FIVE

You Promised to Die of Hunger

RESISTANCE, SLAVERY, AND ALL-OUT WAR

Do you not hear the terrible stampede that shakes the earth?
—MANUEL RODRIGUEZ OBJÍO, "War" (August 1863)

On 9 February 1863—forty-one years to the day after Haitian Unification and emancipation began in the Dominican capital—a group of day laborers, farmers, and other residents from the outskirts of the center-island town of Neiba decided to overthrow the Spanish administration. One of the ringleaders, Cayetano Velázquez, grew up in the capital during Unification, but he moved to the interior some years later. To the others in the assembled group, which came to be about thirty or forty people, Velázquez and another man allegedly suggested that Haitian help would soon come, and that they "would become Haitian" (*se harían haitianos*).[1] Not everyone supported that particular proposal, arrestees later testified. Nevertheless, the group gathered with a range of battle cries: "Free Dominicans!" and even a "Long live Santana!" After paying house calls and amassing a paltry collection of machetes, the group marched an hour or so into the town, shot off the cannon, took over the jail from its four Dominican guards, and went after the military commander, also Dominican, managing to take him captive. They tried to convince the priest, a Spanish man from Tarragona, simply to leave town, but he refused. After just seven hours, the rebellion collapsed that same afternoon, overpowered by the town's own small outpost of reserve soldiers. One of these soldiers testified that the whole disturbance had been "a drunk's affair."[2]

A little later in February, however, the residents of two towns in the Monte Cristi province rose up as well. These rebellions were slightly larger. After

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overcoming the loyalist forces in Sabaneta—really just a symbolic number of troops—about eight hundred area residents marched toward Guayubín, about thirty kilometers away. There was plenty of forethought to these campaigns. More than twenty-two hundred men arriving from Haiti joined them: Haitian soldiers, area residents, and Dominican refugees. Together, they organized three informal regiments. The rebels successfully appropriated a Spanish munitions stash in the second town.[3] Other north-central towns witnessed short, nearly simultaneous local disturbances; guerrilla fighting predominated. The fighting reached Santiago, which was a different campaign proposition entirely: a large Spanish and Dominican loyalist garrison, nearly eight hundred men, guarded the city.[4] Pitched hand-to-hand combat began in the city at nightfall. Spanish troops and loyal Dominican reservists, however, managed to crush Santiago's fighting first. Next, troops were able to pacify the northwestern movement. Many fled into Haiti, but no rebellions followed.[5] As quickly as the February fighting began, it was crushed again. Authorities warily pronounced victory. Late spring and summer 1863 were exceedingly tense.

By late summer 1863, fighting began again, however, and this time the whole landscape exploded. Center-island towns were again the staging site and one of the early hearts of mobilization. In Haitian Capotille, a group of generals and five hundred men issued an official statement, the "Cry of Capotillo," naming a president of a revolutionary provisional government that had yet to exist. Even as Spanish authorities dispatched troops to chase them, however, revolution took hold in the Cibao valley and the northwest.[6] The fighting spread everywhere, and for the next two years, the battles amounted to nearly total social war. Later dubbed the "War of Restoration," widespread guerrilla activity took up more than three-fifths of the entire territory.[7] Weapons were in constant shortage. In most areas the fighting involved blocking roads and access to rivers, avoiding open spaces, and even hand-to-hand combat.[8] In larger towns, the rebels devised trenches to face off with the large standing regiments. They went further, burning Santiago de los Caballeros and Puerto Plata to the ground. The rebels regularly faced regiments of as many as five thousand men, led by prominent Spanish and Dominican generals alike.[9] And yet, the fighting only spread. Families left their homes and refused to return. The fighting, nearly general from its earliest days, sealed the fate of annexation as early as summer 1863. It was a "simultaneous and total uprising," a general later wrote, noting, soon, "the vacuum was complete."[10]

A tiny fraction of the fighters, those who were unlucky enough to get arrested, left imperfect records of rebels' heterogeneous complaints and aims.

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Under duress, they told Spanish jailers and judges information they hoped would be exculpatory, or simply as little as possible. Some recounted stories of poverty and frustration. "It seemed like the [Spanish] government had forgotten [*habían botado*] the town," a frustrated soldier testified in one small town, citing repeated requests for supplies and describing being nearly six months in arrears on pay.[11] Some wealthier, literate town citizens wrote anonymous protest letters that were positively staid, focusing on political appointments, salaries, and the like.[12] The Provisional Government, as it came into being in the midst of the fighting, made pronouncements that were overwhelmingly nationalist in grievance. The government representatives also spoke of daily indignities, however. "The customs of a people free for many years have been tactlessly violated," their Proclamation of Independence read. "Mockery, disdain, marked arrogance, unmerited and scandalous persecution, and even execution are the final result."[13] Traveling rebels proudly represented their region. "¡Viva el Cibao!" shouted one group, far from home, as they surrounded pro-Spanish reservists in an eastern battle.[14] In the earliest fighting, it seems that residents had to rouse, even threaten, prominent citizens to take up arms. They did so in Guayubín, before firing cannon shots and proclaiming "¡Viva la república!"

Most salient of all to the bulk of the population, and what drove them from their homes, was a fear that was more than a sum of any grievances: the fear of enslavement. To the despair of Spanish authorities, "false ideas and abundant rumors" of renewed chattel slavery emptied whole towns and rural areas, well before fighting became widespread.[15] As authorities tried to keep residents calm in the intermittent early fighting, they soon discovered that the slavery prediction was durable, electrifying, and everywhere throughout the territory. The warnings were specific: fleeing Dominicans discussed explicit predictions of where boats might be docked, waiting to abscond with those captured by Spanish troops; they discussed who might be targeted and where the unfortunate ones would be sent. Such rumors were persistent and prevalent, and they held tremendous weight in the desperate anticolonial struggle. In their interpretation, they were discussions of the probable, the possible, and the potentially disastrous. These debates rested, in the words of Luise White, on "a store of historical allusions" about slavery in Dominican soil—and discussions of slavery in Haiti—that gained reinvigorated urgency with the loss of Dominican control.[16] In places like the northern coast and elsewhere, accounts about slavery and postemancipation restrictions reinforced the news that Dominicans received regularly.

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Conflicts with the new administration itself made the slavery discussions more acute. As the fighting began, the hostility of the Spanish troops in battle electrified the debates, which spread everywhere.

In their practical expression, what the Spanish called slavery "rumors" were functionally the scaffolds, and justification, of a plan to revolt. "As [in] the preamble of any rural uprising, there was a true 'silent war' " that preceded the Dominican rebellion, one historian observes, an "unease" that continued to grow.[17] In the countryside, Dominicans probably held gatherings and discussions about the perils and promises of resistance for weeks, even months. Groups may have gathered to recruit, to plan, even to train. Free spaces abounded, if weapons did not. Outside of Neiba, the conspirators had gathered at the wake of a young child. Weddings, funerals, saints' days, major farm labors, even the pursuit of a criminal: all of these were collective activities.[18] The lack of weapons alone required a pooling of resources. In this collective mobilization, an intense field of speculative debate arose in which group dynamics and trust were expected and paramount.[19] In occupied towns, tensions were high. Even a cautious pro-Spanish reply to watchmen on the street could cost a nervous pedestrian an arm, one unlucky Puerto Plata man learned.[20] With incredible speed, fighting enveloped entire communities and rural landscapes. It was relentless and urgent not only because of the stakes but because those fighting knew they could not count on the formal army to help them. The rebels committed arson, destroyed records, scavenged munitions, moved on, and remained fugitives. They were prepared for total war.

As Aisha Finch establishes in rural antislavery insurgencies in Cuba, women "*shared* and helped *organize* larger critiques" of colonial abuses, they had a direct, personal relationship with the targets and geographies of resistance, and their lives were also directly at stake.[21] In the Dominican context, outside of plantation surveillance, loyalist generals tried to appeal to Dominican men that women and children swept up in the uproar were experiencing great hardship. They need not have bothered, because women committed to the mobilizations independently. During the fighting, many rural women continued to manage homestead agriculture; these labors represented continuity from peacetime practices but under circumstances for provision that were much more desperate. In battle-torn areas near towns, some left to forts, but even those who remained behind were involved in the fast-moving developments of guerrilla confrontation. As participant witnesses to an itinerant struggle, these same rural women and town dwellers

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created the neural pathways of revolt. Their information sent armed fighters from town to town, warned of loyalist troop movement, and speculated on the prospects, and consequences, of rebel fighting. As Stephanie Camp notes, again in a plantation context, women's in situ collaboration, and small flights, facilitated male mobility and vital information networks in the face of violence and serious provision shortages.[22] That is not to say that the women got equal recognition, even in the midst of their struggles. As in other contexts, discourses of armed heroism, and citizenship in the nation they contested, were the realm of male entitlement.[23]

At the highest levels of administration, authorities tried to dissuade and defuse the opposition movement. Although they privately discussed the rebellion as a race war, in public addresses, authorities meticulously kept to fraternal language. The arriving captain general, Felipe Rivero, made all outward signs of conciliation, firing a number of offending civil service figures, offering amnesty, and trying to strike an affable tone in his public correspondence. Santana returned to the armed forces when fighting began, and a number of prominent Dominican generals, like General Juan Suero, joined him. Although Suero had resigned after conflicts that included a racist insult, when the fighting resumed in the spring of 1863, he returned to loyalist lines.[24]

No conciliatory discourse could possibly diminish the dynamics of war, however, as military tribunals tried the rebels, sent prisoners in chains to the capital, and on ships to Havana and other sites. Repeatedly, Spanish soldiers threatened and insulted the citizens they encountered. "On occasion some white man would tell a black that if he were in Cuba or Puerto Rico, he would be a slave and would be sold for a certain price," a general later recalled, dispassionately.[25] Soldiers dropped all mask of civility, and they told anyone who would listen that the government was going to send black Dominicans to work on coffee and sugar plantations.[26] Every Dominican in the capital and other towns knew that Madrid papers were printing bitter, racist missives from administrators writing home.[27] Despite Spanish authorities' frequent dissimulation, rebels were clearly mindful of the dynamics at hand. One popular song exulted:

> The whites have already left
> from Yamasá
> What a beating they got![28]

Beginning in late summer 1863, the fighting never stopped. A rebel passport was just as succinct: "The Dominican Republic still lives—liberty or death—and a war of extermination to all Spaniards and their blood."[29]

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Never More Slavery!

The first rebellion explicitly over the threat of reenslavement took place deep in the Cibao valley, only weeks after annexation began. Colonel José Contreras rallied with him a group of men, mostly day laborers, from the town of Moca. Contreras and his allies warned of reenslavement, not of a metaphorical nation, but of friends and neighbors. Spanish observers described the incident as "a mutiny of *morenos*." "If Spanish troops were to withdraw, the pillage and assassination of whites would begin immediately," one concluded.[30] A firing squad shot Contreras and three others on 19 May, the same day the annexation was officially recognized by the queen. On several occasions in later weeks, *La Razón* vehemently reminded its readers "NEVER MORE SLAVERY" while repeating the Spanish promises of annexation, protection, and prosperity.[31] All the talk that first summer was on the "Haitian" mobilization in the center of the island, which had taken place almost simultaneously with Contreras' attempted revolt. A Dominican general, loyal to the Spanish, assured the Crown that the fears of Contreras and his allies were "completely isolated" and wrote, "The state of our troops could not be more satisfactory, and their comportment is unbeatable."[32] "Dominicanos-Españoles" should be "alert to the deceitful suggestions of treason, and trust in your authorities," a Dominican official chided.[33]

Center-island residents' reluctance to return to their homes after Sánchez's and Cabral's simultaneous mobilization that summer demonstrates how widespread these assumptions about slavery were, however, even as annexation was only a few weeks old. Those families uprooted from border towns in the first rebellions of 1861 were terrified to return from Haiti, "continually given false news by the enemies . . . about the poor treatment that those of their class were being given in this territory," an official argued.[34] Hundreds of people remained across the border, anxious about returning, even after an amnesty was announced. Even after the administration offered small amounts of money, appropriated from the indemnity that officials had demanded from Geffrard, residents were only slowly returning.[35] Whole families had fled to Haiti and endured months of dislocation.[36] They continued to trickle in through early spring 1862, nearly one year after the short disturbances.[37] Some parts of the border were quite desolate. "There are barely any resources for housing and subsistence [near Las Matas]; the towns are in a calamitous state," a Spanish official reported.[38] A large handful of men allegedly involved in the 1861 Moca rebellion still languished in the poorly supplied jails a full year later; commissioners advised that they should be tried or released in the short term.[39]

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Slavery discussions continued unabated throughout 1862. A slow boil of unease simmered on the island. As soon as Santiago's military governor had left town, "revolutionary enemies of Spain" immediately tried to sway the morale of the city's residents, "especially the simple country people," the governor complained.[40] He described the provocation: someone, or a group of people, pointed out that the reserves were not being paid and claimed that high-ranking officials had been arrested in the capital. They were telling people, he alleged, of new policies of "all sorts of sacrifices" and "the absurd ideas of slavery."[41] The general mood in the Cibao is "alarming and hostile to the highest degree," the governor reported in December.[42] He blamed "revolutionary enemies" for the rumors that disturbed public order. Warnings of slavery and other abuses proliferated. The four thousand petitioners from Jamaica who opposed annexation—explicitly because they predicted Spain would bring slavery back to Dominican territory—fell silent, but regional eyes were still trained on the island.[43] Journalists in Port-au-Prince compiled and republished accounts of Confederate ships as they stopped at nearby islands; the Confederate *Alabama* regularly docked at Dominican ports.[44] Geffrard's opponents stoked anxiety, suggesting that Spain might offer Haiti to France, and that slavery would take root all over the island.[45] People discussed whether Spain would demand disarmament so that black Dominicans could be enslaved.[46] In Puerto Plata, slavery rumors had circulated for several years. As months of Spanish occupation passed, public signs and graffiti escalated rampant discussions about slavery and direct threats of violence. Fully three months before fighting began in other towns of the north, one prisoner warned his jailers that "this February, the streets will run with Spanish blood."[47] A massive illegal slaving vessel, which almost certainly passed the northern Hispaniola coast, made headlines in Havana that same month.[48] In the capital, authorities continued to check passports of women arriving as domestics, vigilant of slavemasters' attempted smuggling practices.[49]

After the February 1863 uprisings, Rivero suspended civil law and proclaimed the entire island in a state of siege, and a long spring of repression began. In the Cibao, no gatherings larger than three people were permitted after dusk, on the penalty of being shot.[50] The governor created military tribunals to adjudicate the fate of alleged conspirators.[51] As the commissions handed out sentences—hefty jail time and the death penalty—some officials felt uneasy. For one, some of the alleged participants were being condemned in absentia. "It is impossible to defend men I haven't even met," the Spanish *defensor*, a lieutenant, noted with concern.[52] Sabaneta was "new and

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unenlightened [*sin luces*] . . . only recently introduced to the law," another defender argued; he insisted that even the town council members were "rustic and simple laborers" with no formal education.[53] In the capital of the Cibao, Santiago, officials were in a less lenient mood. Members of the city council itself had clearly been involved in the conspiracy, and authorities arrested a number of them as they tried to board ships in Puerto Plata. Military officials decreed that active members of the Reserve Forces caught with suspected rebel conspirators would be shot.[54] A firing squad shot five Dominican men at seven in the morning on 26 April, "in perfect order . . . despite the large crowd of both sexes who had gathered to witness the execution," an authority grimly noted.[55] Authorities executed two more reservists the following week. Martial law, instead of restoring order, caused panic; Cibao residents who had returned to their houses were so alarmed that they fled again. "The towns are practically deserted," Governor Rivero admitted.[56]

Spanish administrators did not raise the specter of race-based conflict openly; they merely called for all Dominicans to remain calm and wrote dismissively of popular fears. Authorities argued that the February 1863 battles were of little importance, and that the country was on a "progressive march."[57] Privately, however, Spanish observers perceived the conflict as a race war. In court cases that summer, a Spaniard claimed that among the "acrimonious enemies" of Spain were implacable race enemies. A certain Santiago "el Francés" reportedly received a promotion in the rebel ranks for "having killed many whites," the witness insisted.[58] In the Cibao valley, "prominent citizens" resisted the incoming rebels, Spanish authorities claimed, and they were violently assaulted, burned, targeted, and killed. "It is supposed that the current rebellion is a race one, since the rebels who have been seen are black, and those against whom the excesses have been committed are whites, counting among those victims some whites: but the lack of details on the matter impede me from confirming this," their report speculated.[59] Governor Rivero pleaded for more troops. He also asked for a new budget for secret police, but funds from Havana arrived very slowly.

The slavery rumors gained further strength and specificity that spring. Many of Santiago's citizens fled to the countryside, where they remained for weeks, until a decree offered amnesty. In one specific incantation, rebels told each other that the Spanish were first slitting the throats of Dominican men and then capturing Dominican women and children, selling them into slavery. Nearly three hundred people hid from authorities on the border. Rejected from asylum in Haiti, they had built a makeshift fort out of cut wood, ready to defend themselves to the last. Luckily, the Spanish officers

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took note that many of the families were unarmed and dispersed the group instead by diplomatic means. "Elderly people, women, and children, truly a disconsolate portrait," an official reported of the return march, appalled.[60] The Dominican loyalist general in Santiago, José Hungria, sent an envoy to talk specifically with the prominent black landowners of the northwest, the Fermin brothers, Furey Fondreu, and a handful of others. Using them, he hoped to convince rural Dominicans not to fear reenslavement.[61] Another Dominican leader urged Santiagueros "of all colors and conditions" to obey Spain. "Let us reject such vile rabble [*canalla*] and group together, blacks and whites, in the shadow of Law . . . and have some patience," he insisted.[62] June edicts repeated slavery's total abolition. Hungria was satisfied with the pacification.

Meanwhile, Santiago's military tribunals of spring 1863 created greater tensions in the city. Authorities insisted on a profound racial taxonomy. They grilled witnesses about the "condition, class, and color of the insurrectionists" and sometimes borrowed terms (like *criollo*) that made little logical sense in the Dominican context. The form of the trials produced another very specific stratification; as a matter of practice, Spanish officers and wealthy merchants testified first, then any Dominican reserve soldiers, then common Dominican men, and finally, any women. In the Santiago trials, the most prominent witnesses against the rebels were prominent Dominicans. Some, like the Grullón family, were wealthy merchants. Others, like Pedro Francisco Bidó, were part of the Spanish government itself.[63] Often Spanish authorities recorded reservist soldiers within proceedings as "laborers," suggesting that the latter category was a blanket categorization for many Dominican men, whose "condition" (as free men), in the scribes' view, also merited constant notice.[64] Following this ontology, Spanish witnesses and wealthy Dominican merchants encouraged dichotomous and color-specific interpretations of the participants. They were "almost all day laborers from the countryside, blacks, with the exception of a few dark *mulatos*," one such observer testified.[65] Spanish authorities diminutively referred to one witness, Dionisio "el Inglés"—probably a free man of color from one of the British islands—as "morenito."[66] When a white man stood accused of joining the rebels, the Spanish officer who reported the incident expressed doubt at his origin. "We have caught a white man, who *says* he was born here," the officer reported.[67] As the trials concluded, a royal order granting sweeping amnesty reached the Cibao.[68] The captain general dissolved the military commission of Santiago and declared the state of siege lifted. He promised to be "humane but

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upright . . . judge me yourself," he urged. General clemency, he warned, could be offered only once.[69]

At the same time that these trials ended in partial conciliation, racist violence escalated in Santiago at the hands of Spanish authorities. Alexander Merriman, a black British subject and resident of Santiago, met the brunt of racist frustration at the hands of Spanish soldiers. Municipal authorities summoned him over a minor matter, but, as they notified him on a Sunday, he did not go. Subsequently, he lodged a complaint with authorities that the police were threatening him. The authorities' response proved profoundly hostile. They told him, "The police have a right to act as they please," and one officer proceeded to beat Merriman with the flat side of a sword on a public street, drag him, prone, to jail, and throw him into a cell, where he continued abusing him. The mayor himself threatened to order the police to "cut him to pieces and kill him, as it was his wish to finish with all the negroes," a distraught and injured Merriman reported. Nor did officials respect his claim to protection as a British citizen; the jailer persisted in national and racial slurs, stuck him in stocks, and continued to beat him severely with a stick as he was bound. Afterwards jail staff locked him in a windowless cell, even as Merriman was bleeding profusely. Only hours later, seeing how much blood he was losing, did the jailer send Merriman to the hospital, then in a critical state. His family brought him everything, as the jailers did not even supply him with water. Weeks passed, and officials filed no charges. British ambassador Hood quickly found himself frustrated at the efforts of local authorities to obstruct inquiry into the incident. More than a month passed—Hood sent the vice-consul from Puerto Plata to Santiago to investigate the matter himself—before Spanish authorities opened an inquiry. Merriman barely survived.[70]

Confidentially, Governor Rivero expressed concern for the long-term stability of the colony and asked for a massive increase in forces and funding. He called for "a very large army, capable of occupying even insignificant sites" in order to "suffocate" resistance on difficult terrain. At a minimum, a heavy presence on the frontier, improved troop transport by water, and at least six infantry divisions were of utmost necessity.[71] Two vessels, real steamships, were needed, he explained, to replace the small frigates currently fulfilling the postal tasks, most of which could not even dock satisfactorily at Dominican ports, much less quickly reach Cuba and Puerto Rico. Chronic supply and treasury shortages suddenly seemed more urgent. Funds were so short that the municipal government of Puerto Plata

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used 760 pesos of private money and borrowed 4,000 more for expenses.[72] The reserves were behind in their pay, and public works—"which should be what drives agriculture and commerce in the territory"—were in a "laughable state; they have not even been begun yet," the governor admitted.[73] The colony's needs so greatly outpaced funding and supplies that he found himself pressed to send a special envoy to Spain.[74] It was impossible "to sustain the interests of national decorum . . . and of the Queen" without addressing money problems, especially given Cuba's slow remission of funds, he maintained. Furthermore, many local officials were not of the "necessary aptitude," he argued grimly, although he conceded that replacing them would cause alarm. While totally decommissioning them would be impolitic, paying them a similar "passive" salary, giving them "some special commission of little importance," or pairing each with an officer of the army might provide a temporary solution, he mused. And the priests were either "totally uneducated . . . or not faithful to the Spanish cause."[75] More land and navy forces were an "absolute necessity," he repeated finally.[76]

A chaotic and volatile scene brewed in the center of the island as rebel leaders, refugee families, residents, and outlaws mingled in the frontier regions and northern Haitian towns. Despite the superficial peace and general amnesty, many did not return to their homes as the authorities intended.[77] In fact, families continued to flee to the countryside, frustrating officials who believed that enemy rumors were more likely to reach *gentes medrosas* (fearful people) outside of urban centers. "I ordered the police to stop the emigration as much as possible without alarming people and to spread news about the rebels, whether or not it was true, that will put a stop to the nonsense stories [*paparruchas*] that they tirelessly sow," one official attested.[78] A number of "the guiltiest and the most compromised" stayed around the center-island region, "uselessly pursued" by the Spanish troops, another general lamented.[79] Some of those freed from jail in the February disturbances in Santiago were reported to be robbing residents that spring—committing "all sorts of robberies, from jewelry to cattle"—and at least one murder.[80] The criminals themselves encouraged the families to remain in the highlands, "out of the fear that they will be persecuted and jailed," the governor lamented.[81]

Santiago authorities, frustrated, dispatched a group of sixty the next month to disperse or capture these alleged criminals, as well as to patrol the province for "bums, drunks, scandalous women, pickpockets," and other undesirable individuals.[82] Haitian officers at Fort Liberté promised coopera-

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tion. This banditry was the "true source of alarm" in the region, authorities concluded, although they simultaneously acknowledged that area residents were sheltering some of the suspects. Rebel leaders, meanwhile, had gone farther than many of the families likely did, spending months of hiding in Cap-Haïtien and other Haitian towns, where military officers offered them supplies, and at least one officer accompanied them to start the fighting again.[83] Chasing them, without any specific leads, the Spanish governor resolved to station troops at the northern border and in Cap-Haïtien.[84] Still, conditions were so unpredictable along the north-coast border that subsequent reports arrived via Puerto Plata and only there, despite Monte Cristi's more central location.[85] Two powerful officers, Buceta and Hungria, traversed the north of the island, leaving troops in Dajabón. Aided by collaborating Haitian authorities, they speculated about the whereabouts of Gregorio Luperón and other rebels. North-coast towns grew hostile; unnamed individuals ambushed a man named Jeronime, who had been serving as a translator for the visiting Spanish envoy, and shot him in his home.[86] By any index, revolutionary energy was intensifying.

They Will Brand Us with an Iron!

When fighting finally exploded again in August 1863, the whole northwest was already alight with insurrection rumors. The Cibao governor knew of the Grito de Capotillo weeks before it happened, and he described, probably accurately, that a thousand Haitian guns were distributed among residents in the northwest in preparation.[87] Area residents apparently hoped for even more help. As one official reported, "Around here the very hot gossip . . . that is agitating the families living here . . . is that on Monday, a fleet of twelve American steamships carrying war supplies and American and Haitian troops will arrive. Your Excellency: everyone says that this information has come from reliable sources, via letters from Haitian residents [of Monte Cristi]."[88]

As the fighting started, Governor Rivero declared a state of siege again, Puerto Rican authorities quickly sent another battalion of troops, and the steamship *Lealtad* mounted a partial naval blockade of Cap-Haïtien. However, a number of northern towns were quickly enveloped. Guayubín burned this time, causing the brutal death of various townspeople. Every day the number of rebels in the hills grew, and the fighting again reached Santiago. On 6 September 1863, the rebels set the richest town in the entire territory ablaze. A terrible fire raged through the streets. The Spanish troops began

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a rapid retreat toward Puerto Plata. An observer of the blaze in Santiago wrote, astounded, "By nightfall, there was already nothing left but rubble and ashes."[89]

At last, Puerto Plata exploded into fighting. Facing five hundred Spanish troops and more reserves, and more arrived to the fort from Santiago, town residents, despite their anticolonial commitments and alarm over slavery, had been slow to erupt. Officials knew almost a week in advance of the impending disorder, and a small volunteer militia of town residents, foreigners, resident Spanish merchants, and Dominicans added to the standing forces.[90] Known troublemakers had been arrested, although one of them, Gregorio Luperón, managed to make a dramatic jail break. The rebels fought with no uniforms, some with no shoes, using weapons stolen from the Spanish or ferried across the border from Haiti. They salvaged a cannon by diving in a nearby shipwreck.[91] The rebels raided government buildings, stole most of the letters and documents therein, and trashed the remaining offices. Hundreds and hundreds took up arms as the Dominican flag was raised over the governor's residence.[92] After the arrival of reinforcements from Santiago de Cuba and Puerto Rico, and after two days of heavy fighting, Spanish forces arrested dozens. Dominican general José Hungria himself oversaw the destruction of rebel trenches in a part of the town called Cafemba. He had been dispatched by a high-ranking Spanish general, with the admonition that residents of the town were the "most insolent and those who think they are invincible."[93]

Describing why they fought, one Puerto Plata rebel spoke of the fear that the Spanish intended to "brand them with an iron, to enslave them and shackle them with iron collars that restricted their head movement, to which a light would be attached to undertake their labors."[94] In light of the collars imposed on men and women laboring in workhouse gangs in Jamaica, these explicit details proved well-founded.[95] The mayor of Puerto Plata called on the help of the Alcalde Pedáneo and "all honorable people" to counteract the slavery propaganda. "The malcontents . . . are just enriching themselves from the disorder as the country becomes poorer and destroys itself," he pleaded.[96] Spanish authorities worried that "the tall tales would excite their spirits and make Dominicans fight to the death."[97] Alarming rumors in the surrounding countryside of Puerto Plata reported that the Spanish were killing everyone and burning everything in their path. The families of the town were fleeing not only to the countryside but to nearby islands as a result, the mayor reported.[98] On 4 October, Puerto Plata burned as Santiago had done. For three days, the fire raged, burning twelve hundred houses to the ground.

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Homeless families scattered to the countryside or to the fort, held by the Spanish.[99] Spanish officers wrote in awe of the rebels' commitment.[100]

Townspeople joined the roving small guerrilla bands that traveled from town to town, disrupting Spanish administration where they could. It was often women who spread the news of coming insurrection; they traveled from house to house and on the roads at the edge of towns, calling on their neighbors to flee to the countryside, often just hours before the fighting began. Likewise, women spread other information that one side or the other had already won, and when it was safe to return. Still others warned those fleeing along one route to take another, as there were Spanish soldiers poised to ambush. Sometimes individuals ignored these warnings (and were subsequently apprehended).[101] Those groups on the move also relied on their knowledge of the surrounding countryside for tactical advantage, often heading off the Spanish at rivers where they might seek to water their horses. Reported a Spanish official with frustration, "The movement counts on leaders who know the terrain perfectly. And in such a mountainous country, too, one can only conclude that the immediate presence of a much larger number of troops can paralyze the progress of the revolution."[102] With limited evidence, it seems like these slavery warnings might sometimes have traveled as documents with the rebels from place to place. Cayetano Velázquez, the leader in the first, tiny Neiba uprising, was the only one in the group of townspeople who knew how to read.[103]

Beyond slavery warning letters, documents threatened and intimidated in other ways. When rebels arrived in towns, their first target was often the municipal building, where they would destroy Spanish records, and sometimes set the building alight. This action was a symbolic and concrete measure to destroy colonial authority, leaving officials scrambling to reestablish criminal cases and other paperwork.[104] "Given that the fire in Santiago has reduced it completely to ashes, it is presumable that the criminal cases, papers, and other documents of the circuit court have been destroyed," officials noted.[105] In Puerto Plata, rebels did the same, annihilating not only the files but even the furniture of the governor's offices and the town council.[106] So well known was this tactic of archive destruction that the queen issued a royal order commanding their reestablishment in reconquered municipalities in January 1864.[107] Other rebel tactics had more symbolic significance; someone killed the much-hated Brigadier Buceta's horse, for example.[108] Often, someone lowered the Spanish flag and cut it to pieces. In Guayubín, rebels confiscated an image of the Virgin Mary from the town church and paraded it about, "with the fanatic idea it might help them," the Spanish witnesses critically

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observed.[109] In the early 1863 Santiago uprising, too, someone took a Virgin of the Rosary and carried it through the streets.[110]

Within two months rebellion spread well to the east. In Hato Mayor, rebels proclaimed the restoration of the Dominican Republic at four in the morning on 2 October, without so much as a drop of blood spilled. Residents were convinced that the Spanish had chains and stocks sitting off the coast at the ready, and that defeat might mean the Spanish would enslave them for life.[111] They asked for volunteer reinforcements to arrive as military aid, "as friends and good Dominicans." The rebels' reclamation of Hato Mayor lasted barely five days, but fighting raged elsewhere.[112] Authorities wrote to the capital reporting heavy losses. Dominican guerrilla groups cut off Brigadier Buceta so completely from the rest of the Spanish forces—having retreated from Dajabon to somewhere deeper into Haiti—that the other Spanish commanders could only speculate about his whereabouts for nearly two weeks, and he barely escaped with his life. The valley town of Moca fell, trapping eighty Spanish troops inside the fort. La Vega soon followed, with rebel ranks there swelling as high as two thousand. In Santiago, outside of the reserves, anyone who had a weapon of any kind—even a machete—had only until noon the same day to turn it in at the fort, in exchange for a receipt.[113] Spanish authorities opened military courts in Santiago and in the capital.

Rural Dominican camps filled with Spanish captives, collaborators, and escaped prisoners. Editors of the *Boletín Oficial* proudly printed the names of forty Spaniards who had defected to rebel Dominican citizenship, either freely or after arriving at camp as prisoners of war.[114] One Spanish soldier reported that in his five-month captivity, he was verbally mistreated but paid the same wage as every other rebel soldier, in exchange for trench digging and other noncombat tasks.[115] The rebels also did not abuse the nearly five hundred other Spanish captives, he noted, although conditions did not bode well for the injured. A remarkable letter in Cantonese survives in the Cuban archive describing how some entered camp:

> The three of us walked along . . . [until] we met a *wu kwai* officer. We were glad to meet him [and] he was happy. . . . [The second] camp has Chinese people as well, and the three of us are very good here. You guys do not have to worry about us, now the *wu kwai* have 16,000 people. They eat a lot of pork and beef here. Now, we are writing you this letter to tell you that if someone comes near this area, come in the daytime and do not come at night! Please hold a green leaf stick so the *wu kwai* officers will know.[116]

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Not everyone integrated into the camps peacefully. Some of the escaped prisoners were themselves quite violent men. Chinese laborer Macsimo Segundo, jailed for murder in Havana and subsequently transferred to Samaná, repeatedly assaulted other prisoners. In the Dominican camp, he refused to work, and some wanted to kill him. Under the cover of night, he fled back to the Spanish to turn himself in. Authorities remitted him back to prison in Samaná briefly, but then dispatched him to Puerto Plata to work on the fort.[117] Others continued to flee the Spanish. Another Chinese prisoner, Roberto, critically injured a Spanish prison guard in his escape to the Dominican lines. (Along with Segundo, he accounted for a total of four cases of laborer convicts fleeing in just a few weeks' time.)[118]

Santo Domingo was the stronghold of the administration. In the spring, the governor confidently announced that residents condemned rebellions with "reprobation and disgust," and he publicized the establishment of a volunteer militia in the capital composed "of good Spaniards from both hemispheres."[119] However, small acts of insubordination proliferated. One low-ranking Dominican officer, drunk, began insulting Spanish soldiers, as nearby townspeople leaving Good Friday services flocked to witness the disturbance. The priest tried to disperse the crowd. "This blind political passion of some, more or less drunks and disturbers of the peace in any time, [has transformed into] ranting against the Spanish and their government," an official warned.[120] Someone stole all the decrees that had been affixed to signs in the public square, leaving only the two closest to the guard post untouched.[121] Some of the early spring rebels had been brought to the capital city to work on chain gangs; although there is no record of their reception, the group was likely a startling sight.[122] By late spring, the Spanish were so on guard that soldiers were ordered to walk around with weapons loaded and swords tightly adjusted.[123] It was a long, hot summer in the capital; the prices of many food staples rose by 300 percent.[124]

Fighting reached near the outskirts of the city, as Dominican general Pedro Florentino faced off with Spanish general José de la Gándara. An article in *La Razón* urged calm:

> Gossip. There is no lack of it in the city, but it is absolutely rampant in the countryside. . . . Do not be fearful, our peasants, show yourselves to be deaf to the tall tales of those apostles of gossipry [*chismografía*], and come to the city without fear to sell your fruits and vegetables. Everything is calm here. No one is being detained, nor are they seizing anyone's packs, and men, women, and children enter the City daily, buy, sell, and

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Fig. 5.1 Letter, in Cantonese, from a man who escaped a Spanish prison on the island (probably Samaná). He describes the meat-heavy rations, black officers, and welcoming conditions of the Dominican camp.

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speculate, and go back to their homes calm and satisfied. Come, come without fear, because no one is impeding your entry or exit.[125]

In areas of traditional black settlement around the capital and the center-island south, Spanish troops met determined, defiant resistance and tales of great heroism. Word around the old sugar plantations and southern maroon communities held that Restoration fighter General José Melenciano, from Haina, "lado de los Naranjos," had a *resguardo* that prevented him from being killed by bullets.[126] Melenciano took his men into the Cibao region. His group was one of the few that traveled in this direction.[127] "[The division of race] is nowhere more prevalent than in the Santo Domingo Province," the Spanish governor reported, confidentially, "in the jurisdictions of San Cristóbal and Ozama, where the old sugar mills were on the Island and where the African race has the largest population. Those who were enslaved are still alive, even if elderly. Their children who knew their parents as slaves have black children of their own, and they cannot but look at the present day with horror."[128] Many around Azua and Baní burned sugar plantations, took their animals, and headed into the mountains.[129]

Men outside the capital mobilized in brazen proximity to authorities. Spanish soldiers reported "large groups of blacks" gathering at the city walls, armed with machetes.[130] Spanish authorities suspected one black Dominican man, a resident of the old *extramuro* community of San Carlos, of being "Haitian" for reasons of his dress and skin color. It seems he had donned his uniform from the Unification period. "A suspicious man, a black . . . with a Haitian-looking hat," Spanish officials recorded of the sixty-year-old Francisco de los Dolores.[131] Interrogated about where he had gotten his uniform, he insisted that it was from when he was a soldier in the time of the republic, but neither his age, his marriage, nor his "very good Spanish" could free him of Spanish suspicion.

As 1863 closed in a whirlwind of fighting, loyalists to Spain blamed propagandists, agitators, Haiti, and anyone they could for spreading slavery rumors. The authors of the branding rumor on the north coast had been "voices against whites and the Spanish," an official concluded.[132] In one instance—several years into the occupation—a young Baní man corroborated stories that claimed rebels were reading letters about slavery to the public. "They read it to most of the people in town, that the whites were going to enslave the blacks, and seeing that most people in town were leaving, I left, too," he reported.[133] Officials of all statures attempted to squelch the rumor. A colony-wide decree read: "Unauthorized men, false interpreters

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of public opinion . . . have transformed the rich and fertile *comarcas* of this island into a theater of horrible crimes. . . . Dominicans, listen to the voice that is not trying to deceive you, the one that is most interested in prosperity for this beautiful land: those who tell you that it is possible to reestablish slavery here are knowingly lying, once the Queen declared it *abolished once and for all in this Province*."[134] "The war has taken on an aspect of race, leaving aside political discontent or nationality," the governor wrote, "and those in Seibo and those in the Cibao have formed a common defensive mass."[135] Men and women, young and old, felt this way. "The rebellion is of the black man against the white man," he concluded.[136] "The people of Puerto Plata are very eager to fight, even though they have few munitions and are receiving even fewer," one foreign resident confirmed. "They wrap themselves in the idea that if the Spanish beat them, they will make them slaves."[137]

Forced to Fight against Your Brothers

Spanish authorities scrambled to counter the guerrilla offensives. Brigadier Buceta, humiliated, described a fantastical—and probably apocryphal—account in which he claimed he had thrown gold coins at approaching Dominicans to distract them (or at least purchase his escape).[138] Disorder in the northern valleys, the portal for tobacco commerce, deeply affected the Cibao. Merchants and growers alike suffered from the lost profits, despite a four-month debt reprieve. Authorities scrambled for prison labor to rebuild and improve area roads.[139] In Puerto Plata itself, all governing was paralyzed—surviving documents had been sequestered to the fort—but the town was largely empty, anyway.[140] A Dominican general, José Hungria, assaulted insurgent encampments, leaving piles of corpses of his countrymen in his wake.[141]

Spanish authorities and loyal Dominicans argued that the fighting sprang from factionalism or banditry. Some rebel officers were former Buenaventura Báez loyalists, and Santana heartily encouraged this interpretation.[142] Báez himself was actually in Spain (and had come to support the annexation), but pro-Spanish pamphlets excoriated him just the same.[143] Governor Rivero referred extensively to internecine party competition of the independence period.[144] "Disgraced generals, sold to Haiti and later bribed by Báez, . . . wanted to create discord," Dominican official Manuel de Jesús Galván concurred, disapprovingly.[145] In simultaneous aspersion, authorities called the movement anarchic and argued that rebels were merely following their urges for personal gain, excess, and disorder.[146] A *Razón* editorial challenged: "The

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monster of rebellion has reared its head, and we ask it anxiously: what is your goal? What do you want? What principles do you proclaim! Ay! Too soon we have the reply. . . . the goals and principles of the rebels who infest the Cibao can be reduced to this horrible formula: killing and destruction."[147] Rebels were "without cause or motive," the governor concluded. "In their vandal acts and impotent rage, they have burned the town of Guayubín . . . and they have killed unarmed and injured men . . . humanity and civilization condemn it." He appealed to the public, "These criminals—can they be called your brothers? No, because you are simple and honorable and could not be associated with arsonists and assassins. . . . You desire good for the country," he argued, concluding, "and the rebels only want to exterminate all prosperity."[148] Another loyalist urged gratitude: "Remember how afflicted we were when we sought the help of the Queen and of Spain." Of the queen's pardons in the spring, the writer chided, "The ink has not even dried on the generous amnesty decrees."[149] Santana called for "brotherhood" with peninsular soldiers and called "bravery and loyalty . . . always our only currency."[150] He urged, "Soldiers, sons of Dominican soil, you who have always heard my voice . . . you will not waver in following me!"[151] "Dominicans: when someone passes by your homes and tries to fool you, treat him like an enemy," the governor implored.[152]

The loyalist press of the capital scrambled to scold insurrection, encourage order and obedience, and sanction male responsibility. Imaginative editorials lavished praise on loyalist acts. An editorial in *Razón* praised "some gravely injured veterans" who offered their only mount, a "skinny horse or burro," to an ailing woman on the road from Santiago to Puerto Plata. Their masculine-heroism-cum-selflessness did not stop there; the veterans had defended a number of other women and even carried their infants, the writer recounted. A nameless soldier ("who died before we could know his name") carried a six-month-old all the way to the northern coast, the columnist continued. "It is comforting, in the presence of the extreme crimes that have been and are continuing to be committed in the Cibao, to contemplate the contrast that such a spectacle makes with the noble and humanitarian conduct of the defenders of order . . . , confident in their magnanimity," he concluded.[153] "Women and children have fallen at the mercy of the sacrilegious bullets of the rebels," another journalist proclaimed, scandalized. One poor child was shot in the arm; another "woman had an infant to her breast, and was killed exercising one of the most sanctified tasks of nature!"[154] "Mass murders, the destruction of entire towns by fire, plundering of fields,

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unjust imprisonment, and all acts of violence [*tropelías*] against all types of property, have deprived women, children, and the elderly of sustenance and reduced them to indigence, making it impossible to live if they do not seek help from the government," the governor announced in a public decree.[155]

Spanish entreaties to the rebels were similarly gendered. In Puerto Plata's diaspora, women kept families together and fed. Of the Dominicans who sought refuge in the fort in the following months, almost all the families were headed by women. Just ten adult men joined the 253 families gathered there.[156] Loyalist Dominican Antonio Alfau made a plea to a rebel general, citing his own "gentlemanly" instincts, the mothering impulses of the Spanish queen, and the familial bonds that supposedly tied the island to its former metropole:

> You are still in time to save yourselves, your beloved country, your women and children, who you have in the *montes* and who will very soon die of hunger and misery if you do not take the loyal hand I am extending to you. Spain is not an enemy of ours. . . . She is our most tender mother, who sacrifices for our happiness. . . . remember the Queen is the granddaughter of Isabel the Catholic, who gave us the religion we profess, who gave us our language, our gentle laws, who made us everything that we are. . . . Remember the unhappy women and children who you have in misery, forgotten by God; here they will be given food to eat and everything they need. . . . [But if you reject us] . . . expect nothing.[157]

To underscore his points, Alfau had his missive delivered by a woman.

La Razón and government edicts announced pro-Spanish victories and bravery as they excoriated rebel cowardice. "I rush to put these reports in your hands, for the satisfaction of all the loyal inhabitants of this Spanish Province," the notes often concluded, and Rivero preferred to sign off as "Your Captain General."[158] Government decrees were inane in their detail, announcing even the smallest spoils of war. One account of a victory reported that forces "made the insurrectionists flee in all directions, leaving us one ox and one pack horse, complete with supplies."[159] A number of Dominicans received official recognition from the Crown for their efforts. "For your loyal and noble conduct, I give you thanks in the name of the Queen, her government, and with all my heart," Rivero's decree read. He reminded the Dominicans of the queen's "untiring generosity . . . as the Mother of all Spaniards"; as for the Spanish nation itself, it was a "brother." He reiterated promises of peace and profit from the beginning of his tenure and urged Dominicans to "gain a love of work, the source of all public wealth." Jus-

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tice would be swift but effective for the rebel leaders, he promised. "The rebellion will be defeated and punished. . . . Stay tranquil and loyal," Rivero appealed.[160] He wrote empathetically: "I am sorry for what has happened: authorities can never look at blood nor tears with indifference, but when they have a duty to carry out, they do so, even at the price of their emotions. This is the sad mission that social good demands of me, and I will fulfill it in the least painful way possible."[161]

Loyalist Dominicans included prominent island-born generals fighting alongside Spanish troops: José Hungria, Antonio Alfau, Eusebio Puello, Juan Suero, and Santana himself, among others. The Crown awarded Hungria the Great Cross of Isabel as recognition for his military feats; Santana had been similarly showered with laurels. Authorities published General Antonio Abad Alfau's victories in national bulletins. "Long live the Prince of Asturias! Long live the Queen!" he exhorted.[162] Valuing fealty and military discipline, loyalist officers were some of the staunchest Spanish bulwarks, and they resented the defection of other Dominican officers particularly. General Juan Suero bristled that General Gregorio de Lora had lied to his face about fidelity to Spain only the night before an attack (and was given weapons); Lora became an instrumental rebel in the Puerto Plata August movement. "I consider officers and leaders of the Reserves, who are receiving a salary either active or passive, to be defaulting on a sacred obligation," Suero penned indignantly.[163] Dominican officers' classification status remained a public debate. A general in the reserves took it upon himself to forward to the governor a list of former officers who, for "unknown reasons," had been classified as passive and thus denied military service. The men, mostly from Azua and the capital, felt that they had been needlessly "stuck with the useless men," and thus deprived of the means to buy basic goods. The petition asked for a restoration of their status and full benefits, in exchange for recognition of the "services they have offered and their faithfulness in such precarious times," the general explained. The petition was left unresolved.[164]

Pockets of loyalism to Spain, particularly in the south, buoyed the capital. Azua seemed wholly tranquil. The all-Dominican, eight-member municipal government of Azua condemned the rebels; "We come to deplore the scandalous and criminal acts that have just taken place in some parts of the Cibao, raising once again rebellion and abusing the generous pardon of our August and generous Queen," they accused. The period of the republic was "nineteen years of continual struggle, ever obstructing prosperity and order," they added.[165] The governor alleged that "all of Baní" was loyal,

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and that those who had fled "are back tranquilly in their houses, under the protection of the brave Army."[166] Even in the Cibao, wealthier loyalists, especially merchants, stood their ground. Some prominent families offered buildings for military use. Provincial governors organized militia of volunteers to add to the Spanish ranks, even arranging nominal pay; La Vega managed to raise seventy volunteers, for example.[167] The municipal government of La Vega criticized area rebels as "lazy, perverse, and undeserving of the title of citizen" who had "suggested such disloyal ideas" to loyal and obedient inhabitants.[168] In early 1864, Santiago itself was briefly in the power of loyalists again.[169] Businesses ran at something approximating normalcy; a few prominent Dominican merchants, like Don Juan Francisco García, were helping the Spanish extensively. It was his conviction that all the merchants wanted the Spanish government back, as did many of the residents of nearby Moca, he maintained. The governor was quick to publicly thank town councils for "loyal and patriotic" sentiments. In the capital, Josefa A. Perdomo dedicated an elegy to Rivero, expressing gratitude for his "constant wish . . . to return to us peace and prosperity." Josefa A. Del Monte replied to Perdomo, calling her lazy and ambitious. "[Queen] Isabel is waiting for you in her palace," the second poet chided.[170]

A new Spanish official, Carlos de Vargas, replaced Rivero as governor after just more than a year. Loyal observers were optimistic about his reception, despite the very compromised military situation. "There appears to be a better feeling since the arrival of the present Captain General, who appears so far to be an honorable and just ruler," the U.S. commercial agent reported.[171] In a confidential letter, the captain general expressed his grave concerns to the Overseas Ministry. "It is difficult for you to imagine, Excellent Sir, how far this extremely critical and dangerous situation can carry on," Vargas confided, praising Santana and La Gándara for fighting bravely. "I must inspire confidence in the country . . . as the first step of pacification," he wrote, "and . . . the show of adherence and cooperation from many influential men of the country . . . make me think I can achieve it." Meanwhile, though, the governors of Cuba and Puerto Rico "cannot afford to send even one more soldier," he lamented.[172] The incoming governor addressed the Provincial Reserves and Spanish forces together: "A few rebels have put this Antille, worthy of a better fate, into a terrible state. . . . They have relied on arson, robbery, assassination and horrific destruction to regain a freedom they have already been guaranteed." Protect "the peaceful and honest man, and help him immediately return to his home," he urged the troops.[173] About seventy soldiers fighting with Santana received special recognition for a

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particularly brutal 29 September fight at Arroyo Bermejo, and the governor promised publicly that order would soon return everywhere.

Strained resources, poor infrastructure, the demands of war, and successful guerrilla blockades crippled the administration. Public works everywhere were in "total paralysis."[174] Azuan authorities reported they had "absolutely no funds," no resources to care for the prisoners, little security, and no way to continue trials.[175] Soon, food was scarce and the town was totally empty. Rebels in and around the town burned farms, moved the livestock, and blocked supply lines. Only small amounts of food arrived by boat from the capital.[176] Government documents went unsigned for months. When towns became "empty and depopulated," authorities left some municipal posts unfilled, simply to save money.[177] Absenteeism was a problem even where government functioned. Interim regulations created sign-in logs for administrators to prove their attendance, and leaves became strictly unpaid. Troubled officials acknowledged the new restrictions but complained, in light of food scarcity and fighting, "It endangers those who are truly suffering."[178] Military officials filled empty civilian posts, sometimes poorly. When an infantry colonel became provisional governor of Samaná in the late summer of 1863—as other authorities left for the fighting in Santiago—he played fast and loose with his authority. To defend the peninsula, he selected the hundred or so "European" (presumably Spanish) convicts and gave them guns. Chaos ensued. The convicts menaced the residents, made racist threats, robbed stores, and caused many families to flee.[179] The interim governor's apparent failure to properly punish the transgressors frustrated residents further. He spent his nights sleeping on a ship off the coast, diffident and unaccountable. "I can't say this was the one and only cause of the uprising in Samaná, but I cannot think of another one to report," a reservist observed.[180]

Women in loyalist towns navigated increased tensions. As in other Caribbean towns, laundry work forged noisy, public, feminine spaces where women's labor monopoly earned them bargaining power with municipal officials, but where the public nature of their tasks could also make them targets of discursive and physical violence.[181] Laundry women found themselves before Santo Domingo's military tribunal. Sometimes, they instigated the inquest. In one case in the capital, two women (émigrées from Santiago) turned on a man, Manuel Guerrero, alleging that he had called the Spanish "whores," that he "had a pistol to shoot them all," and that he was part of a suspicious meeting. Guerrero—a bricklayer, just twenty years old, and of marginal means—retorted that he had only been detained because of the ill

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will the two women had for him. He had been attending wake, not a suspicious meeting, he protested, and he proceeded to name a number of people who had also been in attendance. Five washerwomen, divided in their accounts, testified at Guerrero's trial. Two reported that Guerrero yelled abusive remarks at them for attending a dance with Spanish officers, hosted at another woman's house. One of the women bragged that she had reported "the black" the next day to the same Spanish officers, for having "insulted her and spoken poorly of the Spanish." Authorities sentenced Guerrero to one month in jail, but he languished for nearly two until he was freed.[182] Other capital city women faced death threats for relations with Spanish men.[183] In the opening fighting of Santiago, rebel men shouted to a small group of women who had remained with the Spanish, "We're going to chop off your and the other four whores' heads"; another woman was murdered for her supposed treason of cohabiting with a Spaniard.[184]

Throughout the east, rebels engaged in the delicate politics of solidarity, secrecy, and trust as they tried to recruit their friends and neighbors. Letters suggested that verbal communication was best. "Let's meet so that I can tell you certain very important, secret things," one officer urged another.[185] Even discussions were not necessarily safe. In Bayaguana, authorities jailed reservist soldier José de la Cruz on suspicion of convincing his fellow soldiers to join the revolution and flee to the mountains "to meet up with the Cibaeños." One witness, Teodisio Contreras, divulged the entire conversation he had with his fellow soldier, whom he knew as Pepe. In the street at the center of town, de la Cruz had spoken to Contreras frankly, "Man, I am going to tell you something, and I think as a friend you won't give me up. And even if you do and they kill me, tomorrow there will be another person, who will kill you. I am going to join up tonight . . . come with me, or if you don't want to go, don't go, and when we arrive, I won't shoot you." De la Cruz had carefully thought about his tangled allegiances; he reassured another soldier again that "he would not harm Dominicans, just the Spanish," even if that man decided to remain loyal to the colonial forces. Unfortunately for de la Cruz, Contreras left for his barracks and told his sergeant immediately. Officials declared an embargo on de la Cruz's goods, but five months later annulled it—he had no possessions to embargo.[186] Other appeals employed similarly intimate terms. "Countryman—Brother and Friend," another writer began. "This letter doesn't seek to say anything except to say we hope that you enjoy the same feelings, and that as a result of this communication you will raise the Dominican flag. . . . Here it is reigning with high enthusiasm. Long Live Religion, Liberty, the Dominican Republic, and Perfect Union!"[187] "In

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all of the Cibao, the Dominican flag is flying," the writer reported. The letter bore a handwritten letterhead ambitiously announcing the return of independence: "The Dominican Republic—God, Country, and Liberty."

Fighting threatened to tear communities apart, but rebels were initially optimistic and conciliatory. In some of the early fighting in Puerto Plata, rebel commanders gave explicit orders not to shoot Dominicans fighting alongside Spanish troops, for example. Spanish authorities spread stories that the rebels were shooting loyal Dominican families, although the rumor never held much traction.[188] In Hato Mayor, a rebel letter from 1863 read encouragingly, "We have come here like brothers, and it is a revolution of principle for which we need nothing more than unity and fraternity among Dominicans." No one wanted "even a drop of blood to be spread . . . *vivan todos los dominicanos*," the letter announced reassuringly.[189] A rebel general entreated Dominicans in the reserves, "Let us not engage in a fratricidal war of hate." He continued, "I know you come forced to fight against your brothers; put down your arms or come join the ranks of liberty."[190] "Dominicans! . . . do not let yourself be seduced by the vile interests with which they try to buy your services, to make you brandish arms against your brothers and your homeland," another pleaded.[191] "Leave the lines who are assassinating your brothers," another urged a prominent rebel general.[192] "The friendship you have always shown me . . . and Christian obedience . . . [and the memory] of your noble fighting in Santiago in 1852 oblige me to write this note," one general publicly addressed General Antonio Alfau. His tone was deferential. "Even though I am not worthy of your attention, listen to what I am telling you, for no child wants bad things for his father," he urged. "But no matter what, I am a republican, and I can do nothing less than fulfill my duties as a citizen," he continued. "Santo Domingo's children do not want to fight with you nor General Santana. . . . We do not want war without fathers . . . but if you do, we will fight to the last bullet."[193] A reservist soldier in an early battle replied to such sentiments, "Everyone in Cibao should die for being traitors."[194]

As chaos swept to each town—even if it did not remain in the hands of the rebels—municipal governments' problems multiplied exponentially. In accordance with the governor's orders, all officials and prisoners from Azua evacuated to the capital city in mid-October, for example. Three months later (December), they returned, but officials from more northern cities (including La Vega) fled subsequently to the safety of the capital. Samaná, previously peaceful, was almost totally deserted by early December. As 1863 wound to a close, Spanish troops clung to the southern towns, with their

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eyes on the rebellious Cibao. Despite heavy fighting in nearby Llamasá, the capital remained a Spanish stronghold. Governor Vargas continued the practice of publishing victories, although his tone wavered slightly; the narrative strayed from "quick and shameful retreats" of rebels to admitting "sustained fighting." He continued to thank those loyal to the "cause of order," promising medals and praising loyalist bravery. Privately, he described a more complex situation. "Many of color join our ranks, especially from Azua and Seybo, but they stay just fifteen or twenty days, and then they leave to organize parties of bandits," he decried. Those groups troubled local residents, he claimed, "who [themselves] are gathered and armed to care for their plots and land and cannot be called enemies of ours, but neither can their loyalty be counted on."[195] Even in southern towns, flight caused the line between resident and rebel to be indistinguishable. "The Spaniards are making no progress whatever," one man observed. "Wherever they go, the people get out of their sight."[196]

Puerto Plata, strategically vital, exemplified the worst entrenchment of the conflict. As fighting cut off north-south communication, news from Santiago and Puerto Plata could reach the capital only by boat, and vice versa.[197] As Spanish forces dug in, their control did not extend much beyond the fort. Spanish troops "enthusiastically destroyed enemy trenches," Puerto Plata's mayor reported, but they could not sleep outside. Within the walls, soldiers celebrated Queen's Day, "as far as was possible, with good morale and monarchical sentiment," a commander reported; he also reported sporadic exchanges of gunfire.[198] With just a short cease-fire at Christmas, the siege and sporadic confrontations continued. Unlike in some other municipalities, officials decided that evacuating the port officials to Santo Domingo would be "embarrassing," and only the mayor made the trip. Battles continued at bayonet point around the ruins of the church. Periodic rumors of large numbers of rebels arriving from the west bolstered rebel morale, but Spanish troops dug in their heels to cries of "Long live the queen!"

The fighting swept up whole families, willingly or otherwise. Some testified to military commissions that they had been held against their will. One man who had left Puerto Plata's limits to find food on his farm was captured for two weeks, he claimed, and he suffered constant death threats and only barely escaped. Rebels took his clothing and other possessions, he lamented.[199] Area rebels gathered forces using "threats and terror," Puerto Plata officials accused.[200] Concerned parents accused disgruntled reservists of attempting to "seduce" their sons. The rebels drafted whole towns. In San Cristóbal, a handwritten decree from "the Junta of this town,

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in the name of the Dominican Republic" announced that all those aged sixteen to sixty were to take up arms for defense of the country, to report for duty within forty-eight hours.[201] Both Spanish and Dominican authorities pressured low-level *alcaldes pedaneos* to help recruit townspeople.[202] Rebels warned the local authorities to help the Dominican cause or "be subject to the same penalties [as traitors]."[203] A number of prominent loyalist families in the Cibao had to flee. Some traveled with the Spanish forces or fled to be with the rebels for protection. Remaining in town was physically dangerous but also presented the possibility of sedition charges.[204] Exiled men pleaded for the right to return, invoking the amnesties of early spring. "All are peaceful and honorable men . . . who want to live quietly in their homes with their families," one letter pleaded.[205] Some testified that some of their family—brothers, godfathers, and so on—had been caught up with the rebels, causing families to lose contact.[206] Given the scattered nature of the fighting, Spanish troops could not stay long in any one place, and people worried that "the grave scenes would repeat," especially pillage, as they left. Rebels grabbed what guns and munitions that remained, and then moved on themselves. Sometimes they seized the animals of locals suspected of aiding the Spanish, like one man suspected of ferrying water to the Spanish holed up in a fort.[207]

Given the fires that overtook many towns, often there was little to which people could return. Puerto Plata had burned nearly to the ground in October 1863. For the fire and for the pillaging that followed, the Spanish blamed the rebels, the rebels blamed the Spanish, and merchants and families simply faced destitution.[208] Small groups of Dominican vigilantes harassed Spanish troops who descended from the fort to protect property, Puerto Plata's mayor reported, chagrined. Because he believed there were many more rebels just outside the town, there was little to be done.[209] Baní burned that fall, too, sixty-eight buildings in all, including many of the important stores in the town. Only heavy rains saved some houses. The U.S. commercial agent observed, "No matter where the Spaniards go . . . , when the Dominicans see that they are not able to hold a place, they prefer to lay it in ashes, rather than suffer the Spaniards to take possession and hold it."[210] Small towns like Guayubín were just a collection of huts, basically defenseless, and even the Spanish admitted that the arriving rebels were kind and "humanitarian" in the early spring.[211] As the town was swept into rebellion again, however, a number of citizens died in the fires. When Spanish general La Gándara arrived in Barahona in early 1864, he found it burned and abandoned. A rebel writer lamented, "Fire, the devastation of our towns, wives without

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husbands, children without their parents, the loss of all of our livelihood, and finally misery—these are the fruits we have won."[212]

"Santo Domingo Don't Want Whites": Trenches Deepen

Many Dominicans remained away from their homes, and the Spanish could neither defeat the rebels nor return to everyday administration. Authorities offered a second round of political amnesty (for all but the accused "ringleaders") in August, and another as the new governor, Carlos de Vargas, took power. They bristled at what they saw as the hubris of the popular Dominican reply: few took it, few returned to their homes, and many continued to travel with the guerrilla bands that now traversed most of the country.[213] Prisoners freed by the rebels or during the chaos that swept through were in something of a predicament: they were unsure whether they could return to their homes. Because the destruction of court records had erased their legal status, former prisoners preferred the countryside, rebel lines, or even flight to foreign countries over the prospect of retrial by the Spanish. And, as one official complained, "They can hide themselves for eternity." Given these "anomalous circumstances," multiple capital city authorities argued that a tabula rasa of sorts ought to be established—not a published amnesty, per se, but rather the policy of reopening court cases only for those who newly committed themselves to the rebel cause.[214] Authorities condemned prominent rebels to death in absentia, so their exile was more certain. "All the reflections, deference, and benefits are totally useless with idiot people who are without education or civilization who have lived for decades in the woods, with only the wildest of occupations," Governor Carlos de Vargas fumed in a confidential letter.[215]

As the guerrilla opposition spread everywhere, the discipline of Spanish soldiers faltered. Newly arriving soldiers described Dominican rebels nonchalantly as "the enemy": "Long live Spain! Long live the Queen! . . . To the bayonets!"[216] Among the exhausted ground troops, however, the most common infractions came to be insubordination, obscenity, drunken soldiers leaving their posts, dereliction in prisoner surveillance, theft, fighting, dressing as a civilian, and outright desertion.[217] Murder cases occasionally gripped the military courts; a December 1863 Puerto Plata murder case, involving two soldiers from the Isabel II regiment, caused official stir as far as Havana.[218] A fight between a Spanish soldier and a Dominican cart driver in the capital proved fatal for the latter, but authorities exculpated the soldier on the grounds of self-defense.[219] One soldier, so frightened of his sentence for having shot a local man, fled the military hospital, only to be apprehended

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the following day.[220] Both robbery and murder seem to have increased as the fighting ground on; soldiers stood accused of stealing and reselling provisions, assaults on each other, and robberies against Dominican citizens.[221] A few of the cases in Puerto Plata and Azua involved massive theft, of the sort that might only be effected in a chaotic port town; 500 bottles of wine, 9,732 rations of *galletas*, 49,551 rations of coffee, and so on.[222] In one instance, a whole trunk of money went missing, in the amount of 9,000 pesos.[223]

Discipline of the Provincial Reserves also suffered, leaving Spanish authorities exasperated and suspicious. High-profile defection of Dominican generals put Spanish nerves on edge; among the rank and file, absenteeism was just as destructive, if more inscrutable. A considerable number deserted in the early months—in one instance, nearly five hundred people.[224] As 1863 wore on, trials for soldiers who had left the lines to return to their homes—for sojourns of varying lengths—increased. Often, it was unclear whether lax military discipline, family obligations, or rebel affiliation was to blame, and the soldiers were frustratingly negligent in the eyes of the military authorities. Deserters—in time of war, no less—faced extraordinarily strict sentences, even capital punishment. One reserves soldier, facing eight years, was only going to see his family, taking them a squash, "as he had done during times of the republic," his defense observed.[225] Townspeople came to the defense of soldiers.[226] Some claimed they had sought and gained verbal permission for leave.[227] Others claimed abduction by the rebels, a defense that could not easily be disproven. The Spanish commissions saw no easy resolution.[228] Even officers faced lengthy jail terms.[229] Some tried petitioning for release. San Carlos resident Estanislao Dusablon, a young married carpenter, entreated the governor to release him to return to his profession in order to be able tend to his family, "suffering from the hardest misery." "My poor family," he repeated.[230] Authorities were exceedingly suspicious of those who came and left repeatedly, "all while wearing the Spanish sash." "The Provisional militia are doing no other service than informing the guerrillas," one confidential report concluded bitterly, but Spanish officers could do little to prevent them.[231] A Dominican reserves lieutenant captured one spy, Daniel Rosario, as he absconded with a mule en route to tell rebels about the state of Spanish camps. The two struggled so violently that Rosario later died from his injuries.[232]

Despite public decrees that pleaded for peace, Spanish hostility and violence grew. Consul complaints left a chilling record, as the French consul and the British consul intervened repeatedly in Puerto Plata and other towns. One shooting prompted the Jamaican governor to intervene. "If

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these details are true . . . it amounts to premeditated assassination . . . please investigate," he urged, but the query led nowhere.[233] Spanish soldiers arrested Saint Vincent–born William Henry Abbot, a master carpenter and father of three small children, in his own house in Puerto Plata for unspecified reasons in the midst of fighting. Accusing Abbot of complicity with the rebels, a group of soldiers dragged him to the beach near the local Methodist church—all protestations of his British citizenship in vain—and murdered him without so much as a trial. In fact, Spanish soldiers forced two British day laborers to bury his body.[234] Americans like Peter Vanderhurst tried and failed to seek British protection in Samaná.[235] Dominicans, with no pretense to such recourse, confronted rising aggression.

Authorities increased surveillance as far as they could. They suspected, but could not prove, the gun pipeline from Haiti across the northwest valley.[236] U.S. steamships in Cap-Haïtien's ample port also raised suspicion.[237] Governor Rivero declared the entire island—including Haiti—to be blockaded. All printed material would be "scrupulously examined," all passengers considered suspicious, all those carrying weapons considered enemies. The governor asked for aid from the Cuban navy to survey the northern coast of the island, from Cap-Haïtien (Guarico) to Monte Cristi, and to sail its circumference where possible. Authorities sent news of the blockade to Saint Thomas, Jamaica, and other neighboring islands.[238] The governor declared that all those on ships aiding the rebels would be treated as pirates. Dominican citizens who owned gunpowder were ordered to remit it to area officials; arms restrictions varied from town to town. A colony-wide decree, citing "public hygiene" problems, announced the relocation of some prisoners to the peninsula and proclaimed that spies would be shot on sight. "They do not have the same rights [as prisoners of war do]," he announced.[239]

Spanish authorities focused their scrutiny on traditionally black communities like San Carlos and Los Mina. Officials appointed spies "of absolute trust" to investigate rumors of ferment outside of capital city walls.[240] In more frequent and more hostile patrols, Spanish watchmen pursued everyone, including priests.[241] Spanish soldiers perceived danger in houses where people of color frequently gathered, reported them to the military commission, and often engaged in outright conflict with town residents, particularly young men. In one incident, two young men were detained for two weeks simply for having left their neighborhood and returned.[242] The fighting itself seemed to make the soldiers more paranoid, more racist, and less likely to hide either of these inclinations with the mantle of civility that had framed the annexation project. In San Carlos once again, Spanish soldiers

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claimed they were chasing some "sospechosos" at one in the morning. One of the gunshots ended up penetrating a hut and injuring a sleeping child.[243] Spanish soldiers blamed black subjects even for their own desertions; "I was kidnapped for the night by two black men with a knife and taken to Los Mina," one Spanish soldier claimed.[244] One soldier stationed in neighboring Puerto Rico mused acerbically:

Los negros dominicanos
no quieren a los españoles,
y vienen a Puerto Rico
sin camisa y sin calzones

Papá come gato,
Santo Domingo no quiere blanco
Papá come perro,
en Santo Domingo no hay más que negros[245]

[The black Dominicans
don't want the Spanish,
and they come to Puerto Rico
shirtless and pantless

Papa eats cats,
Santo Domingo don't want whites
Papa eats dogs,
in Santo Domingo there are only blacks]

Tensions were high in the capital; a young man from Samaná took out his pistol and aimed it at a watchman's chest. It was unloaded, but a judge convicted the nineteen-year-old nonetheless.[246] Other young men, similarly, were detained and released with increasing frequency.

Nicolás Guzmán, a volunteer drummer in the Baní regiment, demonstrated how growing tensions over Spanish racism dovetailed with the slavery rumors, even in a loyalist town. Guzmán had been drinking with other reservists in a store when a *paisano* officer—unclear if Spanish or Dominican—entered. Guzmán offered him a drink, which the man refused on the basis of his "not being the same color" as the young drummer. "I said I drink the same as blacks, whites, and *mulatos*," Guzmán recounted, testifying he left immediately. The officer told a different story, reporting that Guzmán threatened him: "If you don't drink this, I'll pour it on you." The officer admitted his own attitude was belligerent, saying, "I replied, the only way you'll be able to

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pour it on me is if you behead me first." A third man separated them. In a temporary evacuation of Baní subsequently, Guzmán fled for a week with the rebels. Defending himself in court, he offered a very deliberate incarnation of the slavery rumor: a group of rebels had arrived in Baní from Maniel—that is, the historic maroon community—reading a letter about impending enslavement. They had read the letter to a gathering of most of Baní's residents. "The whites were going to enslave the blacks," he repeated, "and seeing as most of the town was fleeing, I went with them." Other accounts reported his exit was not so naive. Guzmán allegedly shouted to fleeing residents that he would shoot them en route if they joined the Spanish, who were "*sin verguenzas*," that he would continue shooting, even if it were on his knees. "*Sin verguenzas españoles blancos*," another witness quoted. The military commission ordered him summarily deported.[247]

In the context of increased tension over Spanish racism, resistance became more entrenched. Insurgents fought in extraordinarily spartan conditions. Writer Pedro Bonó observed of one group, "Barely anyone had uniforms. . . . The drummer was in a woman's shirt and no pants. . . . Many others were shirtless. . . . All were barefoot . . . no saddles, just plantain leaves covered with goat leather . . . [and they] were mostly armed with machetes and only a few guns."[248] Fathers petitioned for their sons who had been deported, as sixty-year-old Pablo Santana did for his twenty-three-year-old son, Pablo Santana de los Reyes, languishing in the Morro of Havana. The group of men who had been with young Pablo—of fifty of them, only ten had guns—could not possibly be considered guilty, his father pleaded.[249] Speculation followed those who had been deported. They were working in chain gangs, perhaps on plantations in Havana, individuals warned.[250] Slavery stories proliferated further. One reservist sergeant—indigent, despite his rank, and claiming to have lost his common-law wife to the rebels—passed on an elaborate and alarming warning. He claimed that Spanish promises were not to be believed, that the Spanish planned to burn the towns and enslave the people by embarking them onto ships. They had already taken the residents of Azua and Santo Domingo, he allegedly claimed. He died in jail.[251] A civilian, Ramón Díaz, excused his initial participation with a guerrilla group as involuntary (he joined because of threats, he alleged, and a Spanish council was inclined to agree with him), but he also admitted to becoming convinced subsequently that the Spanish "planned to ship anyone they captured to Havana, to enslave them and make them do agricultural work." The very looseness of the guerrilla ranks precipitated Díaz's capture; reservists

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caught him as he returned to his home in search of clothes, plantains, and water.[252]

Members of a Dominican Provisional Government, newly founded in Santiago, denied the Spanish accusation that they were using slavery as an official recruiting tactic. At the same time, they warned of slavery's salience among the people:

> We have never tried to fool the pueblo saying that the Spaniards would have them made slaves and sell them, like they do today to those *desgraciados* who they go looking for on the coast of Africa. . . . But what could stop Spain from establishing in Cuba or its other colonies all the prisons that it felt like, and send all of the inhabitants of the Dominican Republic there, if that's what they felt like doing? . . . All Dominicans should understand, then, that the Spanish government will not literally sell them as they do in Cuba and Puerto Rico to true slaves; but except for the name, the condition will be worse.[253]

It was these fears that lent incontrovertible urgency to the fighting. And so government members warned the queen, "The fight, Señora, between the Dominican people and Your Majesty's army would be totally useless for Spain; because believe it, Your Majesty, we could all perish, and the whole country could end up destroyed by war and the burning of the towns and cities, but Spanish authorities governing us again, never. . . . They clearly show that the Dominican prefers homelessness with all of its horrors, for himself, his wife and children, and even death, more than, Señora, depending on those who oppress him, insult him, and assassinate him without trial."[254] Inexorably, the resistance deepened.

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