

# Imperialism in the dominican republic



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Imperialism according to the definition of The Dictionary of Human Geography is “ the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural, and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination.”(Johnston: 375) Europe is often accountable for its interest in gaining economic fulfillment and development and doing so by seeking out countries with rich land and obtainable territory. The Dominican Republic was a victim to European imperialism because of its possession of rich farmland and beautiful coast that provided an outstanding selling and trading ground. Affluent in tobacco and sugar, countless oversea investors and financiers made their way to the Dominican Republic to get a piece of the profit and establish their own businesses, especially towards the eastern side of DR which was accountable for the surplus creation of sugar. As wealthy as this country was in its goods such as tobacco, sugar and coffee, they were incapable of withstanding a secure, unwavering economy. During the Dominican Independence War in 1844, the Dominican Republic was given independence from Haiti. Before this war, the entire island of Hispaniola had been underneath Haitian ruling for over 20 years. Helping to first inspire and then lead the war was a young, talented, nationalist named Juan Pablo Duarte. Together with Matías Ramón Mella and Francisco Del Rosario Sánchez, he established a group of individuals in 1838, devoted to oppose the invasion of Haiti, called La Trinitaria (“ The Trinity”). Despite efforts to stay under the radar, the group was soon discovered and renamed itself La Filantrópica (literally “ The Philanthropic”, in Spanish), and continued its silent fight against the Haitians. With the help of a liberal Haitian party, the revolt made a giant step forward by overthrowing President Jean Pierre Boyer. Unfortunately, the Trinitarios’

had called a bit of attention to them and were noticed by Boyer's stand-in, Charles Riviere-Hérard who banished Duarte off the island after imprisoning multiple members of the Trinitarios. Though the rebels begged him to return, he could not because of an illness but this did not stop them. By February of 1843, they had decided to take matter into their own hands and by February 27th, 1844 the Dominicans were celebrating their independence.

## Part 2

Once The House of Bourbon had replaced the House of Habsburg in Spain in 1700, " economic reforms that were newly introduced had begun to restore trade in Santo Domingo". (Leonce: 264) The restrictions that had initially been placed between Spain and the colonies were loosened and relaxed by the crown. In 1737, the last flotas sailed; soon after, the monopoly port system was abolished. These changes encouraged a large boost in emigration from the Canary Islands, especially by the middle of the century. There was a jump in the resettlement of the northern part of the colony and tobacco plantation in the Cibao Valley, even the importation of slaves was renewed. All of this led to the increase of Santo Domingo's population which grew from 6, 000 to about 125, 000 between the years of 1737 and 1790. In this new population count, about 40, 000 were white landowners, around 25, 000 were black or mulatto freedmen, and almost 60, 000 were slaves. Unfortunately, next to their wealthy French neighboring colony, Saint-Domingue, which would become the wealthiest in the New World and held a population of almost four and half times greater? The principal market for Santo Domingo's beef, mahogany, tobacco and hides exports was offered by the colonial elites of St. Domingue when restrictions on regal trade was

relaxed. During the Haitian Revolution 1791, many rich urban families that had been associated with the colonial bureaucracy left the island, while most rural farmers and cattle ranchers, *hateros* as they were known locally, stayed. Spain saw this as a chance to take control of the entire, or at least, some of the western third of the island as to seek a convenient alliance with the British and the unruly slaves. However, after the French and slaves reconciled, the Spanish were conquered by Jacobin General Toussaint Louverture and by 1795, France claimed control of the entire Island under the Treaties of Basel.

In 1801, L'Ouverture declared the eradication of slavery, on behalf of the French Republic, Soon after this, Napoleon dispatched an army which took over the entire island, taking it over for a few months. In October 1802, Mulattos and blacks rose up against these French once again and were victorious in November 1803 and declared Saint-Domingue the independent republic of Haiti on January 1, 1804. Even after this defeat, a small French stronghold remained in Santo Domingo. They managed to reestablish slavery and numerous Spanish colonists returned. In 1805, after crowning himself Emperor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines invaded Santo Domingo but was forced to retreat when faced by a French naval squadron. In their retreat, the Haitians sacked the towns of Santiago and Moca, killing most of the people who lived there. Due to this act, there has been animosity between the two countries for two centuries.

Before Dominican independence, there was a period of time called, “ The Haitian Occupation.”

There were several independence plots prior to this but they all failed and on November 30, 1821, when José Núñez de Cáceres who was Santo Domingo's past Lieutenant-Governor (which was top administrator), declared the colony's independence. Cáceres appealed that the new state gain admission to the republic of Gran Columbia, Simón Bolívar, and though it passed and the Dominican Republic was now free from under Spain's rule, in the February of 1822, led by Jean-Pierre Boyer, Haitian forces invaded nine weeks soon after. While the Haitians, had abolished slavery, much like how Toussaint Louverture had also done two decades previously, the Haitians had also nationalized most private property. This even include the property of landowners who fled in the beginning of the invasion; Church property; even property that belonged to previous rulers, the Spanish Crown. In attempt to boost profit, Boyer placed a large emphasis on cash crops rather than crops that were grown for consumption and had them grown on large plantations. He had the tax system reformed and allocated foreign trade. While it did increase the production and sales of sugar and coffee, Dominican farmers still strongly opposed this new system. Universities were shut down and lower levels of education also collapsed; the Haitian army was drafting many young Dominican men, especially from the ages of 16 to 25-years-old. These poor men were not even being treated in their camps properly, were heavily unpaid and had to " forage and sack" from local Dominical civilians. As much as they might have wanted to fight back and claim their freedom, they were without a leader and lacked the necessary guidance to revolt.

### Part 3

While it is true that the Dominican government has improved and made some substantial progress, according to the State Department's Country Report on Human Rights Practices focused on the year of 2004, human rights records are still fairly pitiable. Press reports on EFE News Service states that in 2004, there were 160 more people killed by the hands of police than there was in 2003. Sadly, not only is the use of physical abuse and torture continuing but even the conditions of prisons have ranged from "poor to harsh" when the fact is that there are overcrowded prison stations that are being made to hold only 9,000 inmates are instead holding over 13,000. These horrid conditions only make a bad situation worse and the tension and the discomfort caused by being so close can only make angry people angrier. A result of 26 injuries and 133 deaths was the product of a fire that rival gangs set to show their discontent with their present situation in The Higüey jail, which "was built in 1960 to house 80 inmates, but according to the director of prisons, Juan Ramón de la Cruz Martínez, it had a population of 426 on the morning of the fire." (NYT: There is also a social problem of human trafficking in the Dominican Republic.

There is an approximated 50,000 women from the Dominican Republic apart of the overseas sex industry. After Thailand, Brazil and the Philippines, this is the fourth largest number in the world.

Countless women from the Dominican Republic are trafficked to Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Austria. In fact, almost 10% of the 500 to 600 visas issued every year from the Netherlands to the Dominican nationals are for prostitution. There is a vicious cycle of women in the sex industry and the average age of women entering the sex industry from the Dominican

Republic is between 24 and 28 years old. On average, these women have only completed primary school. When asked, most Dominican prostitutes give two main motivations for being in the sex industry; those who have children say it allows them to provide for their children. Then there are those without children who proclaim that they are doing it to buy a piece of land or a house for their parents. Most of the trafficked women also reported that their husband, father or boyfriend did not know exactly what kind of job they would be performed overseas, but did not ask; usually the husband, father or boyfriend received the money from the women abroad.

Some of the women who returned to the Dominican Republic had been deported by the police while others were able to escape from the traffickers with the help of friends. Still many women are trapped and have no financial means of returning home, because they have no savings and are addicted to drugs and alcohol. Most of the trafficked women said that if they had known what they were actually getting into, they would have never went. It is only an undersized amount of the women that are actually able to hoard away money to bring back home with them, with amounts that range from US\$300 to US\$10 and this is after roughly one year in the sex industry. Some women are welcomed home when they return because they sent money from overseas and their new jewelry and clothes, or their family's new or improved house is an incentive for other young women to go into the sex industry.

#### Part 4

A well-known commanding officer in the army, Rafael L. Trujillo, established supreme political control in 1930 and though he encouraged, economic growth and development for the country, only he and his supporters actually benefitted from it and it worked more to severely repress the domestic rights of civilians. Dishonesty and negligence to important details led to corruption and major economic tribulations. The Organization of American States took control of the situation and implemented political endorsements against the Dominican Republic as a consequence of Trujillo's involvement in an endeavor to eliminate President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela in the August of 1960. Within the borders of the Dominican Republic are about one million Dominicans and Dominican-Haitians whose treatment is the cause for the international criticism the Dominican Government has been receiving in the last few years. With influence from and similarity to the way Rafael Trujillo, benefitted from the work of others, the Dominican government continues to under-work undocumented, migrating Haitians and accept cheap labor.

“ More than 90% of the country's seasonal sugar workers and two thirds of its coffee workers are Haitians or Dominicans of Haitian origin.” (Ribando: 3) The Directorate of Migration forced the deportation of more than 12, 000 Haitians (including children) in 2002, in the Dominican Republic. According to President Fernandez and many other Dominican officials, the deletion of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in early 2004 has caused the increase of the amount of illegal migrants that were heading to D. R. which then caused an even larger strain on the already strained Dominican economy

Part 5

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Since independence in 1844, the United States has greatly influenced the Dominican Republic's political standing in military. In the early 1900s, the U. S. sent their troops out into several nations and in an attempt to restore the initial civil order, entered such places as Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti and namely, the Dominican Republic. According to representatives of the United States at the time, they needed to take control of the finances in these nations so help prevent the possibility of uproar or chaos caused by money. The Dominican Republic is actually known for having the second largest economical standing in the Caribbean and Central American region. While previously known mostly for their sugar production, their bountiful economic growth is subjugated largely to services such as their telecommunication system. After the assassination of tyrant, Trujillo, as a result of the fear felt by the possibility of reprisal by Trujillo's allies, one of the three later 20th century emigration waves began in 1961. In effort to end the civil war in 1965, the United States began a stronger military activity in the Dominican Republic. Due to this movement, travel restrictions were slackened which made obtaining a United States visa, which was once a reasonably difficult job, much easier. In the year 1966 to the year 1978, the emigrations continued which were stimulated by high rates of unemployment and political subjugation.

Succeeding arrivals of immigrants to the United States were introduced and welcomed in the country by previous immigrants to the nation who had joined together and formulated a group. In the early 20th century, prices, the value of a dollar and the rate of unemployment all increased and supplied

the third wave of emigration which continues to hang pretty high in the Dominican Republic to this very day.