

The Haitians or the Whites?

COLONIZATION AND RESISTANCE, 1861–1863

For the new administration to have any chance at survival, one major obstacle loomed: Haitian opposition and anticolonial organizing on Dominican soil. President Fabre Geffrard's connections with republican idealists, anti-Santana figures, and center-island generals made his immediate military mobilization a real possibility. Among Geffrard's Dominican collaborators was Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, who was a self-taught lawyer, military man, and one of the few men of color in the foundational Trinitario society of the Dominican capital. An idealist, Sánchez was no stranger to Santana's ire. Released from prison in August 1859, he quickly traveled to Saint Thomas. In January 1861, he and others issued a proclamation from Saint Thomas condemning annexation.¹ At some point, he returned to Hispaniola, taking refuge in Port-au-Prince. In late spring, he finally arrived at the center of the island. Santana could not know the specifics of Sánchez's months of communication with President Geffrard, but he almost certainly recognized the center-island campaigns for what they were—a collection of republican, nationalist, anticolonial alliances, with capable military leadership—and he was determined to crush them. With all the might of Spanish forces, Santana relentlessly pursued the small rebel groups. Within a few weeks, he overtook Sánchez and executed him. Santana blamed Haiti alone for the mobilizations, and the capital city paper agreed. "The dark propagandists of the Haitian idea . . . who try to justify or exculpate the invaders are wasting their time," *La Razón* insisted.²

The massive demonstration of Spanish military power effectively silenced open collaboration and resistance for a time, and months of apparent peace

followed. In the capital and other towns, some prominent individuals weathered the political transition without much interruption, perceiving immediate financial and political opportunities. As property owners, they benefited by renting buildings to the administration, continued to forward development proposals, and sometimes served in the local administration.³ The most optimistic speculated that Spanish rule would bring respite from party politics and, along with it, progress, peace, and order. Capital city writers pointed to the unrest and bloodshed in nearby republics and counted themselves lucky that political peace might finally be at hand.⁴ These individuals liked Catholic orthodoxy and the language of order. They used a familiar vocabulary to condemn domestic and foreign opponents of the new regime, calling opponents disorderly, uncivilized, traitorous, or Haitian, just as they had in previous decades. Without writing about it explicitly, they embraced Spanish racial taxonomies. As months passed, some whites in the capital and other towns began to indulge their prejudices more openly.⁵ A handful of prominent Dominican families drafted *limpieza de sangre* documents for daughters who married Spanish officials.⁶ Poets wrote odes to Cuba.⁷ When they condemned and ridiculed Geffard that spring in the columns of *La Razón*, Spanish journalists joined them, producing an effusion of antiblack invective that reverberated on both sides of the Atlantic.⁸

Many residents of towns across the territory, on the other hand, hated the occupation from its first moments. In Sabaneta, a man cut the Spanish flag into little pieces at once.⁹ The officer who announced annexation in the capital was assaulted a few days later.¹⁰ In Puerto Plata, preannexation alarm gave way to immediate tension. It was the last town in the territory to witness a transition ceremony; officials waited, cagily, for hundreds of troops to arrive the night before.¹¹ A priest absconded with and hid the lowered republican flag. The next day, someone raised Haitian colors; just as quickly, they also disappeared.¹² An observer noted Puerto Plata's residents treated the arriving troops "with the utmost coldness and marked disgust, [and] they contemptuously gave them the nickname 'the whites.'"¹³ In and outside of the capital city, a Spanish soldier provided a similar account, describing whole black communities—"the descendants of . . . slaves," he decided—who manifestly demonstrated their distaste at the change of flag.¹⁴ "These are not the Spaniards I knew: they are very white," another capital resident remarked, disapprovingly.¹⁵ As more troops arrived quickly, fugitivity was a central tactic. Samaná residents wrangled approval to worship in the woods, for example, and the governor even gave them lumber to build the chapel.

Other opponents to the arriving officials were left watching and waiting, furious.¹⁶

As months passed, paltry infrastructure, lack of funds, and interpersonal conflicts dealt successive blows to the loyalties of many others. From declassification to the daily comportment of Spanish administrators and soldiers, racism, scarce resources, and disenfranchisement contributed centrally to public discontent. Spanish appointees replaced Dominican interim officials, and Santana could not exercise patronage as he had promised. Meanwhile, many active reserve soldiers remained faithful to superior officers, who took up a career with the Spanish. As months passed, relationships deteriorated, however, sometimes violently. In the Cibao, the military governor was so hostile that he became legend. “¡Más malo que Buceta!” (Worse than [Brigadier] Buceta!) became an invective for a particularly cruel, arrogant, or volatile authority; everyone hated him, and even other Spanish authorities were galled by his behavior.¹⁷ Spanish officials tended not to participate in the daily life of towns, even public ceremonies and church festivals.¹⁸ In the capital, one woman’s florid poetry praised the occupation, but observers claimed that there was “no cordiality” between Spanish and Dominicans, and that many in the capital were distressed and fearful.¹⁹ They were “sadly submitted” in the capital, one observer claimed, explaining that with all of the shortages and unrest of recent years, “the people were of an ill humor to start with.”²⁰ Still, an apparent calm persisted.

Summer, 1861

Although Spain still refused to recognize Haiti, President Geffrard issued an official protest against Spanish occupation on 6 April 1861. “Our brothers of the East have been tricked,” he wrote, observing solemnly, “[and] the survival of one people is intricately tied to the survival of the other.”²¹ Santana had broken treaty mandates, Geffrard warned, giving Haiti “a complete freedom of action,” and a duty, to restore the island’s security. “We . . . declare that we continue to have feelings of brotherhood and our most sincere sympathies for this population,” Geffrard wrote, carefully explaining that the Dominican people had been “surprised and tricked.” In Spanish, he warned Dominicans directly: “Santana is disposing of you *en masse*.”²² Weeks passed, and Geffrard’s condemnations continued, which Port-au-Prince journalists published alongside extensive coverage of outside disapproval. Geffrard considered Santana a cynic and a traitor. He referred specifically to the deep roots of “antination designs” in the east, citing decades of intrigues.

Santana was a criminal by his own constitution, the president argued, and he proceeded to cite all seven constitutional articles in question.²³ Some weeks later, Haiti's government paper printed excerpts of a Dominican annexation pamphlet, which also detailed a litany of crimes. The pamphleteer called on fellow Dominicans to unite in common cause with Haiti. "The interests of the two peoples are compromised . . . it is time to fight with what weapons remain," the Dominican author urged.²⁴ Slavery rumors spread in Port-au-Prince and other towns.²⁵ Geffrard issued a simultaneous call to arms: "To arms, Haitians . . . Freedom or Death!"²⁶ "Our climate, our geographical and political position vis-à-vis foreign [powers], our preservation, our needs and our hopes are the same," another Haitian writer commented. "This annexation, it is the cannon of alarm, it is the poison, it is death: yes, it is death."²⁷

Simultaneously with Geffrard's call, a handful of veteran Dominican generals launched coordinated campaigns that they had been planning for months. Francisco del Rosario Sánchez praised Haiti's "wise and just Republican cabinet" in his proclamations that spring. "I am persuaded that this Republic, against whom yesterday we fought for our nationality, is today just as dedicated as we are so that we might preserve it," he wrote.²⁸ A small, mixed group of rebels gathered in the tiny center-island town of Las Caobas, not far from Mirebalais. Some had only recently returned from Curaçao, Saint Thomas, and various towns in Haiti, where anti-Santana organizing had gained great urgency. General José María Cabral, veteran of partisan politics and exile, addressed his followers with an exhortation, which the *Moniteur Haïtien* promptly published: "The country is in danger, and we cannot save her without a revolution. [The president] has sold the Republic. . . . ¡Tomorrow we will be slaves! . . . We must rise up in the name of liberty, to the cry of ¡Viva la nación!"²⁹ As the rebels mobilized in the center of the island, Santana himself went after them, leading several thousand Spanish soldiers in hot pursuit. Two battalions of Spanish troops from Puerto Rico, two from Spain, a number of Spanish volunteers, and a militia of color from Cuba arrived to join them.³⁰ Cabral and his followers retreated into Haitian territory, but others were not so lucky. Near Las Matas, Santana ordered the execution of Sánchez, whom he knew very well. At Santana's orders, and despite the protest of Spanish officers, troops executed nineteen other men in a horrible manner on the afternoon of 4 July 1861; some were shot, others beaten, and others killed with machetes.³¹ "The first stories of the atrocities . . . are beyond belief," the French consul reported. "These poor men asked to be judged before a military tribunal made up of Spanish soldiers and wrote

a plea to the Queen. All was denied.”³² Authorities in Madrid were just as shocked.³³

It is difficult to determine exactly who participated in the small campaigns, although it seems to have been Dominican officers, a number of Haitian soldiers, Dominican refugees living in Haiti, and center-island residents, who both expected and warmly received the arriving troops.³⁴ Domingo Ramírez, who had proposed reunification in 1860, was on the front lines.³⁵ Of the very few firsthand documents that survive from the rebellion itself, one is a simple letter from a woman in Neiba, Ramona Recio, to a certain “Juan Florian” in Haiti. Her “suspicious” letter, seized by Spanish authorities, and the subject of her interrogation, referred cryptically to a “burro that ought not be sold, but rather be turned over to her brother”—code for a firearm, perhaps?—but the matter was dropped after a brief interrogation.³⁶ Other surviving clues are more explicit. Segundo Mateo was prototypical of residents’ alliances, general mobility, and support for the anti-Spanish campaign. Mateo had been born in Dominican territory but resided twelve years in Hincha (or Hinche), then governed by Haiti. He worked both with a local Haitian commander, carrying weapons, and for Cabral, as a spy against Spanish authority in San Juan de las Matas. The arriving troops, he reportedly confessed, were composed both of Haitian regiments and of “Haitianized Spaniards” (*españoles haitianizados*).³⁷ Geffrard may have pressured some Dominican refugees to make their way to the campaign or lose the salaries they had been collecting from the Haitian state.³⁸ Someone got hold of a Spanish flag that had been seized in the center-island fighting and brazenly dragged it through the mud in front of the Spanish delegation in Port-au-Prince.³⁹ Families trickled back into the center-island towns only slowly. A total of 207 people returned over the next eight months. Most were “Trinidad,” “Acosta,” and “Pérez,” but there were a number of “Divals” and “Dilils” as well.⁴⁰ Many others stayed in Haiti, perhaps fearful of reprisals.⁴¹ Despite Spanish persecution, a few ethnic Haitians did return to their homes in the east; the elderly Borni Beliard and his family came back to Guayubín, for example, after his conduct was universally vouched to have been “good.”⁴² The residents “do not want to be Spanish citizens,” the Crown complained.⁴³

Delighting in a narrative as old as the republic, annexation authorities repeatedly insisted that the rebellion was only Haitian. “The Haitians fled Neyba and Las Matas like cowards!” a writer at *La Razón* proclaimed.⁴⁴ Those few Dominicans who had been involved in the “humiliating defeat,” journalists argued, were “merely a handful of misfits with the exaggerated pretensions of the descendants of Toussaint.”⁴⁵ Cabral, Sánchez, Ramírez, and

their followers “are, [like Judas], Haitian men who have renounced their faith, honor, and country,” the writer of another editorial continued accusingly, arguing that they sought the destruction of the country and should be disowned.⁴⁶ Pro-annexation journalists followed up with an indulgent, racist press offensive. A writer rhapsodized about an unnamed young Dominican who had been canonized as a Spanish patriot for having saved a Spanish flag from the “Haitian hordes.”⁴⁷ Madrid journalists were even more overt, unleashing a torrent of slurs.⁴⁸ The defeat of the “cowards” had been easy, loyalist writers concurred. “We will see if the Haitians doubt now the spontaneity of Dominicans in the annexation,” one editorial exulted.⁴⁹ *La Razón* writers went so far as to embrace rumors of French reoccupation of Haiti—albeit dubious, they admitted—with glowing prose.⁵⁰ Dominicans were “working energetically with [the Spanish] . . . to reject the invasion of their black neighbors,” Madrid papers agreed.⁵¹ “Let us throw up our voices to give most fervent thanks to Divine Providence!” a proclamation attributed to Santana exhorted. “We are children of the same August Mother of all Spaniards . . . of all Spaniards born in Europe, America, Asia, and Africa!”⁵²

Military reprisal was fast and brutal, directed squarely at Port-au-Prince. Spanish agent Manuel Cruzat arrived in late April and tried to force his way into having an audience at the presidential palace.⁵³ He demanded that Geffard immediately renounce opposition, recognize annexation, expel any conspirators, and pay an indemnity for his call to arms. In fact, the Spanish actions of that summer very nearly destabilized the government in Port-au-Prince. On 5 July 1861, six Spanish steamships appeared in the harbor of Port-au-Prince, causing “great sensation.”⁵⁴ General Joaquín Rubalcaba, the commander of Havana’s naval forces, demanded 200,000 pesos fuertes, one hundred cannon shots in salute of the Spanish flag, and assurances of no further disturbances within the Haitian territory, all to be satisfied within forty-eight hours. Geffard refused his demands and declared martial law. As hours passed, citizens became frantic, storing valuables and heading miles outside of the city.⁵⁵ The situation was so tense that Spanish authorities urged foreigners to evacuate; the Spanish press wrote almost gleefully about the terror and the tension of the peasant residents of the surrounding area. After five days of mediation with the British and French consuls, Geffard consented to saluting the Spanish forces and negotiating compensation.⁵⁶ One month later, Spanish authorities demanded an additional 25,000 pesos fuertes as indemnity for damages caused in the Dominican towns of Las Matas, Neiba, and Cercado, a “most moderate” sum, the Spanish Crown announced.⁵⁷

Seeking to protect his republic, Geffrard acquiesced to all signs of conciliation. He ordered Cabral and a handful of others out of Haiti, and they quickly absconded to Saint Thomas.⁵⁸ In Port-au-Prince, residents quietly criticized both Geffrard's capitulation and his quick recourse to martial law, and they feared more Spanish aggression was to come.⁵⁹ The *Moniteur Haïtien* was forced into silence. A report on Jamaicans' opposition to annexation was buried on the second page of a July paper, and a later issue praised Geffrard for having navigated "difficult and delicate" negotiations with Spain.⁶⁰ Months later, a journalist nearly echoed the Spanish line: that 1861 border troubles had caused "complications," he wrote, but that they were "smoothed out by the wisdom of both governments." The writer pointedly returned to domestic questions of agricultural development and education.⁶¹ The "indemnity" the government was to pay received passing mention.⁶² Geffrard was in a difficult diplomatic position, and he faced increasing domestic opposition. He clung to constitutionalism and pronounced clemency to conspirators who cropped up in various towns, but he also warned that unauthorized small vessels, milling about the coast, would be treated as pirates.⁶³ In the Dominican capital, meanwhile, the summer executions had chilled the populace. Santana's brutality ruled tenuously once again.⁶⁴

Alarming Reports, Not at All Satisfactory: The Erosion of Spanish Optimism

Although calm was reestablished in late summer, Spanish frustration grew. General Santana, author of annexation and Spain's first collaborator, proved a troublesome and frustrating proxy who rarely fulfilled his duties as Spanish authorities would have liked. Publicly, Cuban governor Serrano referred to him positively, but in an "internal and most confidential report," he recounted a very different opinion. "Alarming reports, not at all satisfactory," had been arriving about Santana's cruelty, and soon the Cuban governor himself became convinced that the Dominican caudillo was "an almost insuperable obstacle to the organization of the territory."⁶⁵ Through maneuvering and violence, Santana was in command of a "completely loyal" party of followers on whom he rained patronage. He and his followers "have so exaggerated their pretensions . . . and ambition for salaries and posts, that it constitutes a great obstacle for continuing to organize [the administration]," the visiting governor reported. "They want the top posts and refuse the lower ones that have been generously offered them," he complained.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Santana was implacable with his Dominican enemies. He tried to block former opponents from government posts, even denying their reentry

to the country on an individual basis.⁶⁷ Serrano had arrived in Santo Domingo determined to declare total amnesty, a measure that he quickly learned Santana opposed.⁶⁸ Santana's favoritism and strong-arm tactics extended as far as the clergy; Santana urged that prelate Moreno del Cristo be removed for being anti-Spanish, but Serrano determined his motivations to be wholly personal.⁶⁹ "Underhanded machinations [stemming] from political enmity and envy," Serrano concluded, disapprovingly.⁷⁰ The regente of the Real Audiencia, Eduardo Alonso y Colmenares, was even more critical. He accused Santana and his coterie of purposely provoking conflict with officials in order to regain lost popularity; he was uncooperative and narrow-minded, Alonso accused. The behavior and corruption were alarming, he continued, and advocated that Santana's replacement should be immediate.⁷¹

Whether Santana's resignation in mid-1862 was due to fevers and rheumatism, as he claimed, or to increasing Spanish pressure is not clear. He was obviously unhappy; he had tried for months to resign, writing repeated requests. A critical observer remarked that he had profited from the sale of supplies to Spanish troops in hard currency and sought to retire to the east with his earnings.⁷² Certainly, too, he was no longer the pragmatic Spanish choice for captain general. Spanish authorities admonished Santana to defer to Governor Serrano regarding any foreign policy concerns, including Haiti.⁷³ Santana retreated from official business—as he had been wont to do throughout the First Republic. "Off with his cattle," one Spanish general sneered.⁷⁴ At other times he was irascible and withdrawn, "complaining about every decision that is not his," one confidential report accused, observing, "He only wants to govern with the arbitrariness, violence, and exclusivity of the Republican era, with different names."⁷⁵ To remove him without controversy, Serrano suggested he be called to Madrid, "under a plausible pretext of meeting his August Sovereign."⁷⁶ Not long after Serrano's visit, Santana retired to his Seibo ranch permanently, anyway. "If his ailments were in part responsible for his resignation, it is no less certain that his impotence versus the near absolute control of . . . an upstart bureaucracy in the process of replacing his intimate collaborators was a decisive factor," historian Luis Álvarez observes.⁷⁷

As 1862 proceeded, so did a progressive increase in Spanish replacements for government positions. New captain general Rivero acknowledged that a dramatic replacement of partisan and problematic appointments would be "extremely impolitic in the eyes of the country," but he proposed to neutralize the appointments by adding army officers "of recognized skill and talent" as secretaries.⁷⁸ Other professionals faced new restrictions. Prior to

the Spanish administration, public defenders in the republic had needed only proof of upstanding status and a two-year apprenticeship. Spanish commissioners suggested that the legal ranks be weeded out significantly. Only those who had been practicing law for fifteen or more years could continue; others would need to pass an examination, and in some cases, an additional apprenticeship.⁷⁹ Authorities disqualified three former members of the Dominican Supreme Court in this manner.⁸⁰ A handful of prominent *letrados* sought licenses to continue in their public clerk (*escribano público*) posts, but candidates arriving from Puerto Rico supplanted them.⁸¹ As the administration stabilized, Spanish authorities methodically purged the prominent Dominicans who had overseen the transition. Spanish bureaucrats Victoriano García Paredes and Mariano Cappa replaced Fernandez de Castro and Miguel Lavastida in their high-ranking posts, leaving them only a semiofficial advisory capacity.⁸² Manuel Cruzat—former consul in Mobile, Galveston, and disastrously in Haiti—became the director of mail. Eduardo Alonso y Colmenares, a Madrid-educated lawyer, became the regente of the Real Audiencia. Dominican officials Pedro Ricart y Torres, Miguel Valverde, Pedro Curiel, and others were ousted in subsequent months.⁸³

Logistical and economic problems plagued the new administration. Few public works projects began. As an interim measure, authorities instructed local officials to use proceeds from fines for municipal funding, but they were insufficient, onerous to citizens, and only slowly disbursed.⁸⁴ The administration never repaid wealthy loyalists for their out-of-pocket support in crushing the 1861 revolts. Salary complaints were common.⁸⁵ “It seemed like the [Spanish] government had forgotten the town,” a frustrated observer proclaimed in one center-island town, citing repeated requests for military supplies and nearly six months in pay arrears.⁸⁶ Administration costs mounted: thousands to repair the few standing government buildings, payments for renting of private homes and furniture, and other start-up expenses. Some of the expenditures highlight the formalistic costs of Spanish return: 81 pesos to celebrate the entry of the royal seal, 27 pesos for new flags in Puerto Plata, 430 pesos to relocate a woman living near a sixteenth-century chapel marked for restoration, and other incidental costs.⁸⁷ Officials proposed purchasing the land on which the island’s first Mass was celebrated and finding and restoring Columbus’s house in Santo Domingo, historically dubious but symbolically significant projects.⁸⁸ The new watchmen forces cost 14,000 pesos in the capital alone and almost 34,000 pesos island-wide.⁸⁹ Treasury authorities, meanwhile, were frustrated with the difficulty of organizing First Republic documents, and could not precisely

ascertain what constituted state property.⁹⁰ Madrid officials were very critical of the accounting going on in Santo Domingo generally.⁹¹

Slow official responses aggravated everything. The lack of regular steamship service made governing difficult, officials complained.⁹² Mail took about a week to arrive from the east to the capital, and about the same amount of time to get from the northern coast to the capital by boat, but it took almost two weeks to reach Santo Domingo from the territory's most important town, Santiago. Authorities in Santiago de los Caballeros complained about the slow speed of correspondence.⁹³ Mail from Santo Domingo to Madrid regularly took as long as two months. Santana asked Spanish authorities to send ships directly to the capital, as the roads were so poor crossing the island to Samaná that dispatches took a long time to arrive. His request was denied on the basis that the route amounted to too much of a diversion from Havana, obviously a priority destination.⁹⁴ Administrators waited on funds and instructions, but the chief postal administrator, like others, quit to find more lucrative employment.⁹⁵

Some posts simply went unfilled. Try as they might, officials could not fill the position of minister of justice. Although notification of the post's creation was mailed to the colony's mayors in January 1862, a number of them replied that they had never received word, even six months later. Exasperated, capital city officials reissued a thirty-day call: baptized Catholic men with robust constitution, twenty-five years or older, and "certified of good morality and conduct" were welcome to apply, it urged, and the edict was to be read and repeated in important public places. "We read the edict," the Azua mayor reported months later in late summer, "but there is absolutely no person who could possibly be a candidate." The Puerto Plata mayor also complied, "but no one solicited the post," he regretted. The post was provisionally filled—more than a year later—by a French citizen living in the capital, who later deserted, leaving for Saint Thomas under an assumed name. Anyway, funds were short and would have to be borrowed from Puerto Rico. No further records suggest what exasperated officials did next.⁹⁶ Even the prized port of Samaná—where a new mayoral position was tentatively created in late 1861—could not find any notaries at all to perform secretarial duties there.⁹⁷ In the capital, meanwhile, the Royal Audiencia begged the Crown for more money—repeatedly arguing that the administration of justice could not possibly be administered with so few personnel.⁹⁸ Elsewhere, officers criticized the pace of public works projects. An officer in Azua complained of the impossibility of finishing barracks there, "whether because of the loss of materials, or the slowness of the laborers who are not sustained by anything

other than the Government's ration." He asked for funds to be able to pay them according to their progress, with the hope of speeding things along.⁹⁹

Spanish troops were not prepared for the conditions under which they met the rebels in the spring of 1861, and conditions were difficult generally. With more troops arriving in Azua from Havana in mid-June, conditions during the summer campaign "against Haiti" were unimaginably bad, the Cuban governor reported. According to authorities on the ground,

It is impossible from all angles to form a worthy idea of the difficulties one fights against in this country for the simplest thing. I will leave out the housing of troops in a town composed of insufficient barrack-huts, in such poor condition that when it rains it is as if one were in open country. I will not tire Your Excellency by describing the Hospitals where it has been necessary to put two sick men in the same bed for days, nor will I report the scarcity of articles of the first necessity, nor the high cost of living, not even how it is necessary to travel three leagues and more amid heavy rainfall and overflowing rivers to provide forage for the horses. Your Excellency will easily understand everything when I simply tell you that since the moment of arrival I have been buying burros at any price, and despite Santana's presence and help, it has not been possible for me to buy more than forty—and that after having left Santo Domingo twenty-five days ago.

The horses were tired, he reported, and oxcarts difficult to find. "With respect to the depopulation of the country and the poor condition of roads I will just tell Your Excellency, that in more than twenty *leguas* from Azua to San Juan de la Maguana, there are just six miserable huts [*bohíos*] in three spots, hours apart on the road. . . . Often there is no other remedy than sleeping on the ground, and the forest is too dense for hammocks," he lamented.¹⁰⁰ As always, however, Spanish authorities were eager to underscore the harmony between Spanish troops and the Dominican peasants they encountered. The Spanish soldiers had faced the adverse conditions with such "superior discipline . . . fraternizing with the residents and in everything laboring with prudence and tact, that it is the admiration of the country," the Cuban governor insisted.

Arriving Spanish settlers fared worst of all. There was confusion over who would cover the costs of arriving Spanish families, especially if their deals had been struck before annexation was official. They arrived in small groups from port cities like Cádiz; often, expeditions of larger groups failed in planning stages.¹⁰¹ Officials agreed that white labor was necessary and resolved to

adhere to pro-*colono* statutes from the neighboring islands, but they quibbled on land allowances and other costs. After the settlers arrived, they fared overwhelmingly poorly. Some of them sought government aid immediately; others tried to return to Spain.¹⁰² Widows, orphans, and the sick were left stranded. A number who were reported to be dying in Samaná had no money to return to Spain. Future colonists must not be sent in the height of the summer, which had caused so high a mortality rate “that they were terrified of all the island residents,” one report warned.¹⁰³ The projects were so unsuccessful that a royal order in March 1863 allowed widows to return to Spain.

Spanish authorities endeavored on a good faith mission to redeem the paper money of the republic for pesos fuertes, just as Dominican politicians had negotiated. Authorities began the program slowly, however, and they quickly ran into problems.¹⁰⁴ First, the Classification Panel found that it was difficult to know if the paper bills they were receiving were real; they considered it simply impossible to validate them all.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the Crown issued paper IOUs of its own, papers that were themselves subject to rampant falsification and inflation.¹⁰⁶ When redemption began, the panel offered to redeem paper currency with copper. As paper money was already not accepted, small merchants scrambled to exchange the copper for silver or gold, often at unfavorable rates.¹⁰⁷ Just one year in, Puerto Plata was abuzz with discontent. The state of the town was “alarming,” Santana reported, and the discontent centered on the paper money. The tone of the pamphlets circulating—railing against the “Despotic Spanish Government” and demanding “the blood of the traitor of he who sold us as vengeance”—gave ample reason to make him nervous.¹⁰⁸ Poorer individuals often could not get authorities to accept their money, sometimes in so deteriorated a condition that it was in multiple pieces. One anonymous letter writer later observed, “This disgusted the masses, as the measure, on top of being arbitrary, discredits their limited means.”¹⁰⁹ Currency gained some stability, but the cost of living rose along with it, raising the price of daily goods in the capital by 20 percent almost immediately, and more in the long term.¹¹⁰

At the end of Santana’s tenure, the colonial government was in dire financial straits. Railroad, canal, highway, and bridge plans were on hold, and Samaná’s mine awaited an engineer. Even Santo Domingo’s port could not be dredged until further notice, nor could a much-needed railroad connecting the tobacco fields of the Cibao to port cities be constructed.¹¹¹ The public works department had only an inspector at present and an annual budget of fewer than 40,000 pesos. Money was “a delicate subject”—there existed a

“total lack of capital . . . to make large-scale industry”—and so contributions from Cuba ought to continue for a time, the incoming governor argued. He would study the tax system as ordered—but in the meantime, it was vital that the stipends from Cuba came with “strict regularity, as in this island there is not a single resource, nor a merchant to whom one could appeal in the case of urgency.” Santo Domingo officials asked the Cuban treasury to cover its summer costs in 1862, but neither the 120,000-peso stipend requested for August nor the 200,000 pesos for September arrived.¹¹² The captain general of Santo Domingo would have to take a pay cut by 1863, the overseas minister warned.¹¹³ Cuban governor Serrano was gone, too, retiring, as Santana had, for health reasons.

As the new captain general, Felipe Rivero, began his tenure, however, official Spanish sentiment was stubbornly optimistic. Rivero himself assured the Spanish Overseas Ministry that he was taking careful notes and reading the reports of “very authorized people who have had the chance to study and learn the nature and character of the inhabitants.”¹¹⁴ Religious reform would continue apace. Despite early failures with Spanish settlers, he urged that more rural laborers and Asian laborers ought to be drafted. General Santana retired with laurels and a healthy half-pay salary, honored with the “Grand Cross of the Royal American Order of Isabel the Catholic” and the title of “Marques of Las Carreras,” recalling an 1849 battle with Haitian troops.¹¹⁵ Dominican officials also wrote approvingly of Santana’s replacement by Rivero.¹¹⁶ Apart from a few minor incidents, the country was tranquil, authorities wrote. “Dominicans, embrace your new father!” Santana wrote before taking leave of the capital. “Peace and happiness await,” the arriving Spanish governor reminded the public, arguing that a new era of prosperity was to be gained through their voluntary obedience.¹¹⁷

Conflicts with the Spanish State

To the average Dominican resident living somewhat near a larger town, the arrival of the Spanish troops and administrators steadily impacted daily life. Spain’s first visibility was military; nearly three thousand troops had arrived by 5 April. The larger state—government spending grew in Santo Domingo from 241,000 pesos in 1860 to more than twice that figure within two years—brought Spanish priests, Spanish civil and military governors, and new Dominican authorities to the payroll.¹¹⁸ Although much of the budget was funded by Cuban coffers, at least some of it came from residents themselves; the income exacted from Dominicans doubled from 1860 to 1862.¹¹⁹ Merchants felt the impact first. It was they who suffered new licensing fees,

faced difficulties exchanging the paper currency from the former republic, and—as rebellion broke out—saw few of the capital improvements for which they had so greatly hoped. Those authorities who had served in Cuba in particular were arriving from a colony with a large civil and military structure. “You can go nowhere in Cuba without meeting soldiers,” a resident of the neighboring colony complained.¹²⁰ While residents of the biggest urban centers—the capital, Santiago de los Caballeros, Puerto Plata—probably felt the expansion most immediately, therefore, others received Spanish *alcaldes* and low-level Dominican officials (*alcaldes pedáneos*) charged with spreading Spanish law to the smaller towns.¹²¹

Few authorities were as famously unlikable as Brigadier Manuel Buceta, charged with governing the Cibao province from its capital, Santiago de los Caballeros. Buceta was irredeemably heavy-handed, authoritarian, and condescending, driving even prominent, loyal Dominicans to disgust. Alejandro Ángulo Guridi, the son of Dominican parents who had left the island in 1822, raised and educated in Puerto Rico and Havana, was such a subject. Guridi had returned to the island in 1852, involving himself in liberal politics and pro-immigration schemes, and supported annexation on the grounds it would usher in peace, with prosperity soon to follow.¹²² When Spanish officials began arriving, therefore, he and other loyalists made ideal transitional authorities; in fact, a number of them constituted the municipal government (*ayuntamiento*) that was to collaborate with Buceta in Santiago, probably the wealthiest and most important city of the east. Faithfully, Guridi and others labored to establish a new town hall, in a large house with a side room. “We decorated the tables and floors of the meeting room, made a carpet-canopy for the President’s place, and hung a painting of our August Sovereign,” Guridi reported. Of the result, he wrote, “Well, it is clear, Excellent Sir, that the location doesn’t look like the Ayuntamiento of Madrid nor that of Havana; but everything is relative in this life,” explaining, “And we are satisfied in having done everything within our means to create a meeting room for decent men who have seen those of other countries.”

The conflict between Buceta and Santiago’s municipal government escalated quickly. Buceta’s response was indecorously haughty. Guridi explained: “Well, Excellent Sir, the first day that Sr. Brigadier Governor saw it fit to attend our meeting, he said that it was an indecency, and that it was not fit even for troops to sleep in; and why were we meeting at that time anyway, if it was not the set hour.”¹²³ Buceta exited, threatening jail for anyone who was not present again at seven that night. When the meeting convened that

evening, Buceta refused to listen to the members' reasoning on a number of legislative decisions. Guridi and others tried to remain calm. "Excellent Sir, we continued carrying out our duties without complaining, without the tiniest bit of venting escaping from our lips," he reported, both composed and exasperated. Buceta's supercilious manner was not placated. Unsatisfied with the contractor chosen by the Ayuntamiento for trash collection—neighbors had simply left refuse in the wrong street, "unused to the service," Guridi insisted—the Spanish commander ordered the trash to be piled at the door of the municipal meetinghouse, blocking its entrance entirely. Residents were abuzz—some surprised, some furious. The Ayuntamiento members, for their part, felt humiliated, and they wrote individual scathing letters to the captain general directly. "I would not be worthy of my parents' name or even my own . . . please let me quit, and tell the governor not to oppose my passport," Guridi pleaded. Governor Rivero, perplexed at the events, wrote to Buceta for more information, but it was too late. Guridi left the country again in 1863; he published the oppositional pamphlet *Santo Domingo and España* anonymously from New York the following year.¹²⁴

Town residents often resisted paying fines to the new Spanish state, especially if they were men of military rank. In the town of Guerra, a group of a dozen men were interrogated about a game of *juego del monte* (a card game similar to poker). Town officials detained the owner of the house, Pedro Pineda, and ordered him to pay sixty pesos; the rest were to pay a smaller amount or spend some time in jail. Pineda refused to submit to his sentence. His resistance flummoxed authorities, who were unused to enforcing such statutes. The mayor—whose own secretary riddled the ensuing correspondence with numerous chirographic errors—was bewildered. "I am relating this to Your Excellency so that you might answer us as quickly as possible, saying what should be done on the matter; of course the sentence should not be illusory under any context," his report read.¹²⁵ Pineda escalated his opposition, now claiming to be a "Spanish Colonel" and insisting that he would listen only to military authority. "No matter what, [that authority] falls to me," the army commander Miguel de los Santos wrote, urging, "so I hope Your Excellency can tell me what I can do to oblige him to pay, as he has been too abusive and even now continues abusing the authorities. . . . I hope that you will have the kindness to answer me on the matter using the same porter."¹²⁶ Officials in the capital replied sternly; not only was Pineda not exempt, but the fines for all the infractors should actually be double or triple the original amount. Under some confusing circumstances, Pineda

himself defiantly delivered this order of punishment from the capital back to the town. Guerra's army commander balked and asked Pineda only to pay the original amount, in installments.¹²⁷

Passports proved complicated. A larger administration probably caused more people to worry about official passports than before, although it is difficult to state conclusively that this is so. It does seem like making one's resident status official became important, as was the case for a Bavarian merchant who applied for naturalization, despite having already been a resident for more than ten years.¹²⁸ Some individuals, like Blas C. Jiménez, had served in the military in both countries, with long-term residency both places. Jiménez had moved to Port-au-Prince without any intention of returning to the east, and there he married a young Haitian woman and raised a family, all the while as a Haitian military officer, even traveling abroad under the auspices of a Haitian passport. Authorities were perplexed as to whether he should be admitted as a Spanish citizen again. After the fighting began, first in 1861 and then steadily in 1863, travel became even more fraught. Spanish authorities insisted that the families who had left in the earliest rebellions—which they characterized as “invasions” from Haiti—had been forcibly relocated westward, for example, and they bid the eastern residents return quietly to their homes. Despite their reportedly destitute conditions and official prodding, however, they were slow to return to Spanish jurisdiction.¹²⁹ Petitions to travel westward persisted long after the fighting heightened scrutiny; residents' commercial and familial interests were simply too important. Ana Maduro asked for a passport to travel to Port-au-Prince to recoup a sick daughter she had left there in 1864, for example, and others applied for cattle trading and other business interests.¹³⁰ Dozens, if not hundreds, of ethnically Haitian residents in towns like Las Matas Cercado and Sabana Mula did not return east after fighting erupted, as both scrutiny and chaos grew.¹³¹

Animal impressment grated on everyone. Given the extraordinarily poor condition of the territory's roads and a lack of Spanish pack animals, the governor created a system of *bagajes* in September 1862 authorizing Spanish commanders to impress oxen, burros, and horses to carry supplies, often without recourse for their Dominican owner. An anonymous letter writer described the rude manner with which impressment was effected: “The arbitrary *bagaje* system: suffice it to say that they threw what the horses were carrying into the middle of the street (the loads of the *campesinos*), saying that the urgency of Royal Service demanded it, and that the beasts, thus embargoed, didn't always make it back to the hands of their owners.”¹³² In San

Cristóbal, Spanish troops were encroaching on residents' farms and seizing the animals they encountered. Not even prominent area residents were safe. One of the accusing *vecinos* was prominent military officer (and future independence fighter in Cuba) Modesto Díaz, another a former senator.¹³³ One reservist complained that he had waited more than three months for repayment (108 pesos) for his horse, which the Spanish forces had seized with no indication of forthcoming payment. The Spanish captain was extraordinarily curt in his reply to the query, even as he took advantage of his letter to complain of the disorder of Spain's collection of pack animals. Of forty animals borrowed, he could locate only twenty-five, he admitted, and didn't know what else to say.¹³⁴

With new civil codes ruling the towns, other costly daily irritations emerged. Where some locals had appealed to their town officials (usually an *alcalde ordinario*) for redress during previous years, now they sometimes had to travel to court in the municipal capital, a prohibitively costly proposition.¹³⁵ In the capital, building codes seemed punitive to those who tried to set up new public establishments, and homeowners had just one year to bring their houses up to architectural and hygiene codes.¹³⁶ Merchants seeking licenses (*derechos de patentes*) in smaller towns grumbled at the fact they were to pay the same rates as the capital.¹³⁷ The revenue from fines was sufficient that in the small town of Guerra officials proposed building a church from the proceeds.¹³⁸ As months passed, authorities became well aware of how onerous the fees were for much of the population, and they admitted that they had too closely modeled the police and government codes after Cuba's ordinances. After the first year, the Consejo de Administración proposed some reforms. They called on the governor to relax or suppress ordinances about house repair and painting, animal tethering, clothes hanging, children's dress, licenses for small-time vendors, and animal impressment. Demanding a license from nearly destitute, small-time vendors "would be the same as taking away from them the only means they have from not dying of misery," the council noted, empathetically, arguing that even free licenses were a problem.¹³⁹

Protestants in Puerto Plata and Samaná, as well as other towns, faced state discrimination. Spanish officials at the highest level vacillated on the issue of religious tolerance, and lower-level authorities bungled local relationships. In Samaná, the army seized a Wesleyan chapel that served a number of British subjects for use as an infirmary, for example, only to hastily retract their occupation at the behest of the British consul and the Spanish governor.¹⁴⁰ The following year, authorities in Samaná found themselves defending the

Protestant population, refusing to enforce newly restrictive measures unless they heard directly from the governor.¹⁴¹ As policymakers vacillated, resident Americans felt extra hostility; they suspected Spanish hostility to their community was an extension of imperial pro-Confederate sentiments.¹⁴² The father of a free black Methodist family of five from New York—who had been living in Samaná since at least the 1850s and who worked in the customs house as a bookkeeper—sought protection from Spanish persecution by hoisting a British flag, but British consul Hood acerbically dismissed him.¹⁴³ Some residents fled scrutiny, even to Turks and Caicos. Others appealed to the British consulate, or even President Lincoln, for intervention and protection of their churches, schools, and civil marriages. Even the smallest day-to-day dealings, like opening a small pharmacy, became problematic for Protestants who refused to swear a Catholic oath. Archbishop Monzón was hostile to their appeals; the practitioners amounted to “diverse and contrary sects,” he replied scornfully.¹⁴⁴ Only their central importance to the Puerto Plata merchant community, long roots in other northern towns, and the threat of international incident with the British unevenly protected them. Samaná officials were acidly critical of the Catholic priests who served the area; they also demanded more funds.¹⁴⁵

Invigorated Catholic orthodoxies were widely unpopular. Santana himself opposed inquiry into masonry in the territory, for example.¹⁴⁶ Some of the territory’s most prominent men were masons; they too faced censure from the pulpit. Authorities even forced some to hand over secret documents to church authorities.¹⁴⁷ Parishioners of local Catholic churches resented new fines. Marriage in the church, which had been at once fairly uncommon and free, was now an expectation and cost an onerous 250 pesetas.¹⁴⁸ In one instance, a local Neiba official attempted to intervene on the part of the area residents, arguing that infractions like child nudity were innocent. The incoming cleric’s repression had left children “marooned in their house,” the sympathetic writer urged, and he testily pointed to the priest’s own shirking of his duties.¹⁴⁹ Even the regional authority, Eusebio Puello, concurred. The commanding clergyman was absolutely curt and unsympathetic in response. “Your protests are useless and in vain, because I will still correct the scandalous behavior of nudity and common-law marriage, not just in the church, but in the street, plazas and *montes*. . . . It is diabolical,” he replied.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the archbishop muted complaints about priestly abuses, like Bonao’s drunken cleric, who had wandered the streets, naked.¹⁵¹

The measures divided local religious authorities. While some probably adopted the hardline stance of the incoming archbishop, other town clergy,

even those who had initially supported Spain's arrival, resented their new-found role as tax collector for various sacraments.¹⁵² Spanish authorities lamented the loss of their "important support," and retrospective accounts point centrally to the harsh actions of the archbishop as a source of discontent.¹⁵³ A few Dominican-born priests vocally opposed annexation from the outset, and the most prominent faced unwanted repression and deportation. Father Fernando Antonio Meriño, a longtime opponent to Santana and interim ecclesiastical governor, was an immediate opponent. He attacked the proposition at an independence day Mass in February 1861, even before Spanish arrival, and refused to take a loyalty oath to the queen or to add a prayer for the life and health of the kings at the end of Mass. His open dissent earned him immediate censure and expulsion by mid-June 1862; subsequently, he spent time in Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and Spain lobbying against annexation. In frustration, he wrote in his diary, "Damn the Spanish Government, may the Devil take them!"¹⁵⁴

Women confronted all manner of new measures, civil and religious. It is likely that their low-capital ventures—fruits, vegetables, alcohol, and so on—finally gained official exemption from licenses with the code reforms of 1863. Other ordinances were not as easy to elude. Spanish zeal for reformed Catholic marriage was "double-edged empathy," as administrators sought to instill a sense of "shame" and gender differences through marriage and restricted ideals of female propriety.¹⁵⁵ In towns and rural areas throughout the republic, most women lived informally with their partners, a position known locally as *mancebinas*. Many poorer town couples had their own small-scale commercial enterprise, but usually both partners were very cash poor. One Neiba couple, in which the man sold small amounts of tobacco (among other endeavors) and his partner sold different kinds of liquor (or sometimes traded it in kind), was perhaps typical.¹⁵⁶ Spanish priests of varying disposition arrived in towns across the territory. Few archival traces reflect how women might have received and responded to their strictures. The licensing of midwifery—at a prohibitive twenty pesos—must have been an obstacle that many tried to avoid, for example.¹⁵⁷ Other decrees, like that requiring clothing for young children, might have been simply troublesome, frustrating, and impossible.

The logistical demands of thousands of new residents in the capital, however, presented opportunities that a number of women eagerly took. Very few wealthy families had domestic servants in the capital; it was "notorious, domestics are immensely difficult to find and charge very high day rates," authorities observed. Also, water was hard to come by. The town council

recommended that cooks, washerwomen, and ironers not have to seek a license.¹⁵⁸ Although some of the highest-ranking officers brought with them domestics from Cuba and Puerto Rico—as the enslaved maid scandals proved early in the occupation—most arriving Spanish personnel probably entrusted their laundry to enterprising local women. The occupation sanctioned an important public presence and source of income for urban women, and the multiple-day turnover demanded considerable interaction with their clients in towns and army outposts.¹⁵⁹ Port cities like Puerto Plata attracted women migrants from other islands, like the young Josepha Debra, from Turks and Caicos, who moved to Puerto Plata when she was very young and “perfectly understood Spanish.”¹⁶⁰ She and other women, usually unmarried, moved again from Puerto Plata down to the capital as washerwomen and sweets sellers, probably to capitalize on the troop and governmental concentration there. Often they moved in with other unmarried women of greater means, including Spanish residents of the capital. Some struck up relationships with the soldiers that were subject to considerable scrutiny after fighting began.¹⁶¹

Call on Me, I’m No Coward!

Even for those citizens who did not find themselves on the wrong side of any gaming law, commercial code, or sacrament, the presence of Spanish troops marked a novel quotidian reality. In smaller towns, their profile was likely minimal. However, as the troops settled into larger towns across Santo Domingo, their comportment proved to be volatile. General and later governor of Santo Domingo José de la Gándara praised the “admirable instinct . . . and inalterable discipline” of the Spanish troops for avoiding incidents as they disembarked, even as he cryptically alluded to “irregularities” in how they first treated Santana.¹⁶² Rank-and-file soldiers and officers alike met taxing conditions—difficult travel, poor housing, make-shift hospitals—and many of the soldiers were very young, just eighteen or nineteen years old, unused to their new assignment.¹⁶³ Officers and ranking soldiers alike were frustrated that their transfer to Santo Domingo had restarted seniority clocks for promotion; often, too, their abrupt transfer meant that they had been separated from families they had already established in Cuba or Puerto Rico. A new theater company in the capital, whose directors had been excited for a new public, closed when arriving officials simply did not fill the seats as they had imagined.¹⁶⁴

With its extremely sparse material culture, Santo Domingo was not the most agreeable place for transfer. In their downtime, troops were often

bored. Higher-ranking officers held social events like masked balls, ostensibly with well-off Dominicans (or, at the very least, with Dominican women). “Given that in this town [Santiago] there is absolutely nothing to do, sometimes the officers got together to eat dinner or lunch [sometimes with two Dominican pharmacists],” one officer testified during an inquiry about socializing. The matter was resolved without any discipline.¹⁶⁵ Spanish rank and file and Dominican town residents clashed over the former’s bored, and hostile, misconduct. Some incidents were as innocent or thoughtless as soldiers leaving open farm gates as they exercised, repeatedly allowing local farm animals to escape.¹⁶⁶ Infantrymen wandered to towns’ outskirts, often for extraofficial reasons. In one criminal case, seven Spanish soldiers from three different regiments, apparently friends, were arrested on a variety of charges: patrolling a house without orders to do so, having an unlicensed firearm, and stealing coconuts and sugarcane. They were “skulking about,” the official reported.¹⁶⁷

An excess of enforced leisure and alcohol frequently bred conflict. In Puerto Plata, a few drunken soldiers tried to crash a family baptism party in the early morning of 18 August 1862, for example, demanding beer and saying “lots of crazy stuff” (*muchos disparates*), witnesses claimed. The house’s owner informed them that the party had ended, but the soldiers proceeded to trash the home, looking for its female residents. At some point, the women of the house did emerge and began throwing rocks at the intruders. “I told them that they had no authority to enter . . . not even my husband did,” Juana Silberia testified. A soldier threatened her, telling her not to “get involved in men’s affairs, and that if she didn’t be quiet he would break everything in the house [and] kill her.” Bravely, Juana responded by pushing the menacing soldier out of the house, but when the soldiers pried the door open again, she fled to her sister’s home. A policeman arrived and began to beat Juana’s husband, at which point her sister María threw herself on him, ripping his uniform in several places. With several rocks in her hand, she threatened the officer, “Kill me or I’ll kill you!” It seems unlikely the women ever received justice. One soldier freely admitted that the band of soldiers had been partying—three sergeants, three policemen, and two Dominican men had been drinking, then six more had joined their group, he testified. More tellingly, however, another soldier dismissively referred to the incident as a “dispute with some *morenos* in the street,” and the case was never resolved.¹⁶⁸

Sometimes conflicts caused a public spectacle, as when a low-ranking Dominican officer from the reserves got into a drunken fight with a Spanish sergeant in Cotuy. People poured out of the town church into the street. “All

the locals who were in service for Holy Friday became very upset [*se alborotaron*], and all the women went running in the streets to their houses,” Spanish officials reported.¹⁶⁹ In the southern town of Bani, a fight between “various officers” of Battalion Vitoria and several local men—“a wholly personal matter, without the smallest mention of politics,” one observer argued—was resolved with minor disciplinary measures.¹⁷⁰ Bored and prone to overreact, soldiers at times became violent. A soldier roughly disciplined a local child for fighting, bruising the child in the process; officials admonished him not to repeat the incident.¹⁷¹ One soldier was accused of a very brutal beating of an elderly shoemaker after he refused the soldier a drink.¹⁷² Soldiers felt the division between Santana and Spanish officials acutely. One Dominican lieutenant asked Santana, snidely, “How many Captain Generals are there in the island?”¹⁷³

Interpersonal relationships between the soldiers sometimes soured. A fight during a card game won one Spanish soldier two months in prison.¹⁷⁴ When a Spaniard got in a squabble over which of his fellow soldiers was to give him a shave—he spoke heatedly to one, in whispers—the resulting melee caused the death of a bystander from a stray bullet. A military judge sentenced the soldier to be shot.¹⁷⁵ Military judges came to doubt Spanish accusations. One Spanish sergeant testified, for example, about how a Dominican soldier, Manuel Martínez, had behaved flippantly in a church—dumping drinking water into the holy water basin and defiantly refusing to remove the cup. The sergeant described how another Dominican volunteer had joined Martínez and made physical threats against him, adding to the insubordination. Based on evidence unclear in the testimony fragment, however, the Spanish military commission was not convinced of the Spanish commander’s accusations. “The superior officer forgot his responsibility not to abuse power . . . [The commission determines] that there was neither irreverence nor insubordination,” the report concluded.¹⁷⁶

For the numerous Dominican men who found themselves expelled from the military by declassification, the sight of Spanish troops must have been even more difficult to bear. Those who were disqualified from active service in early fall 1861 received a small pension, one half of what active reserves earned. Hundreds of others were demoted, however, not just to the Provincial Reserves (where “active” Dominicans served) but out of military service entirely.¹⁷⁷ They were forbidden from wearing military uniforms. For soldiers used to the privileges of rank—where pay had been inconsistent in the years of the republic, title had compensated—these expulsions threat-

ened their livelihood and dignity. One former general reported that he had presented his papers directly to the Cuban governor Serrano, only to wait eight agonizing months to hear of his declassification. It was “a great shame for me,” he wrote, and he swore “that if the Spanish Government would call me to service, I would not serve, because according to them I was not worthy of attention, nor merit, nor appreciation for classification, then she could not be worth serving.”¹⁷⁸ Gratingly, too, favoritism reigned. Some former soldiers were integrated, but mostly those who had direct connections to Santana. Members of his immediate coterie received classification, sometimes after only a few years of service, and Santana was put in charge of the troops arriving from Puerto Rico. Even those who had been classified into the reserves felt the indignity of separation, however. In a distinct uniform, they were clothed, literally, as second-class soldier-citizens. Observers commented widely about the resentment the measure caused. It was a blow to the *amor propio* of the men, an anonymous report observed.¹⁷⁹

Conflict erupted between active reservists and decommissioned men. General Marcos Evangelista had been classified as passive—certainly a tough blow for a thirty-eight-year-old, and a general at that—and, indeed, the insult was almost too much for him to take.¹⁸⁰ When the local government of Seybo called on all soldiers to report, he did so, ignoring that his passive status disqualified him. Upon arriving in the town plaza, he was dismissed by the military commander—“There is just a lot of enmity between us,” Evangelista insisted, alluding to prior disagreements—and the general became positively irate. “The authorities of Seybo are cowards, whatever their status, and *muy habladores*, too!” he reportedly said. “When things are bad, call on me, because I’m no coward!” he allegedly yelled, drawing a machete. He refused to leave the plaza. Waving the machete, he shouted, “No one come close to me!” “My brother, drop it, let it go,” another Dominican officer urged. Evangelista pushed him and raised his hands as if to strike. “I’m every bit a man,” he insisted. “You think you’re the only one?” queried another onlooker. Still enraged, Evangelista retreated, protesting that he was leaving of his own accord, not because he had been ordered to do so. Santana and the Spanish were losing popularity anyway, he allegedly muttered. He originally had been sentenced to deportation, but his sentence was commuted in the amnesties granted by the queen that spring.¹⁸¹ Other declassified officers—Evangelista among them—joined the armed opposition to the Spanish. At least twenty-seven ranking passive officers were suspected in Puerto Plata disturbances in 1863, and some of the passive generals—Jacinto de Lora,

Gaspar Polanco, Pedro Florentino, and others—became leaders in the Restoration forces, where they joined countless more who had been demoted from the infantry and other ranks.¹⁸²

Active Dominican officers received abuse as well. Santana himself, General Juan Suero, and General Gregorio Lora were all belittled by different individuals—in the presence of their subordinate troops—for not being white. One incident caused Suero, then governing Puerto Plata, to resign his post, and the offending soldier was only minimally disciplined.¹⁸³ Spanish generals were aware of the lack of fraternal sentiment, and they readily admitted that rank-and-file Spanish soldiers “denigrated or refused the company of men of color.”¹⁸⁴ One Spanish soldier—a young man who had served in the “African War” in Morocco—loudly insulted Santana and other Dominican authorities as he was expelled from a dance, protesting drunkenly, “Who has seen blacks govern whites?”¹⁸⁵

Which Party Are You?

Spanish aggression toward Haiti reverberated everywhere. After the “indemnity” demands, Spanish authorities dropped the pretense of conciliation and became aggressive about reclaiming central territories that had been settled by Haitian residents since the last treaty, nearly ninety years earlier. The Spanish warship *Don Juan de Austria* arrived at Port-au-Prince’s harbor in March 1862. Haitian foreign minister Victorin Plésance was “disconcerted . . . , and his countenance revealed deep feeling for a moment; recomposed a bit he answered me that as soon as the President and the rest of the Ministers arrived, they would take up the matter and give me a response,” the Spanish consul Mariano Álvarez reported, gleeful at the minister’s discomfort.¹⁸⁶ Given that there had never been revisions of the 1777 treaty to reflect the shifting demographics in the communities of Las Caobas, Hinche, and San Miguel, “Spain will get what no other nation has been able to obtain from those blacks [cession of territory],” the consul gloated.¹⁸⁷ The Spanish emissary’s invective grew daily, and his viciousness harbored ambitious territorial resolve. According to him, the “country of barbarians” had won its independence illegitimately. “This is the right by which the white race can assert possession of the west side of Hispaniola,” he exulted, “and with such precedent, who can dissent against the reclamation that I have just proposed?” In his strong-arm tactics, Álvarez was in close communication with the French consul but not the British vice-consul Byron, who had married a Haitian woman. “I imagine he listens to those people more than the nation he represents,” Álvarez sniffed.¹⁸⁸ His communiqués from Haiti were so vitriolic that they often pre-

cluded any meaningful reporting at all. He openly and frequently fantasized about conquering the whole island.¹⁸⁹

Spain's threatening imperial posturing came at a particularly critical time for President Geffrard. Already saddled with the complicated political position of official neutrality on annexation, the president faced numerous political rivals. Some opponents agitated against proposed reforms to Article 7 of the Constitution; some decried conciliation with Spain (without presenting evident alternatives); others represented ambitious military families and more opportunistic political complaints. The president's opponents blocked each new measure he sought to pass through Congress.¹⁹⁰ A small revolt broke out in Gonaïves, and the wealthy Salomon family rallied peasant opposition in the south. Spanish diplomats were well aware that Spain was tightening the legislative bind on Geffrard and his party. The opposition also exploited the border reclamation conflict, Álvarez happily reported.¹⁹¹ Geffrard sought conciliation, pardoning a number of generals involved in recent political intrigues, and even an individual suspected of collaboration in the murder of his daughter, Cora Geffrard, four years prior.¹⁹² "Despite all this, it seems like any day now the tranquility will be broken," Álvarez continued, "the conditions for unrest exist and the enemies of the government are numerous."¹⁹³ Recent unrest promised to repeat, and the president had support only from his National Guard. "The enemies of the administration are advising the people to resist [both the Spanish presence and Geffrard]," a Spanish general observed from Port-au-Prince.¹⁹⁴ The president sent his family to France that spring, anticipating political turmoil.¹⁹⁵

At once provocative and conciliatory, Spain's actions spread fear for Haiti's territorial integrity and the prospect of reenslavement in Dominican soil. Haitian observers speculated that Samaná Bay would help with illicit slave trading to the other Spanish possessions.¹⁹⁶ Confederate fighting reached the island's shores—such as when the aptly named Confederate steamship *Havana* docked outside of Port-au-Prince with seventeen Union prisoners.¹⁹⁷ Debt anxiety and foreign aggression fed off each other. Troubling rumors were spreading: the first, that the Spanish government had ceded the whole island to France in order to settle Haiti's debt; the second, that Geffrard was also in talks to cede the island to a foreign country. Santana blamed these rumors on Geffrard's enemies and the French consul in Santo Domingo, M. Landais, "an open party loyalist."¹⁹⁸ "To maintain the favorable opinion of the blacks of Haiti, and even also a part of those of this Province," Santana suggested that Spanish-Dominican newspapers ought to address these concerns directly. Spanish diplomats warned that the language used to discuss

Haiti in *La Razón* should be “as moderate and prudent as possible,” and avoid accusing Geffard of complicity. Port-au-Prince’s citizens were interested and troubled by Spanish coverage, and they were “noisily disturbed,” the same diplomat advised.¹⁹⁹ The Spanish governor was intransigent, however, and did not recoil from making new threats. He wrote to Spain, asking for more forces to defend the Cibao valley from its “600 *legua* frontier with this enemy race.”²⁰⁰

Rebellion continued to brew in the center of the island and in other sites, and authorities could do very little. There were hushed rumors that opponents were pondering concessions to the United States for naval backing, or that Dominican rebel agents sought a new alliance with the Haitian state.²⁰¹ Through the fall of 1861 and into the next year, disquiet in center-island areas continued. Captain Manuel Feliz (“Quiri”) and Lieutenant Manuel Feliz (“Cabulla”) were disturbing public order in the region, authorities complained, perhaps responsible for the rumors that revolution was going to break out in Cibao, that the queen was seeking to jail Santana, and that Báez would soon return.²⁰² Authorities scrambled for more information on these men. Spies along the border predated annexation, and they remained on the payroll as the new regime began.²⁰³ The data they managed to gather were minimal, however. Supposedly Quiri had a girlfriend or wife in a place called Juan Herrera; his nearly eponymous fellow rebel had been involved in skirmishes with the authorities near Neiba at least since June, but both men continued to elude capture well into the fall.²⁰⁴ Intermittent shows of “good faith” by the Haitian government that entailed expulsion of frontier groups only served to contribute to chaos in the region, a Spanish general asserted.²⁰⁵ The men regularly took refuge in Ouanaminthe, la Visite, and other center-island towns.²⁰⁶ It is “of utmost importance to be vigilant of Hinchá,” an 1862 report insisted, continuing, “Hinchá is the place where all the bad men of the east and the west of this island have gathered.”²⁰⁷

Even as Haitian authorities, under pressure, collaborated in the capture of suspected conspirators, anti-Spanish alliances surfaced steadily. In Jacmel, western authorities detained a small group of travelers who had arrived from the interior of the island, claiming that the purpose of their voyage was to sell wax and buy fabric. The accused came from all corners of the eastern territory: Neiba, Santiago, Las Matas, and Higüey; they even had in their company a man from Puerto Rico. Authorities accused them of meeting up with Domingo Ramírez and his forces—rumored to be as many as four thousand—of Dominican expatriates, recent rebels, and Haitians. Their intent was revolutionary. One of the defendants, Pedro Curro of Neiba,

was allegedly seeking a literate man to write a proclamation of loyalty (to Haiti) for another small town, Petritut. Curro may not have known how to read or write passably enough to draft the document himself, but other witnesses testified that he spoke capable French, had some sort of association with powerful Ramírez, and had coordinated the group's travel to Jacmel. Furthermore, other witnesses reported that he grilled a number of individuals whom he encountered: "Which party are you, Haitians or the whites?" "That's a strange question, you know I serve the Spanish," one reportedly answered, deflecting. "Haitian or Spanish?" another witness reported. Spanish authorities, unable to prove that the defendants were not in fact on a commercial venture, jailed the men for months for unauthorized travel, but party loyalties were deepening.²⁰⁸