

the blanket of darkness could be heard shots and outcries, or sometimes transistor radios blaring the Tonton Macoutes' alert-signal, the unforgettable "*Feu nan caille-la!*" (House afire!).

Perhaps to warn off Juan Bosch, who had succeeded Duvalier's Trujillo friends in Santo Domingo, nocturnal assassins in January 1963 cut the throat of the Dominican consul at Les Cayes. The unfortunate consul, Señor Gerardo Blanco, had reportedly been helping *mulâtres* of the South (for a fee, of course) to slip away with Dominican papers. Others unable or afraid to risk escape began to make arrangements with the Latin American embassies for eventual asylum, thus providing a good thing for ambassadors, who in some instances were able to turn as much as \$50,000 on a single case.

On 10 February 1963, the day the constitution prescribed for elections, foolhardy students distributed anti-Duvalier leaflets and went out with paint cans and scrawled Port-au-Prince walls with the obscenity "*Caca Doc*" (Doc is shit). This proved a mistake: some thirty students and their relatives, including several university professors, were arrested, beaten, and tortured; several, after personal interrogation by the president in his basement room, were executed.

Nor was trouble confined to the towns. Under new levies established in March, wretched *paysans* were taxed on rice and even on the homemade chairs and tables in their *cailles*. When strapping *marchandés* protested, the Milice beat them down. And Macoutes themselves turned ferociously on each other in Gonaïves, when a carload of Eloïs Maître's Port-au-Prince TTMs clashed with local braves of Zacharie Delva and Charlotin Saint-Fort. Next morning the battered bodies of the Port-au-Princiens were found, genitals stuffed in mouths, again profaning the church portals where, after Msgr. Robert's expulsion, Delva had celebrated Bois Cayman.

While tension mounted within, François Duvalier was facing his most serious challenge from abroad. His chief opponents were the United States and the Dominican Republic, backed by the Organization of American States and the Vatican. Friends and supporters he had none.⁴³

Trouble with the Dominicans began on 17 February 1963, when Juan Bosch was inaugurated president in Ciudad Santo Domingo. In the words of the perceptive American ambassador there, John Bartlow Martin, "While Trujillo lived, Duvalier was comfortable. After Trujillo fell, Duvalier became uneasy." Duvalier's uneasiness was justified: the

43. In his revisionist memoirs, Duvalier later claimed support from Ghana, Uruguay, and France, none of which in fact supported him.

excitable, volatile Bosch, whom *irresponsable*," was viscerally Dominicans, toward all Haitian rated, Bosch began to talk of a coup. "We want to give hope. Duvalier reciprocated in the style of an assassination plot against Bosch. Members of the Trujillo family accompanied by former officers of SIM arrived in Port-au-Prince on 28 April and foreign crises pressing upon

The United States had by now not actively intriguing with his looking about alertly for any plot one in sight.⁴⁴ Like Duvalier, he died May 15 without any reliable friends left out.

Early in April, a group of colorists arrived. Headed by Colonel G. S. slightly-built *mulâtre*, the plot involved officers who still survived, perhaps of such intrigues, however, there was Papa Doc who struck. Five of the officers lost their families to the Brazilian emigration.

One who did not flee was Clément, a soldierly *noir* from one of Jacme's units. He was arrested and taken to the case of *pédi té*' (Make his feet leave the ground) in the morning, to end Turnier's agony. He was beheaded. For a week after, just as the rot in the open, what remained of his body decomposed into a heap of offal in the parade ground.

During the next ten days Duvalier lost roughly one third of the officer corps.

44. About this time, with or without J. Fignolist coalition was training Haitian recruits. Support from the Dominican Armed Forces, by opportunism, this band did not seem to have any military success.

45. For an ordinary beating, the usual phrase is *pas lever l'ageuil*' (Make him think a bit). For more severe beatings, the phrase is *pas lever l'ageuil*' (Make him think but do not lift the earth" means death.

excitable, volatile Bosch, whom Duvalier subsequently called “*ce fou irresponsable*,” was viscerally hostile toward him, and, like most Dominicans, toward all Haitians. (Almost as soon as he was inaugurated, Bosch began to talk of nudging the Haitian military toward a coup. “We want to give hope,” he said, “to the Haitian people.”) Duvalier reciprocated in the style of Trujillo: (1) he helped to arrange an assassination plot against Bosch (it failed), and (2) he invited four members of the Trujillo family from Spain to Port-au-Prince, accompanied by former officers of SIM (Trujillo’s secret police). Their arrival in Port-au-Prince on 28 April heightened the already serious internal and foreign crises pressing upon Duvalier during those weeks.

The United States had by now burned its bridges to Duvalier. While not actively intriguing with his enemies, the U.S. Government was looking about alertly for any possible successor but was finding no one in sight.⁴⁴ Like Duvalier, Washington was also looking toward May 15 without any reliable forecast as to how events would turn out.

Early in April, a group of colonels in the FAd’H felt the moment had arrived. Headed by Colonel Lionel Honorat, a well-educated, slightly-built *mulâtre*, the plot included those of the patriotic senior officers who still survived, perhaps eight to ten in all. In the usual way of such intrigues, however, there was a leak: on 10 April, D-day, it was Papa Doc who struck. Five of the leaders most implicated made it with their families to the Brazilian embassy.

One who did not flee was Charles Turnier, a handsome, upright, soldierly *noir* from one of Jacmel’s fine families. On 14 April Turnier was arrested and taken to the casernes and beaten all night. “*Fai pié-li pédi té*” (Make his feet leave the earth) was the command.⁴⁵ Next morning, to end Turnier’s agony, another officer shot him through the head. For a week after, just as Soulouque left dead enemies’ bodies to rot in the open, what remained of Charles Turnier was allowed to decompose into a heap of offal in the hot sun in the middle of the dusty parade ground.

During the next ten days Duvalier dismissed sixty-nine officers, roughly one third of the officer corps. Virtually all of them, as well as

44. About this time, with or without Juan Bosch’s personal knowledge, a Déjoeist-Fignolist coalition was training Haitian revolutionaries in the Dominican Republic with support from the Dominican Armed Forces. With its built-in instability, cemented only by opportunism, this band did not seem to present possibilities of serious political or military success.

45. For an ordinary beating, the usual Créole command is “*Réfléchi-li, pé-z-à-pé*” (Make him think a bit). For more severe treatment, the phrase goes “*Réfléchi-li, mais pas lever lègeuil*” (Make him think but don’t stir up his pride). “Make his feet leave the earth” means death.

most of the plotters, had received American training. At the same time, there began systematic arrests and roundup of retired or former officers and their families, who were thrown into Fort Dimanche as hostages for the future behavior of the Armed Forces. While this was going on, about 15 April, Clément Barbot, who had been living very quietly at home since release from prison, slipped out of his house in Déprez and, joined by certain trusty friends of earlier times, went underground.

April 22 opened a new national fête, the Month of Gratitude, during which the Haitian people were called upon to express their gratitude to François Duvalier for all the good things he had done.

A first, if unexpected, expression of feeling toward the president came on 26 April. That morning, as a palace limousine delivered two Duvalier children, Simone, aged fourteen, and Jean-Claude, twelve, at the Methodist College Bird, where they went to school, another car slowed alongside. Three shots were fired: each found its mark, killing the driver and two Macoute bodyguards. The children, scampering inside the schoolyard, were not fired on.

Clément Barbot, the one man who knew enough of Duvalier's methods to fight him, had struck his first blow. With characteristic precision — he loved children and knew the Duvalier youngsters well — he had shot the Macoutes only.

The spasm that seized Duvalier can be compared only with the insensate rages of Hyppolite. The events that followed can be likened only to 1915. Soldiers and TTMs combed Port-au-Prince, arresting at random, firing weapons in savage panic. Under shoot-to-kill orders with regard to any retired or former military officers, they gunned down Captain Albert Poitevien, former Garde-Côtes commandant, on his doorstep. Many hundreds of arrests were made of men, women, and children; all were hustled off to Fort Dimanche. Hardly any ever emerged. One among many never seen again was Colonel Edouard Roy, Haiti's pioneer aviator. Motorists driving cars of the same make as the original attackers' were shot in the streets and their vehicles riddled.

At the height of his frenzy, Duvalier, not yet aware that Barbot was involved, conceived the idea that the marksman who had picked off the Macoutes could only be former Lieutenant François Benoît, one of the stars of the recently abolished rifle team, who was among those purged in the preceding days. That Benoît had been in asylum inside the Dominican embassy when the attack was executed was ignored. Commanded by the sinister Major Romain, a swarm of Macoutes and Presidential Guard dashed up to the Benoît home in Bois Verna, opening fire as they deployed. The first bursts of automatic weapons gunned down

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Benoît's aged father, a retired judge, and his mother and a friend on the front porch. The servants and even the family dogs were killed. The house, battered by hundreds of rounds, was doused with kerosene and then set on fire. Benoît's baby son, Gérard, died in his crib as flames consumed the old gingerbread house. Mme. Benoît, still teaching school though advanced in pregnancy, was warned and got away to the Ecuadorean embassy before Macoutes attacked the schoolhouse. Balked of their prey, the TTMs stormed, looted, and gutted the home of Lieutenant Benoît's brother. An elderly lawyer, Maître Benoît Armand, was killed because his first name was Benoît.

Belatedly learning that Benoît had been in asylum the whole time, but no less convinced of his guilt, the Garde Présidentielle then moved against the Dominican chancery on the Delmas road. Setting up machine guns to cover the building, where they mistakenly thought Benoît had taken refuge (together with twenty-two other fugitives, he was actually in the residence, not the chancery), they ransacked the premises and maltreated the lone woman secretary. This was the first occasion since 1915 that Haitians, this time uniformed soldiers, however, had violated a foreign diplomatic mission.

Their fury somewhat subsiding, the Duvalierists then invaded the grounds of the Dominican residence but were driven out by the chargé d'affaires, Francisco Bobadilla. In sullen rage they ringed the residence with troops and weapons while Benoît and his fellows inside wondered whether their fate might be that of Guillaume Sam.

Besides abhorrence throughout the hemisphere, the savagery in Port-au-Prince evoked two reactions: (1) the Caribbean Ready Amphibious Squadron of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, complete with the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, was ordered at forced draft to the Gulf of Gonâve;⁴⁶ (2) Juan Bosch put the Dominican Armed Forces on war footing, sent his navy to sea, massed 3000 troops at Dajabón, Elías Pinã, and Jimaní, sent Duvalier an ultimatum demanding withdrawal of troops surrounding the Port-au-Prince embassy, and invoked the Rio Treaty.

Duvalier never blinked. His response the same day, 28 April, was to break relations with Bosch while welcoming the Trujillos and their secret policemen to Port-au-Prince that afternoon on Pan Am flight 431A.

Even as the OAS council was voting to send an investigating team (the OAS ambassadors from Chile, El Salvador, Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia) to Port-au-Prince, Dr. Jacques Fourcand, the Macoute

46. Britain likewise ordered H.M.S. *Cavalier*, with a detachment of Royal Marines, to station in Gonâve Channel, where she was joined by a Canadian destroyer, H.M.C.S. *Saskatchewan*.

declared *persona non grata* and refused to allow back to pick up his household effects). On 3 June, sailing north in the wake of Admiral Gherardi while the State Department "reappraised" its position, the amphibious task force withdrew from the Gulf of Gonaïves.

Looking back on the whole fiasco (which in Washington's terms it was), John F. Kennedy ruefully asked Ambassador Martin, "Wouldn't it have been better if we'd let Bosch go?"

The few discordant notes in that superbly orchestrated performance of May 1963 came from the crack of rifle and pistol shots and the thud of bombs aimed by the one man Duvalier feared.

Clément Barbot had left his calling-card on 26 April. Now, early in May, with Rhéa, his cherished wife, and four children safe inside the Argentine embassy, he was ready to take the field.

In rapid succession, as only he could, Barbot harried and fooled Macoutes and Milice, shooting them down from ambush, killing them by tens at a time. Privy even to the mysteries of the telephone system, he got an open line to Duvalier's ornate white phone and warned the president that his coffee was poisoned (Duvalier's reply: "Clément, you will bring me your head . . .") Or was he thinking of his own father's head?). While Major Jean Tassy, his successor and one of the cruelest men in Haiti, relentlessly combed Pétionville, Barbot raided Fort Dimanche and emptied the armory. A closer call came when pursuers found his Martissant hideout not far from the bomb factory of 1957. But Barbot escaped — all they got was a weapons cache and a black dog who vanished in the night. Haitian suspicions were confirmed: Barbot could at will, as had been widely said, change himself into a black dog. Word went out from Duvalier: shoot black dogs on sight. Barbot's answer was to leave a personal note on Duvalier's own desk in the Palais.

On 21 May, as Duvalier herded in 50,000 *paysans* to celebrate the climax of the Month of Gratitude, Barbot's forces (now bearing the title "Comité des Forces Démocratiques Haïtiennes") bombed the Lycée Pétion and the Collège St. Pierre (the Episcopal boys' school), both co-opted to billet rural *miliciens*, and failed to blow up the HASCO fuel dump only because the grenades he used were high explosive, not thermite incendiary. During the night, while mysterious fires reddened the sky over the Cul-de-Sac, rifle fire of a predawn ambush and shoot-out echoed for hours from Déprez to Martissant.

Meanwhile, on the dark night of 19 May, a daring American reporter, the *Washington Star's* Jeremiah O'Leary, made contact with Barbot himself at a canefield sanctuary near Cazeau, south of Damien, where the new jet airport would eventually be built. Here for two hours

Barbot talked of his struggle, the president had expressly ordered TTMs, and asserted that Duvalier had a million in a Swiss bank.

"Duvalier," said Barbot in his own words, "is not a communist, a democrat, or anything else."

Then O'Leary was guided out of the city to Port-au-Prince.⁴⁹

On 14 July the end came. With the help of his pediatrician brother, Dr. Harcel, Barbot was betrayed by a peasant. Led by Grégory and assorted *miliciens*, under Elie, Barbot fled to the Cazeau hideout and set the cane field on fire. Out, the Barbots broke cover and were killed by automatic-weapons fire. Afterward, the bodies of the corpses were triumphantly displayed. The end was months to come before any

The Barbot insurgency, mounted in 1963, striking expertly at the vitals of the regime to a degree never previously or later achieved, in the sixteen months following the end of the succession of incursions and guerrilla warfare, plunged Haiti into an abyss of violence.

While all eyes focused on the insurgency, the returned to the Dominican Republic, the local military, training and organization for invasion of the North. The Campaign of August and September 1963 in a series of probes, most of which had been compromised.

Ably supported (until a heart attack) by René Léon, who had fought the Cazeau, Cantave successively took or tried to take

49. Twelve years later, in April 1975, a group of members of the Marine Mission, during the Barbot insurgency, supplied Barbot with small arms, ammunition, and money, both privately and officially, by Colonel R. to May 1963.

50. In a kind of reprise of the Barbot insurgency, led by Hector Riobé, whose father and brother fought a battle in caves behind Kenscoff, where the Barbot forces finally overrun by overwhelming FAD'H forces, the movement attackers on 18 July 1963. Riobé killed and captured.

Written in Blood

The Story of the Haitian People

1492-1971

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AND

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Illustrated with photographs and maps

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Heinl, Robert Debs, date
Written in blood.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
I. Haiti—History. I. Heinl, Nancy Gordon, joint author. II. Title.
E173.H4
978—78-2869

Printed in the United States of America

Houghton Mifflin Company Boston

1978