defending himself and his peers against "pointless condemnation, an unrealistic and abusive approach to the commercial profession which supplies seventy percent of public revenue."<sup>104</sup> The letter also insinuated that the government's infrastructures of corruption were exceeding accepted boundaries: "the Haitian state is omnipresent through its ever-growing direct and indirect taxes and is regularly printing and following new tax codes without taking into account their negative impact." Villard observed caustically that even if the government was concerned with fighting inflation, its methods did not include any effort to reduce its rake of profits.

---

<sup>101</sup> Jones to DOS, "GOH Partly Nationalizes French Cement Company."

<sup>102</sup> Meade, "Haiti's Economy - June 1979," June 14, 1979, 1979PORTA02602\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA02602\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA02602_e.html).

<sup>103</sup> Serge Villard, "Lettre Ouverte Au Ministre Du Commerce et de l'Industrie," *Le Nouvelliste*, May 28, 1979.

<sup>104</sup> Villard.

In June 1979, while Ciment d'Haiti was still floundering in government hands, Bauduy deepened these cracks by initiating another high-profile fight over price control. This time he confronted Haitian manufacturers of laundry soap which, unlike the cement industry, was in the hands of three of Haiti's most powerful industrial families: the Mevs, Brandts, and Madsens.<sup>105</sup> Like Ciment d'Haiti, the manufacturers came to Bauduy to request a price increase, citing elevated production costs due to inflation and the energy crisis. Jones described that the "soap produced by these tycoons is used by peasant population to wash clothes. Produced in long skinny bars, it is one of the products no household can be without."<sup>106</sup> Bauduy insisted the manufacturers had overreported the costs of production, and as he had with Ciment d'Haiti, mandated a price reduction.<sup>107</sup> But having witnessed what happened to the cement factory, the three former competitors overcame their rivalries and joined together to fight the government. They provoked a countrywide shortage of the basic necessity by collectively refusing to sell soap at the new price.<sup>108</sup> Jones noted, "Soap manufacturers for the first time put aside personal feuds, united and carried battle one step further ... they restricted production of

---

<sup>105</sup> Louis Deblé, "No 161/ 166," July 9, 1979, 524 PO/B Box 208, CADN.

<sup>106</sup> William Jones to DOS, "The Soap Crisis," July 16, 1979, 1979PORTA03093\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA03093\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA03093_e.html).

<sup>107</sup> Jones to DOS.

<sup>108</sup> Jones to DOS.

soap, hoping to drive the price above that which they had requested, thus forcing Bauduy to accede to their request."<sup>109</sup>

The soap manufacturers complemented this economic warfare with a public relations campaign. Taking advantage of the regime's relaxation of censorship, the businessmen printed in newspapers a series of scathing letters attacking the minister.<sup>110</sup> "Bauduy had not done his homework," remarked Jones. "There is no substitute [for the soap] on [the] market, government had no stockpile to supplement supply and soon [the] soap shortage became acute [sic]."<sup>111</sup> While the government and industrialists fought over who would profit off Haiti's captive consumers, the population went without. As they came to lose trust in Jean-Claude, industrial elites overcame differences and started to work together at a level they had not previously.<sup>112</sup>

This pungent showdown ended on July 10, when Duvalier called the soap manufacturers to the palace to mediate.<sup>113</sup> Specific details of their negotiation have not been discovered, but afterward the price was raised incrementally and the soap crisis came to an end. This conflict, following on the heels of the nationalization of Ciment d'Haiti, soured Haiti's once-optimistic commercial atmosphere, "with many big business

---

<sup>109</sup> Jones to DOS.

<sup>110</sup> "Les industriels du Savon répondent au Ministre Bauduy," *Le Matin*, July 7, 1979; Louis Deblé, "No. 701 / AM," July 5, 1979, 524 PO/B Box 151, CADN; "Lettre Ouverte à Mr. Guy Bauduy Secrétaire d'Etat du Commerce et de l'Industrie," *Le Matin*, June 30, 1979.

<sup>111</sup> Jones to DOS, "The Soap Crisis."

<sup>112</sup> Deblé, "No 161/ 166."

<sup>113</sup> Jones to DOS, "The Soap Crisis."

interests totally alienated by Bauduy's activities."<sup>114</sup> In late summer 1979, Duvalier sought to salvage his government's declining relationship with the business community in a series of meetings, including one with the Mevs, Brandts, and Madsens.<sup>115</sup> The meetings culminated in a formal gala on September 17 that was intended to both facilitate and symbolize renewed cooperation between the government and elites. Jones, who had in meetings with the President advocated for the commercial class, reported:

On September 17th President Duvalier hosted dinner at El Rancho hotel for approximately 250 members of local business community ... Guests included nearly every local businessman of any consequence. Duvalier moved freely among guests under minimum security and privately asked certain guests to phone him directly about their problems. Most businessmen look on meetings as an important step in calming fears of GOH policies towards private sector and general uneasiness of recent political crackdown ... most are convinced President Duvalier has genuine interest in cooperation with business community and encouraging private investment ... General attitude is one of hopeful skepticism ... Participants attached importance to fact that Duvalier was not accompanied by other GOH Ministers, especially Minister of Commerce Guy Bauduy.<sup>116</sup>

A month later, Bauduy was fired. There is almost no mention of him in historical accounts of the Duvalier regime, but his brief tenure had a lasting impact on its trajectory. In response to policies he implemented, the Haitian commercial classes began organizing to protect their collective interests. In 1980, Haitian industrialists, led by the Mevs, Brandts, and Madsens, united into a civil society group called Association des Industries d'Haiti (ADIH or AIDH).<sup>117</sup> This group accrued more influence, especially as

---

<sup>114</sup> William Jones to DOS, "GOH Patches Up Differences with Local Business," September 20, 1979, 1979PORTA04199\_e, Wikileaks, [http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA04199\\_e.html](http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1979PORTA04199_e.html).

<sup>115</sup> Jones to DOS.

<sup>116</sup> Jones to DOS.

<sup>117</sup> "Formation d'une Association Des Industries d'Haiti," *Le Matin*, March 4, 1981.

the United States and the IMF increasingly embraced private investment as the privileged form of international development. Donor agencies bypassed bilateral assistance in favor of working directly with private business interests following the Latin American debt crisis of 1982. In October 1982, ADIH negotiated with USAID for a \$5 million loan for the creation of an investment bank.<sup>118</sup> The rising influence of an organized commercial and industrial elite would have critical consequences in shaping Haiti in the wake of the dictatorship's collapse in 1986.

Despite the failed initial attempt to take over the cement plant, over the next three years the regime took over other industries including the edible oils plant (SODEXOL), the flour mill (formerly the Murchison enterprise Caribbean Mills), and a sugar factory. It also purchased a fleet of fishing boats.<sup>119</sup> Under the guise of economic development, Haitian officials successfully petitioned for financial aid for these state-controlled industries, effectively shielding their infrastructure of corruption from international audit. Ciment d'Haiti returned to government control in 1983, when Frères Lambert was sold to another French conglomerate with little interest overseas cement production.

Worried World Bank economists fretted that these investments drained the public coffers while barely turning a profit and did little to advance "national

---

<sup>118</sup> "Chronologie de l'activité Gouvernementale Pour l'année 1982 (Suite)," *Le Matin*, February 21, 1983.

<sup>119</sup> "Aide-Mémoire," June 26, 1980, 524 PO/B Box 166, CADN.

development." But regime officials were preoccupied with maintaining infrastructures of corruption, even if, in the process, they drove the industries into the ground. These dubious investments drained the country's foreign reserves and wreaked havoc on the value of local currency. Large expenditures broadened elite alarm since they imperiled the country's meager foreign currency reserves and generated a foreign exchange crisis that had a negative impact on foreign trade.<sup>120</sup>

U.S. diplomats began to sense the choice between corruption and stability. In May 1981, U.S. *chargé des affaires* Alf Bergesen acknowledged that keeping Duvalier in power precluded shutting off funding to the VSN: "Jean-Claude cannot afford to cease this practice. The VSN remains armed, dangerous, confused by Jean-Claude's distancing of the 'Duvalierists'," he wrote.<sup>121</sup> Without the infrastructure of corruption, there could be no Duvalier regime. Bergesen adroitly described how the international community's push for fiscal reform had undermined the regime:

Our particular concern is that Jean-Claude is making more enemies than he is gaining friends and that he cannot continue to do so without destabilizing himself. He needs the continued support of the VSN and others who, according to Haitian tradition, are paid by the government for their continued support. Eliminating this tradition, one of the purposes of the economic reform program, will contribute to the unraveling of the patron-client nature of Haiti's political system. Jean-Claude keeps some people loyal by giving them automobiles (Mercedes and BMW's are preferred, but he is also reported to have obtained six Audi's last year for people he wishes to cultivate). This sort of thing can become expensive, but has become part of *the price of power*. At the same time, if Jean-Claude ignores implementation, he will alienate the new generation of Haitian

---

<sup>120</sup> Ernest Preeg, "Opposition Groups in Haiti," July 11, 1983, Case No. F-2014-14304 Doc No. C05641427, U.S. Department of State FOIA. Emphasis added.

<sup>121</sup> Alf Bergesen, "Response to Destabilization Questions," May 4, 1981, Case No. F-2014-12609 Doc No. C05617549, U.S. Department of State FOIA.

bureaucrats and technicians who are apparently genuinely interested in making the country better. Jean-Claude is indeed caught in a bind because he loses needed support whether or not he implements political and economic reforms.<sup>122</sup>

Trapped between its increasing vulnerability to the international community and the need to maintain a tenuous domestic support base, the regime's efforts to adapt its infrastructures of corruption had put it in an increasingly impossible position.

### ***Conclusion***

The firing of Bauduy was part of a larger retreat from liberalization. Bauduy's dismissal contributed to a cabinet reshuffle that resulted in a number of key figures of the more conservative François Duvalier era coming back into power. Shortly after the cabinet change, a group of armed civilians, reportedly acting under orders from the National Palace, violently broke up a human rights conference meeting in Port-au-Prince. This chilling effect was amplified a year later when the government launched a round up of Haitian social activists and journalists which sent a least fifty activists and journalists, including Jean Dominique, the radio personality who had interviewed Bauduy, into jail or exile. These two attacks, each known as "Black Friday," signaled the regime's dramatic retreat from the policies of liberalization and human rights. In some respects, the retreat from liberalization was a reaction to shifts regional power dynamics. Duvalier and his officials also repeatedly expressed insecurities after the Somoza

---

<sup>122</sup> Bergesen. Emphasis added.

dictatorship in Nicaragua collapsed in July 1979, despite U.S. efforts to prop up that regime. When Jimmy Carter lost the U.S. presidential election to Ronald Reagan in November 1980, people over the world understood that U.S. foreign policy would no longer emphasize human rights. American officials witnessing the Duvalier regime's rollback of modest social reform were neither surprised nor alarmed. In a cable to Washington, Jones expressed disappointment, but maintained that stability was the top priority, "if for no other reason than that there are 4500 Americans resident in Haiti, and a fair amount of business interest."<sup>123</sup> He went on: "The Duvalier regime feels particularly insecure following recent events in the region. It suffers both from naivety and an unrealistic view of the world. We must deal with the regime and we should not try to destabilize it ... We should continue to exert pressure, without making our aid programs hostage to the adoption of our democratic values." Never having placed faith or investment in democratic movements in Haiti, Duvalier's policy reversal was, for the United States, a rollback to a comfortable *status quo ante*.

The dictatorship collapsed on February 7, 1986, weighted down by an accumulation of structural contradictions and pressure from mounting unrest and pro-democracy organizers. One of the final straws was ADIH's public withdrawal of

---

<sup>123</sup> Jones to DOS, "U.S. Policy Towards Haiti."

support. Having alienated the Haitian commercial class, the regime had turned them into a force that would contribute to its unraveling.

## 6. Conclusion

In the early morning hours of February 7, 1986, Jean-Claude Duvalier drove to the airport named for his father and boarded a plane into exile along with his wife, children, and dozens of relatives and associates. The regime had collapsed, weighed down by its own structural contradictions and the pressure from mounting civil unrest and a rising pro-democracy movement that had formed to oppose them.<sup>124</sup> The crew of the U.S. Air Force C-141 Starlifter was to escort the Duvalier family to Grenoble, in southern France. Their departure was preceded, hours earlier, by an Air Haiti cargo plane that had taken off with their riches, including Michele's wardrobe and jewelry collection.<sup>125</sup> Dawn was a long way off. Far above the city, Port-au-Prince would have looked like an inky stain creeping from the slopes of Morne de l'Hopital into the shadow of the sea.

The Duvaliers' departure from Port-au-Prince marked the dynasty's end, but it did nothing to dismantle the uneven geography of power, with the capital at its center, that had been solidified by their twenty-nine years of oppressive rule. As we have seen in this dissertation, François Duvalier took power at a moment when migration into the

---

<sup>124</sup> Alex Dupuy, *Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Robert Fatton, *Haiti's Predatory Republic: The Unending Transition to Democracy* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002); Amy Wilentz, *Rainy Season: Haiti-Then and Now* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

<sup>125</sup> John Moody, "Haiti End of the Duvalier Era," *Time*, June 24, 2004, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,143126,00.html>.

capital city was transforming Haiti's traditional geographic order, which had first come into existence in the post-independence period. The Duvaliers harnessed the resulting social anxieties to consolidate power and develop infrastructures of corruption, while those same anxieties underpinned the physical construction of the city under their rule. The urban transformations both reflected and contributed to shifting local and international dynamics specific to Port-au-Prince during the era. But both the regime and the patterns of urban growth it oversaw were simultaneously entrenched in larger historical contexts, most fundamentally in Haiti's long transition from slavery to freedom.

As described earlier, Port-au-Prince's spatial and political inequities emerged from decisions made in Haiti's post-independence period by political elites who tried to perpetuate the colonial hierarchies of slavery by shifting their foundational logic from racial to spatial difference. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, successive Rural Codes enshrined an uneven geography of power into the very fabric of national territory. Those who lived in spaces deemed "rural" were confined to working the land for the profit of others. They were subjected to the rule of a police state with limited access to formal institutions outside the military and local *chefs de section*. The colonial status of slave was sublimated into the postcolonial status of rural inhabitant; conversely, the colonial status of freedom sublimated into privileges associated with cities. The notion that the majority of the population was to live in servitude to a small elite, although continually contested,

nonetheless underpinned both Haiti's administrative territory and political history. The social vision advanced in the Rural Codes never came to define Haiti's lived reality, but it influenced it by further enshrining profound prejudice against the Haitian peasantry. This prejudice shaped the independent Haitian state into a reinterpretation of the colonial slave state.

This prejudice would underwrite the 20<sup>th</sup>-century history of Port-au-Prince. As structural transformations pushed increasingly large waves of Haitian farmers off the land and into Port-au-Prince, they were received with hostility and resentment. Inculcated in the framework of a rural-urban divide, urban elites and officials perceived migrants and their descendants as invaders violently appropriating privileged spaces. Instead of shaping Port-au-Prince to address the needs of its newer inhabitants, systems of extraction that traditionally targeted the rural producers were updated to incorporate the growing population of urban consumers. Elites began abandoning downtown, the traditional site of privilege. They retreated, constructing new and more remote neighborhoods in the mountains. This form of urban marronage did not just remove them from the challenges of city life below, it compounded those challenges by contributing to environmental degradation.

Yet, as rural peasants and their descendants entered and inhabited Port-au-Prince, they also began to make claims on the power the city represented. This would be most clearly articulated in the decade following the dictatorship's collapse. With the

rupture of authority created by the Duvalier's departure, Port-au-Prince witnessed a dramatic increase in squatting on private, municipal, and state lands, a practice that had been repressed during the dictatorship. As they had before, many elite residents perceived this urban transformation as a form of social violence. In a 1994 publication, "Port-au-Prince: Peut-il Etre Sauver?" (Port-au-Prince: Can it be Saved?), filmmaker Arnold Antonin called for an end to the "ruralization" of Port-au-Prince, saying that ever since the collapse of the dictatorship, city residents had allowed their city to become a "toilet." Along similar lines, sociologist Sabine Manigat contended, "The entire city of Port-au-Prince has acquired the physiognomy of a slum. Instead of adapting to the city, the migrants now appropriate it, assault it and transform it, according to their needs and vision." Manigat described migrants as transgressive interlopers "drawn by illusions of urban living" who "hurl themselves at the task of conquering any chink of available terrain." These accounts attest to the pervasive narrative of urbanization as "territorial aggression."

Anxiety about urban appropriation was compounded by the fear that the poor were also laying claim to what Port-au-Prince represented: the apparatus of the state. In 1990, Haitians elected a Roman Catholic priest from La Saline named Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A liberation theologian, Aristide had risen to national prominence through impassioned denunciations of structural oppression and demands for greater wealth distribution, beginning during the Duvalier dictatorship. He condensed social critiques

into salient proverbs, such as calling for an end to “this regime where the donkeys do all the work and the horses prance in the sunshine.” When open and safe elections were finally organized four years after Duvalier’s departure, Aristide won in a landslide, winning between 67% percent of the popular vote.

With the election of a populist, people believed that concerns of ordinary people would finally be attended to by the central authorities. It represented an enormous repudiation of the traditional social and political structures that had framed Haiti since before independence. Ending the structural hierarchy between urban and rural spaces and populations was one of Aristide’s proclaimed goals. He moved to stop the practice, written into the 1962 Rural Code, of marking those born in rural sections as “peasants” on their birth certificates.

Both supporters and detractors believed his presidency was a watershed moment in Haitian history. Supporters were hopeful the government might begin to govern in favor of the wider population rather than for the enrichment of an elite few. But to many of his detractors, Aristide’s calls to alter the existing social framework sounded as bloodthirsty as “koupé tet, boulé kay” — a motto attributed to Jean-Jacques Dessalines that means “chop off the head, burn the house.”

Nine months after his election, Aristide’s government was toppled in a coup led by Lieutenant General Raoul Cédras. In an expanded reprisal of Figinolé’s ouster in 1957, the military reasserted the traditional social order with extreme brutality. Aristide was

hustled onto a plane to carry him into exile and his supporters were massacred in the streets. His ouster was followed by a four-year military junta, one of the most repressive periods in the country's history. The savagery with which the junta attacked the democratic movement attested to the ruling classes' commitment to upholding the structural framework that had systematically excluded the poor from the political process. Aristide was returned to power by a U.S. invasion in 1994, then overthrown again ten years later—each upheaval re-inscribing, ever more profoundly, enduring social inequities.

Port-au-Prince was radically and permanently transformed on January 12, 2010, when the catastrophic release of energy from a nearby fault line provoked the failure of the built environment. Cement structures across the city collapsed, killing hundreds of thousands. Among the largest buildings destroyed were, quite literally, the concrete legacy of the Duvalier regime: the tax office, the nursing school of the general hospital, modernist architecture across Delmas, and the airport terminal. In the aftermath, engineers pointed to the unsafe ratios of cement, sand, and water in the concrete of many of the fallen buildings—a cost-saving measure with roots in the extractive economies of cement production—as a major cause of deaths in the earthquake, along with the inadequate use of costly rebar and lack of enforcement of construction codes. (Ironically, it was in the makeshift shanties in the poorest seaside neighborhoods, such as La Saline and Cité Soleil, where people might have been safest: a fallen house of wood

scraps and corrugated tin did less damage than a multistory concrete edifice.) The infrastructures of corruption had remained long after the dictatorship collapsed, embedded in the space of the city.

The material production of Port-au-Prince, as I have shown in this dissertation, arose out of overlapping layers of contexts that tied together local topography, built environment, social structures, and political forms, which were also entwined in regional and global dynamics. The dictatorship was rooted in and influenced by uneven geographies of power that shaped the capital and country. The relationships between space and politics in this period were specific to the regime, yet at the same time they preceded the Duvaliers and continued after the family lost power and fled Haiti. In this sense, Port-au-Prince was both a space and motion—like a slow-moving earthquake, a coming together of multiple contexts and timelines whose slippage formed the lived layers of the landscape.

## **Appendix A: Archives Consulted**

### **UNITED STATES**

History Miami Museum

Library of Congress

Marine Corps Research Center Archives

National Air and Space Museum Archives

National Archives, College Park (NACP)

New York Public Library

United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UNARMS)

Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

### **HAITI**

Archives National

Bibliothèque Haïtienne des Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne (BHFIC)

Bibliothèque Nationale

Private collections

### **FRANCE**

Centre des archives diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN)

### **CANADA**

Centre International de Documentation et d'Information Haïtienne et Afro

canadienne (CIDIHCA)

## **ONLINE DATABASES**

Department of State Freedom of Information Act Virtual Reading Room

Digital Library of the Caribbean (DLOC)

Gallica.fr

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKPL)

International Monetary Fund Archives

Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)

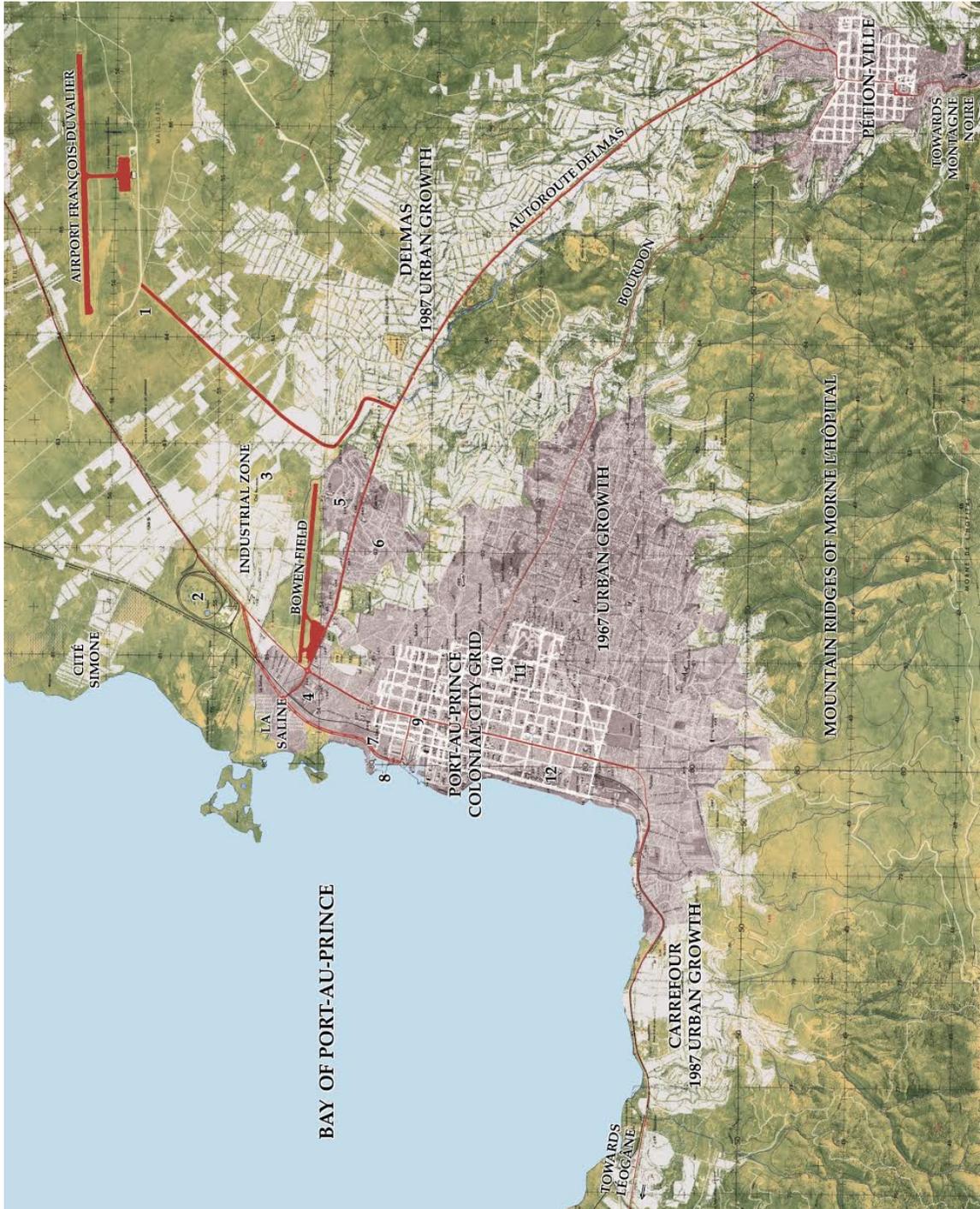
Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Libraries

Wikileaks

World Bank

Newspapers.com

## Appendix B: 1965-1987 Map of Key Sites in Port-au-Prince



## Key to Appendix 2

Purple indicates urban fabric in 1965; white indicates extension of urban fabric by 1987.

1. Industrial park (1980s)
2. HASCO
3. Cité Militaire
4. Fort Dimanche
5. Cité No. 2
6. Cité No. 1
7. Croix-des-Bossales
8. Pier
9. Iron Market
10. National Palace
11. Champ de Mars
12. Boulevard Henry Truman (Exposition zone)

Thanks to David Smith of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology

for designing this map. It is based on two historical maps:

Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers. "Port-Au-Prince and Vicinity." 1: 12,500. E9350. Washington D.C.: U.S Army, 1967. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Libraries. [http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/txu-oclc-17740473-port\\_au\\_prince1-1967.jpg](http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/txu-oclc-17740473-port_au_prince1-1967.jpg).

Defense Mapping Agency. "Port-Au-Prince." E935. Washington D.C.: Hydrographic Topographic Center, 1987. NACP.

## Bibliography

- Antonin, Arnold. *Albert Mangonès: L'espace Public*. Documentary. Le Centre Pétion-Bolivar, 2004.
- — —. "Port-au-Prince: la troisième guerre mondiale à déjà eu lieu." In *Port-au-Prince: Peut-il Être Sauvé?* Port-au-Prince: Ateliers Mitspa, 1994.
- Alcindor, Christian. "U.S.-Haiti Relations from 1957 to 1963: Anticommunism, Nation-Building, and Racial Diplomacy in the Age of National Liberation." PhD diss, Rutgers, 2002.
- Americas Watch, National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, and Caribbean Rights. *The More Things Change: Human Rights in Haiti*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1989.
- Anglade, Georges. *Atlas Critique d'Haïti*. Montréal: Groupe d'études et de recherches critiques d'espace. Département de géographie, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1982.
- — —. *Cartes sur table: Convergences & divergences, réponse à 15 ans de commentaires, 1974-1988*. Vol. 2. Port-au-Prince, New York, Montréal: Editions Henri Deschamps / Etudes et Recherches Critiques d'Espace, 1990.
- — —. *Cartes Sur Tables: Itinéraires et Raccourcis Cinq Ans de Jalon: 1977-1981*. Vol. 1. Port-au-Prince, New York, Montréal: Éditions Henri Deschamps / Études et recherches critiques d'espace, 1990.
- — —. *Espace et Liberté en Haïti*. Montréal: Groupe d'Études et de Recherches Critiques d'Espace, département de géographie, UQÀM, Centre de recherches Caraïbes de l'Université de Montréal, 1982.
- Aristide, Achille. *Mémoire Sur La Municipalité En Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, Haïti: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1952.
- Arthus, Wien Weibert. "L'aide Internationale Peut Ne Pas Marcher: Évaluation Des Relations Américano-Haïtiennes Au Regard De L' Alliance Pour Le Progrès (1961-1963)." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 155-77.

- — —. “Les relations internationales d’Haïti de 1957 à 1971.” *Bulletin de l’Institut Pierre Renouvin* 35, no. 1 (May 1, 2012): 157–67.
- Averill, Gage. *A Day for the Hunter, a Day for the Prey: Popular Music and Power in Haiti*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Barthélémy, Gérard. *Le Pays en Dehors: Essai sur l’Univers Rural Haïtien*. Montréal: CIDIHCA, 1989.
- — —. “L’extension des lotissements sauvages à usage populaire en milieu urbain ou Paysans, Villes, et Bidonvilles en Haiti: Aperçus et réflexions,” June 1996.
- Bellande, Alex. *Haïti déforestée, paysages remodelés*. Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2015.
- Bernardin, Ernest. *L’espace Rural Haïtien: Bilan de 40 ans d’exécution des Programmes Nationaux et Internationaux de Développement (1950-1990)*. Delmas, Haïti: Editions des Antilles S.A., 1990.
- Bhimull, Chandra D. *Empire in the Air: Airline Travel and the African Diaspora*. New York: NYU Press, 2017.
- Boucard, Arnoux. “Impact Psycho-Sociologique du Transfert des Anciens Residents de la Saline à la Cité Simone O. Duvalier No. 1.” Master’s Thesis, Université d’Etat d’Haïti, 1968.
- Casimir, Jean. *La Culture Opprimée*. Delmas, Haïti: Lakay, 2004.
- Castor, Suzy. “Décentralisation et Processus de Démocratisation.” *Journal of Haitian Studies* 3/4 (1998 1997): 4–14.
- Charles, Etzer. *Le Pouvoir politique en Haiti de 1957 à nos jours*. Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1994.
- Chochotte, Marvin. “The History of Peasants, Tonton Makouts, and the Rise and Fall of the Duvalier Dictatorship in Haiti.” PhD diss, University of Michigan, 2017.

- Clough, Joshua. "Exile and Ethnography: Jacques Roumain and the Problem of Place in French and Haitian National Thought 1927-1944." Master's Thesis, City University of New York, 2012.
- Comhaire, Jean L. "The Haitian 'Chef de Section.'" *American Anthropologist* 57, no. 3 (1955): 620-624.
- Corvington, Georges. *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*. Vol. 2. 4 vols. Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007.
- — —. *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*. Vol. 2. 4 vols. Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007.
- — —. *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans*. Vol. 4. 4 vols. Montréal: CIDIHCA, 2007.
- Craan, Jacques. *La Commune Son Role, Son Importance*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1956.
- Dash, J. Michael. *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915-1961*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981.
- Daugherty III, Leo J. "Fighting Insurgents in Haiti and the Lessons of Small Wars (1919-1929)." In *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps*, 1:64-98. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2015.
- Devagues, Roland. "Une Capitale Antillaise: Port-Au-Prince (Haïti)." *Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer* 7 (1954): 105-36.
- Diederich, Bernard. *The Murderers Among Us: History of Repression and Rebellion in Haiti Under Dr. Francois Duvalier, 1962-1971*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2011.
- Diederich, Bernard, and Al Burt. *Papa Doc & The Tontons Macoutes*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005.
- Dubois, L. "Thinking Haiti's Nineteenth Century." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 18, no. 2 44 (January 1, 2014): 72-79.
- Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012.

- Dupuy, Alex. *Haiti in the World Economy: Class, Race, and Underdevelopment since 1700*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989.
- Fass, Simon M. "Housing the Ultra-Poor: Theory and Practice in Haiti." *Shelter Policy in Developing Countries*, 1987, 193–205.
- — — *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988.
- Fatton, Robert. *The Roots of Haitian Despotism*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007.
- Ferrer, Ada. *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Gaillard, Roger. "Port-au-Prince en passe de devenir un monstre: Une interview d'Albert Mangonès." *Conjonction*, no. 119 (March 1973): 11–17.
- Godard, Henry. "Port-au-Prince (1982-1992): un système urbain à la dérive." *Problèmes d'Amérique latine* 14 (September 1994): 181–94.
- Gold, Herbert. *Haiti: Best Nightmare on Earth*. New Brunswick, NJ: Routledge, 2001.
- Grant, Faye W, and Dale Groom. "A Dietary Study in Haiti." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 34, no. 7 (1958): 708–16.
- "Haitian Cities: Actions for Today with an Eye on Tomorrow." Washington D.C.: The World Bank Group, January 1, 2018.
- Hector, Michel. *Syndicalisme et socialisme en Haïti: 1932-1970*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1989.
- Heinl, Robert Debs, Nancy Gordon Heinl, and Michael Heinl. *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1995*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996.
- Herskovits, Melville J. *Life in a Haitian Valley*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2011.

- Holly, Josph. *Les Problèmes Environnementaux de la Région Métropolitaine de Port-au-Prince*. Port-au-Prince: Commission pour la commémoration du 250<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la fondation de la ville de Port-au-Prince, 1999.
- Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *Les Constitutions d'Haïti (1801-1885)*. Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1886.
- Kausen, Valerie. "'Hereditary Antagonism': Race and Nation in Maurice Casseus's *Viejo*." In *French Civilization and Its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, edited by Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele, 173–86. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003.
- — —. *Migrant Revolutions: Haitian Literature, Globalization, and U.S. Imperialism*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008.
- Laguerre, Michel S. *Urban Life in the Caribbean: A Study of a Haitian Urban Community*. Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1982.
- Lahav, Pnina. "The Chef de Section: Structure and Functions of Haiti's Basic Administrative Institution." In *Working Papers in Haitian Society and Culture*, edited by Sidney W. Mintz, 51–83. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975.
- Lee, Paula Young, ed. *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1974.
- Lherisson, Gary. "Principes, Reglements et Outils Operationnels de la Legislation Haitienne sur le Developpement Urbain." Ministère de la Planification & de la Coopération Externe, August 5, 2015.
- Locher, Uli. "The Market System of Port-Au-Prince." In *Working Papers in Haitian Society and Culture*, edited by Sidney W. Mintz. New Haven, CT: Yale University Antilles Research Program Occasional Papers, 1975.
- — —. "Urban Bias in Haiti: The Problem Becomes the Solution." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 13, no. 1 (1996): 87–108.

- Lucien, Georges Eddy. *Une modernisation manquée: Port-au-Prince de 1915 à 1956*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Port-au-Prince: Editions de l'Université d'Haiti, 2013.
- Lundahl, Mats. *Peasants and Poverty: A Study of Haiti*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1979.
- — —. *Politics or Markets?: Essays on Haitian Underdevelopment*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1992.
- — —. *The Haitian Economy: Man, Land and Markets*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- Mackenzie, Charles. *Notes on Haiti, Made during a Residence in That Republic*. London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830.
- Magloire, Rachel. "Les mystères de la construction." *Rencontre*, July 1994.
- Mangonès, Albert. "Architecture in Question." Translated by Paulette Richards. *Callaloo* 15, no. 3 (1992): 846.
- — —. *En toute urbanité*. Port-au-Prince: Éditions Mémoire, 2001.
- Manigat, Sabine. "Haiti: The Popular Sectors and the Crisis in Port-Au-Prince." In *The Urban Caribbean: Transition to the New Global Economy*, edited by Alejandro Portes. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Mathurin, Augustin. *Bi-centenaire de la fondation de Port-au-Prince, 1749-1949: exposition internationale, 8 décembre 1949-8 juin 1950, à la mémoire du grand président Léon Dumarsais Estimé*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie des Antilles, 1975.
- Millspaugh, Arthur C. *Haiti Under American Control, 1915-1930*. Boston, MA: World Peace Foundation, 1931.
- Müller, Markus-Michael. "Entangled Pacifications: Peacekeeping, Counterinsurgency and Policing in Port-Au-Prince and Rio de Janeiro." In *The Global Making of Policing: Postcolonial Perspectives*, edited by Jana Hönke and Markus-Michael Müller. New York: Routledge, 2016.

- Nérée, Bob. *Duvalier: le pouvoir sur les autres, de père en fils*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1988.
- Nicholls, David. *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996.
- Ofé, Germaine, Jasmine Narcisse, and Dominique Raymond. *Germaine ou Chercher la Vie*. Haiti: United Nations Children's Fund, 1993.
- Péan, Leslie. *Haiti: Économie Politique de La Corruption*. Vol. 4. 4 vols. Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 2007.
- Polyné, Millery. *From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan Americanism, 1870-1964*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2011.
- Ramsey, Kate. *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Renda, Mary A. *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Rouzier, Sémexan. *Dictionnaire Géographique et Administratif d'Haiti*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. Paris: Imprimerie Brevetée Charles Blot, 1892.
- Schmidt, Hans. *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*. New Brunswick, NJ.: Rutgers University Press, 1995.
- Schuller, Mark. *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Shamsie, Yasmine. "Export Processing Zones: The Purported Glimmer in Haiti's Development Murk." *Review of International Political Economy* 16, no. 4 (October 22, 2009): 649–72.
- Simpson, J. Montague. *Six Months in Port Au Prince (Haïti) and My Experience*. Philadelphia, PA: GS Ferguson Company, 1905.

- Smith, Matthew J. *Red and Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change, 1934-1957*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- — —. "VIVE 1804!: The Haitian Revolution and the Revolutionary Generation of 1946." *Caribbean Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 25–41.
- Smucker, Glen Richard. "Peasants and Development Politics: A Study in Haitian Class and Culture." PhD diss, New School for Social Research, 1984.
- Soden, Robert. "4 Years On, Looking Back at OpenStreetMap Response to the Haiti Earthquake." *World Bank: Latin American & Caribbean: Opportunities for All* (blog), October 29, 2014. <http://blogs.worldbank.org/latinamerica/4-years-looking-back-openstreetmap-response-haiti-earthquake>.
- Soja, Edward. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Verso, 1989.
- — —. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- St. Hubert, Hadassah. "Visions of a Modern Nation: Haiti at the World's Fairs." PhD diss, University of Miami, 2018.
- Stieber, Chelsea. "Gérard de Catalogne, passeur transatlantique du maurrassisme entre Haïti et la France." In *Doctrinaires, vulgarisateurs et passeurs des droites radicales au XX e siècle (Europe–Amérique)*, edited by Olivier Dard, 233–54. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012.
- — —. "The Northern Récit Paysan: Regional Variations of the Modern Peasant Novel in Haiti." *French Studies* 70, no. 1 (January 2016): 44–60.
- Supplice, Daniel. *Dictionnaire biographique des personnalités politiques de la République d'Haïti (1804-2014)*. Port-au-Prince: C3 Editions, 2014.
- Thomas, Louis. *Les Communes de la République d'Haïti à l'épreuve des mutations du XXe siècle*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie M. Rodriguez, 1986.
- — —. *Section Rurale ou Section Communale: subdivision géographique typiquement haïtienne*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1988.

- Trouillot, Henock. "Le Code Rural de Boyer et la Paysannerie Haitienne." *Conjonction*, no. 96–97 (1965): 62–77.
- Trouillot, Lyonel. "On the Sounds of Haiti." Translated by Laurent Dubois. *Transition*, no. 111 (January 2013): 9–13.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Haiti: State against Nation*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990.
- — —. "The Odd and the Ordinary: Haiti, the Caribbean, and the World." *Cimarrón: New Perspectives on the Caribbean 2*, no. 3 (1990): 3–12.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- Verna, Chantalle F. *Haiti and the Uses of America: Post-U.S. Occupation Promises*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017.
- Voltaire, Leslie. "Port-Au-Prince, Birth of a Primate City." PhD diss, Cornell University, 1982.
- Wilentz, Amy. *Rainy Season: Haiti-Then and Now*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.
- Wilson, Ruth. *Here Is Haiti*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957.
- Withers, Charles. "Place and the 'Spatial Turn' in Geography and in History." *Journal and History of Ideas* 70, no. 4 (October 2009): 637–58.
- Yarrington, Landon. "The Paved and the Unpaved: Toward a Political Economy of Infrastructure, Mobility, and Urbanization in Haiti." *Economic Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (January 2015): 185–204.

## Biography

Claire Antone Payton was born in Washington D.C. on June 4, 1985. She earned a B.A. from Reed College in January 2008. In May 2012, she received a M.A. from New York University. In 2010, she conducted oral history research that became the Haiti Memory Project, an archival collection of testimonies of disaster and survival. Her dissertation research in Haiti was supported in part by a Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship.

### Selected Bibliography:

“‘After they beat us they are like dogs at our Feet’: An Oral History of Vulnerability and Violence in Post-Earthquake Haiti.” In *Remembrance: Loss, Hope, Recovery after the Earthquake in Haiti*, edited by Nadège T. Clitandre, Claudine Michel, Marlène Racine-Toussaint, and Florence Bellande Robertson. Santa Barbara: Center for Black Studies Research at the University of California, Santa Barbara, 2016.

“In Moral Debt to Haiti.” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 49, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 64–70.

“Vodou and Protestantism, Faith and Survival: The Contest Over the Spiritual Meaning of the 2010 Earthquake in Haiti.” *Oral History Review* 40, no. 2 (2013): 231–50.