

## HAITI:

### The Political Economy and Sociology of Decay and Renewal

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- HAITI IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER: THE LIMITS OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION.* By Alex Dupuy. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997. Pp. 220. \$59.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)
- HAITIAN FRUSTRATIONS, DILEMMAS FOR U.S. POLICY: A REPORT OF THE CSIS AMERICAS PROGRAM.* Edited by Georges Fauriol. (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1995. Pp. 252. \$24.95 cloth.)
- BUILDING PEACE IN HAITI.* By Chetan Kumar. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1998. Pp. 107. \$9.95 paper.)
- HAITI: DANGEROUS CROSSROADS.* Edited by Deidre McFadyen, Pierre LaRamée, and the NACLA staff. (Boston, Mass.: South End, 1995. Pp. 256. \$15.00 paper.)
- FROM DESSALINES TO DUVALIER: RACE, COLOUR, AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE IN HAITI.* By David Nicholls. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996. Pp. 400. \$50.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)
- HAITI RENEWED: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROSPECTS.* Edited by Robert Rotberg. (Cambridge, Mass.: World Peace Foundation, 1997. Pp. 245. \$28.95 cloth.)
- THE HAITIAN DILEMMA: A CASE STUDY IN DEMOGRAPHICS, DEVELOPMENT, AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.* By Ernest Preeg. (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1996. Pp. 133. \$14.95 paper.)
- SILENCING THE PAST: POWER AND THE PRODUCTION OF HISTORY.* By Michel-Rolph Trouillot. (Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1995. Pp. 224. \$22.00 cloth.)

Conceived in blood, ostracized in its early years as an aberration and a threat to the old world order, and ranking dead last in every social index among American countries in the late twentieth century, Haiti stands out. What factors have accounted for Haiti's decay? Can Haiti be renewed? The eight books reviewed in this essay attempt to address these questions, with varying degrees of success. Their explanations of the Haiti *problématique* fall in two categories. One set of explanations is rooted in Haiti's history, polit-

ical culture, and social structure, especially in the chasms between elites and masses, between blacks (meaning dark-skinned) and mulattos, *mouns laville* versus *mouns andeyo* (urbanites versus country folk), and rich versus poor. The other set of explanations emphasizes external factors, especially relations between Haiti and France in the early nineteenth century and between Haiti and the United States in the twentieth. The solutions proposed vary from aggressively integrating Haiti into the global economy along neo-liberal lines to a more populist approach emphasizing basic needs and self-sufficiency in food production.

### *Haiti Viewed from Inside*

Many students of Haiti have pointed to the country's history as one of the internal reasons underlying its decline. Haiti was the richest colony in the world when the Revolution of Saint Domingue (Haiti's colonial name) broke out in 1791, accounting for as much as half of metropolitan France's foreign trade. Production of sugar, cotton, and coffee was the backbone of the economy, with slaves providing the necessary labor. Beneath the apparent prosperity, however, lay troubling sociopolitical faultlines. Saint Domingue existed more in name than as a unified political entity. It was basically a buccaneer society where European profiteers, adventurers, arrivistes, and *bons vivants* sought to make quick fortunes with little regard for the interests of the colony or, for that matter, those of the metropolis (Gordon 1983). The leitmotif was easy money, which could be used to purchase titles of nobility in France. Apocryphal heredity in turn facilitated access to the salons of Parisian *haute société*.

Back in Saint Domingue, meanwhile, a social powder keg was about to explode. At the start of the revolution, Haiti contained perhaps the most socially fragmented population in the Caribbean, with blacks outnumbering whites by a ratio of more than ten to one (five hundred thousand blacks to thirty thousand whites). A majority of the black slaves had been born in Africa (the *bossales*). They were deemed beyond assimilation by racist white planters but also by some colony-born blacks known as creoles. Antebellum Haitian political struggles also pitted blacks of various origins against mulattos, freed blacks against black slaves, blacks against whites, mulattos against whites, and whites against whites (*petits blancs* against *grands blancs*). Of these divisions, the black-mulatto cleavage may have been the most fateful in Haitian history. It dominated politics during the first 150 years of independence and therefore deserves extensive analysis.

On the eve of the Haitian Revolution in 1791, fully one-third of all mulattos owned slaves. In parts of Haiti, especially the south, mulattos dominated the local economy, but colonial laws and color prejudice of the whites prevented mulatto representation in the governing of the colony. Mulattos occupied an ambiguous position in colonial Saint Domingue:

they were not black, but neither were they white; they owned slaves and sizable plantations but suffered all sorts of indignities at the hands of even the poorest of whites, including political marginalization. The visceral hostility of white Saint Domingo to the political enfranchisement of the mulattos and mulattos' desire to lead a postcolonial order without the whites led to a temporary alliance between half-castes and blacks. For mulattos, the last straws were the deportation of mulatto leader André Rigaud to France, the reestablishment of slavery in Guadeloupe by Napoleon on 11 July 1802, and a decree ordering the confiscation of the weapons of non-military personnel, many of them mulattos who had taken up guns to protect "their property" (de Lacroix 1995).

Shortly after Haiti became independent in 1804, it split into a mulatto-dominated republic in the west and south and a black-dominated kingdom in the north. Reunification in 1820 ended only the political division of the country. The old color cleavage continued well into the twentieth century, leading ultimately to the *noiriste* Duvalier dynasty. Haitians are justifiably proud of having led the only successful slave revolution in modern history, but a more somber reality must be recognized: the revolution created an independent Haitian state—a weak one at that—but not a nation (Trouillot 1990). Haitians have never developed a collective vision of their country based on mutual responsibilities and citizenship for all. Any sense of oneness that Haitians possess has evolved ipso facto out of a common language (creole), shared religion (vodun mixed with Catholicism), and other cultural manifestations such as food, painting, and music—not from any project of nation building, accountable government, prosperity, or other common goals.

The tragedy of Haitian history is that for almost two hundred years, no framework has ever been successfully devised to manage cleavages and craft a rapprochement among social forces and between these forces and the state. This lacuna is essentially a failure of political leadership as normally demonstrated by elites. Instead, social cleavages have penetrated the state, giving way to the use of state power by elites to annihilate rivals. To make matters worse, the constant threat of foreign invasion in the early nineteenth century meant that scarce resources had to be used ostensibly to protect Haitian independence. The Haitian state became imbued with a security ethos that espied external enemies and fifth columns everywhere who had to be defeated. Thus by the early 1830s, Haiti boasted an army larger than that of imperial Britain but not a single university. In sum, the Haitian state has had to wage war on at least three fronts: against society or "the nation," against aspiring elites fighting for state control, and against external enemies, real or imagined. The resources required to wage this three-pronged assault eventually drained the Haitian economy, undermined the state, delayed nation building, and (contrary to official expectations) increased Haiti's vulnerability to foreign occupation.

What role has color played in all of this? Color has served simply as a wedge issue. The Haitian elite has employed color to mobilize supporters and justify its hold on power and privilege. In other words, color has been the veil behind which the ugliest contradictions of Haitian society have been hidden: a weak state versus an even weaker nation, a peasant economy sapped by population growth and predatory state policies, a political class that seeks power in exclusive terms, and a bourgeoisie more rent-seeking and myopic than entrepreneurial and farsighted. Color is in short an epiphenomenon, but one not without poignancy in Haitian history. I shall return to the role played by color in Haiti later and examine it in light of the book by David Nicholls.

Haiti exhibits a bifurcated elite. The economic faction of the elite has evolved since independence from a landed gentry in the early nineteenth century to a commercial-industrial class in the late twentieth century. Rooted in colonial Haiti, the old economic elite secured its position at independence, when many white planters hurriedly left their estates to their illegitimate mulatto sons and daughters in hopes of regaining control when conditions were propitious. The old elite also had black (dark-skinned) elements, especially in northern Haiti (James 1963). Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines distributed large tracts of land to their most able generals, who in turn leased portions of their estates to their subalterns and civilian allies. Both the black and mulatto factions of the old elite were Francophile and nominally Roman Catholic.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a class of *nouveaux riches* appeared. They included Syro-Lebanese and Jewish merchants, whose primary activities were importing consumer goods and exporting primary commodities (especially coffee). Their gravy train was exclusive trade licenses granted by the state, and their shops frequently lined the seaport streets (*bord-de-mer*) of Haitian cities. To protect themselves from expropriation, expatriate merchants generally maintained British, German, and U.S. citizenship (Plummer 1998). Expatriate industrialists entered the scene around the turn of the century, as Haiti started a modernization program that included constructing railroads, establishing commercial banana plantations, and setting up electrification financed mainly by U.S. banks, all undertaken by the governments of Nord Alexis (1902–1908) and Antoine Simon (1908–1911). The families who prospered during this period included the McDonalds and the Mevs (from the United States), the Brandts (whites from Jamaica), the Madsens (from Denmark), and the Nadals (from Catalonia, Spain). After World War II, second-generation Haitian industrialists moved into basic production and resale of consumer goods like cooking oil, flour, shoes, and toothpaste.

The other half of Haiti's bifurcated elite is the political elite. Casual observers of the Haitian scene assert mistakenly that members of the Haitian political elite come from the black (dark-skinned) middle class, while

the economic elite is composed of upper-class mulattos and whites. Another frequent mistake is to treat the Haitian political elite the way Karl Marx treated all state elites: as servants of the economic elite. Things are more complicated than that in Haiti. Social relations are always dynamic, not frozen in time and space but ever-changing. Any correlation existing between color and state power in Haiti is only a recent phenomenon, and the same is true for color and wealth. In the nineteenth century, mulattos and blacks competed fiercely for control of the state, and a strong black economic elite arose in the north under King Christophe (1807–1820). In the annals of Haitian history, a sizable number of Haitian political leaders were mulattos, among them Alexandre Pétion, Jean-Pierre Boyer, Rivière Hérard, Sylvain Salnave, and Boisrond Canal in the nineteenth century and Surdre Dartiguenave, Louis Borno, Stenio Vincent, and Elie Lescot in the twentieth. The point is that for much of Haitian history, public power and private wealth have not always followed color lines.

The problem in Haiti has been that historically the political and economic elites have tended to behave as “classes for themselves,” more as protection rackets than as custodians of the public good. The political elite, whether Lavalassien or Duvalierist, has cared more about its own power, and the economic elite about its rents. Their interests converge insofar as both elites fear mass uprising and have an interest in keeping what former President Paul Magloire (1950–1956) called the “*va-nus-pieds*” (the shoeless ones) in their place. But at crucial periods, the two elites’ interests also diverge, thereby creating possibilities for coups. Haiti’s divided elites have not hesitated to invite foreign powers to annihilate local opponents. In so doing, they have undermined the country’s hard-fought independence, nationalistic rhetoric notwithstanding. This conclusion is the essential point of the late David Nicholls’s *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti*. His first-rate analysis of Haitian history, especially that of the nineteenth century, shows how Haiti’s political elite has been more preoccupied with capturing and maintaining power than with developing the country.

In their fratricidal struggles to achieve absolute victories over their rivals, Haitian politicians have used the masses as pawns. In the nineteenth century, the landowning dark-skinned Salomon family in southern Haiti manipulated peasant armies (known as *piquets* because their main weapons were wooden pikes) against mulatto-dominated governments in Port-au-Prince. Yet Lysius Félicité Salomon, Haiti’s finance minister under Emperor Faustin Soulouque (1849–1959), did not condemn the use of the Haitian army to crush the same peasants whom his family had supported earlier and would support again later. Elite families in the north also had their peasant armies, the *cacos*. When local armies were insufficient to secure power, Haitian leaders enlisted the support of foreigners to cement their position vis-à-vis their domestic opponents and in the process cost the

country its independence. In this context, the peaceful invasion of Haiti by U.S. troops in 1994 to restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power after the breakdown of the Governors Island agreement between Aristide and Raoul Cedras continues a longstanding tradition of internecine elite conflicts, inability to resolve them peacefully and on terms acceptable to everyone, and ultimate recourse to foreign assistance. Were he still alive, David Nicholls would probably find the past in the present.

The main thesis of *From Dessalines to Duvalier* is unassailable, as is its coverage of nineteenth-century Haitian politics. Nicholls erred seriously, however, in his analysis of late-twentieth-century Haitian politics, which was dominated by the Duvalier dynasty. He came dangerously close to becoming an apologist and grossly overestimated the magnitude of popular support for the first Duvalier regime. Those of us born at the apogee of Duvalier tyranny still remember the fear on our parents' faces, the unexplained nightly curfews, the draconian presidential decrees (like the one banning the wearing of khakis by able-bodied civilians), and the jailing of loved ones on the flimsiest of charges. Consequently, Nicholls's assertion that "Duvalier's government enjoyed the support or the benevolent neutrality of a large part of the population" seems strange indeed. Fear occasioned by state-sponsored terrorism was the order of the day, and Papa Doc would not have lasted as long as he did without them. The survival of François Duvalier's regime owed much more to terror, the weaknesses of the opposition, and U.S. assistance (periodically interrupted by embarrassment) than to popular support for the former country doctor.

Even when Nicholls acknowledged the excesses of the first Duvalier regime, he finessed them: "Duvalier's government certainly used terror, but this was nothing new in Haiti; all previous government had used it" (p. 214). By painting Haitian authoritarianism in broad strokes and making no distinctions between leaders, Nicholls omitted crucial facts about the first Duvalier dictatorship. No Haitian leader before 1957 had succeeded in using terror as widely and as long as François Duvalier, nor did anyone else manage to perpetuate his rule through a dynasty. Dessalines, widely acknowledged as the founding father of Haiti, deliberately did not create a nobility, for, in his words (probably paraphrased): "Je veux être le seul noble d'Haiti" (I want to be the only nobleman of Haiti). However sympathetic Nicholls may have been to the Duvaliers, the reality remains: the François Duvalier regime was a despotic tyranny tinged with the admixture of messianic and dynastic pretense (Chirot 1994) and cloaked in the mystical garb of *négritude*. The younger Duvalier's regime was slightly less retrograde but certainly not "modernizing," as Ernest Preeg asserts. In methods and duration, Duvalierism was far from business as usual (as Nicholls would have readers believe) and more grotesque than any regime in Haiti hitherto or since.

François Duvalier managed to exploit color to surround himself

with a cadre of overzealous henchmen and ideologues willing to help him achieve his one and only goal: to remain in power through brutality and propaganda. Just as Adolf Hitler had Joseph Goebbels, Papa Doc had Gérard de Catalogne (not insignificantly, a mulatto). The elder Duvalier did not hesitate to crush blacks, on whose behalf the regime ostensibly ruled, when they got out of line. The two Duvaliers did next to nothing to uplift the vast majority of Haitians (at least 90 percent of them dark-skinned) out of excruciating poverty, yet the commercial and industrialist mulatto families fared very well. The Duvalier dynasty probably did more to discredit color-based *negritudiste* regimes in the black world than any other. By posing the Haiti problématique as the lack of black control over the Haitian state, François Duvalier misdiagnosed the situation entirely. It scarcely matters whether he did so maliciously to justify reactionary majority rule or merely to promote the cretinist interpretation of an amateur ethnologist.

Color has been the superficial expression of the Haitian rot. Thankfully it has faded as an explicit dividing line in Haitian politics. Analysts are now beginning to recognize that other internal factors are the root causes of Haiti's troubles. Class and demographic issues have supplanted color and race in contemporary analyses of Haiti. Thomas Malthus and Marx are now the patron-saints of scholarship on Haiti. Ernest Preeg's *The Haitian Dilemma: A Case Study in Demographics, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy* identifies demography as the Achilles' heel of Haiti. Population growth in Haiti hovers around 2.5 percent per annum. As demographers readily admit, population growth is not a problem as long as corresponding quantitative as well as qualitative growth occurs in the economy.

The reasons for Haiti's population growth should be familiar to demographers. The fertility rate is the highest in the Western Hemisphere, averaging five births per woman. Haiti's infant mortality rate has been declining, although it too is the highest in the hemisphere. High fertility and declining infant mortality have combined to swell the population of Haiti. The effects of population growth have been moderated somewhat by emigration, with one out of every seven Haitians living abroad. Population growth has been accompanied by deforestation (only 3 percent of Haiti's landmass has forest cover). The obvious connection is that as families grow, they need more arable land for food production or must intensify farming on the land already in use. Energy needs are also increasing. Between fifteen and twenty million trees are cut down in Haiti each year to make room for farming and to satisfy energy needs by making charcoal. The tragedy is that the more trees are cut down, the more Haitian topsoil is susceptible to being carried away in heavy rainfalls, thereby aggravating erosion and unproductive agriculture.

The other strand in contemporary Haitian scholarship emphasizes class and class struggles, a line of analysis associated with the Marxist Left. *Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads*, edited by Deidre McFadyen, Pierre LaRamée,

and the staff of the North American Congress for Latin America (NACLA), contains a leftist analysis of post-Duvalier Haiti from a grassroots perspective. The Haitian drama is presented here as an ongoing crisis engendered by class differences between a national bourgeoisie allied with international (mainly U.S.) capital and the Haitian masses as represented by popular organizations. The contributors are skeptical of U.S. policy toward Haiti and "the bourgeois faction" of the ruling Lavalas movement (named after the creole word for flood). Some contributors are connected to the radical Haitian Left (such as Kim Ives of Haiti Progrès) and others to the peace and labor movements in the United States. *Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads* is mainly a leftist account and critique of efforts to address the Haitian crisis that does not propose any remedies (the radical Left seems out of solutions these days).

As befits a collection produced primarily by activists, *Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads* is a one-sided narrative of Haitian politics since 1986, perhaps meant more to spur action and confirm established beliefs than to stimulate thoughtful analysis. Only one essay can be described as scholarly, that by the erudite Michel-Rolph Trouillot. On the whole, the volume espouses the kind of infantile Marxist rhetoric that remains the hallmark of the U.S. Left even after the end of the cold war. In this work, the Haitian imbroglia takes on gargantuan proportions. For example, Ben Dupuy asserts in explaining the 1991 coup and the return of Aristide to power, "if Aristide is restored to meaningful power, it could derail the whole democratic process in Latin America" (p. 98). More hyperbole follows. In Kim Ives's essay, the middle-class elements of the Lavalas movement, on whom Aristide has relied to deal with the international community and govern Haiti, become "the Lavalas bourgeoisie." Paul Farmer attributes U.S. policy toward Haiti, especially the 1994 "friendly invasion," to the need to prevent Haitian refugees from invading the United States (a reasonable assumption) and the thirst of U.S. capital for cheap labor (never mind that labor can be hired almost as cheaply in Mexico and the nearby Dominican Republic, which are much more politically stable than Haiti and have better telephone systems).

The ideology-driven analysis of *Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads* permeates all twenty-two essays, infecting even the work of Trouillot, who erroneously calls the Duvalier regime "totalitarian." Totalitarianism requires a state that has the means to monopolize both the public and the private spheres of life. The fact is that under the elder Duvalier, the Haitian economy remained in private hands. The economic elite was seldom threatened, although occasionally a member would be roughed up and thrown in jail (like O. J. Brandt) for refusing to bankroll the latest pet project dreamed up by Papa Doc. He might have wished to bring totalitarianism to Haiti (there is no proof of that), but François Duvalier lacked the means to do so. Papa Doc was more of an egocentric fourth world tyrant who was



content to let Haitians be as long as they did not interfere with his Caribbean brand of personal rule.

To summarize, decay in Haiti may be understood as a by-product of Haitian history, culture, social structure, economy, and environment. The three works reviewed thus far emphasize these internal factors. Their authors are mainly foreign-born specialists on Haiti. Other recent works on Haiti do not necessarily ignore the internal contradictions of Haitian society but emphasize external factors, such as early international reaction to and policy toward independent Haiti and the country's role in the post-cold war era. Two examples are Trouillot's *Silencing the Past* and Alex Dupuy's *Haiti in the New World Order*. Both of these authors are of Haitian origin.

### *The External Factors Approach*

International mistreatment of Haiti is covered with much erudition by Trouillot in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. The Haitian Revolution represented such an aberration to the rest of the world that it was denied even as it was taking place. Slaves as subhuman species were thought incapable of conceiving of and fighting for liberty. In France even the pro-abolition group Association des Amis des Noirs did not believe that a disparate group of brigands (as the Haitian freedom fighters were called) could topple Napoleon's army. According to Trouillot, during the war, the exploits of the former slaves were often minimized or ignored altogether because the Haitian Revolution did not fit the worldview of Europeans. From their standpoint, it was unthinkable that slaves would want to be free and would engage in collective action to secure their freedom. Even after the revolution had succeeded in making Haiti the world's first independent black republic, non-Haitian historians routinely relegated the revolution to the category of a minor event whose outcome was determined not by the heroism of Haitian slaves but by epidemic calamities (such as yellow fever) and by outside power support (especially that of Britain, the United States, and Spain).

The fact that the Haitian Revolution has been "overlooked" as a major event in eighteenth-century world history is due mainly to the challenge it posed to the West's view of itself, according to Trouillot. Western historiography is linked to the liberating ideas of the Renaissance, which launched the West—and by extension "the rest"—on the path to modernity. The slaves who led the Haitian Revolution were clearly not part of a tradition rooted in the West. Furthermore, the Haitian Revolution sent shock waves throughout the New World, threatening slavery in the southern flanks of the United States. The revolution led Napoleon to cede the Louisiana Territory to the United States at a bargain-basement price. Simón Bolívar, the liberator of much of South America, was given military support

and troops by Haitian President Alexandre Pétion. Haiti was a source of racial pride for black people who knew of the country's exploits. Indeed, the 1804 constitution gave automatic Haitian citizenship and freedom to any black person, no matter his or her place of birth. These were not minor accomplishments, but acknowledging them was problematic for the West.

Early foreign reaction to Haiti and attitudes developed since independence have had a profound impact on Haitian decay. After Haiti declared its independence in 1804, Napoleon vowed to recapture the island and reestablish slavery. Promises of indemnification by Haitian President Jean-Pierre Boyer in 1825 eventually saved the day. Isolation in the nineteenth century prevented Haiti from learning from its neighbors. Haiti's institutional memory in the nineteenth century was basically Bourbon, Jacobin, or Bonapartist France. None of these models was particularly suited to the emergence of liberal democracy. When Haiti was finally integrated into the international family of nations in 1915, it was as an occupied country. So condescending were the Yankees toward Haitian culture that one officer, "reflecting" on the use of the French language in Haiti, exclaimed, "Think of it, niggers speaking French!"

During the U.S. occupation (1915–1932), not even Haitian presidents could enter the American Club in Port-au-Prince. What was the most lasting legacy of that experience? Simply put, it was the Haitian army. Evidence of foreign factors in Haiti's decay is so overwhelming as to be undeniable, yet the culpability of the Haitian elite remains. If Haiti was occupied by U.S. troops in 1915, it was because Haitian leaders had mortgaged the country's future by signing off on ill-conceived industrialization programs financed by U.S. banks. In the four years preceding the occupation, Haiti had four presidents. The last one, Vibrun Guillaume Sam, was literally torn to pieces outside of the French embassy by a Port-au-Prince mob. Nation-states whose leaders cannot agree on how to manage the economy and share power set the stage for instability, which makes their country easy prey for stronger nation-states.

Alex Dupuy's *Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution* makes a forceful (if not entirely successful) case for linking the Haitian problématique to outside forces. According to Dupuy, the end of the cold war has fundamentally altered world politics and U.S. foreign policy. During the cold war, U.S. foreign policy was shaped mainly by security concerns. Now there is a strong preoccupation with free trade and market economies. The thrust of U.S. foreign policy in the new world order is to use its status as the only remaining superpower to lead the way in constructing a global market economy presided over by at least minimally liberal democratic governments. Dupuy contends that the U.S.-led invasion in 1994 was undertaken to achieve democratic stability and implement neoliberalism in Haiti.

Although Dupuy's attempts to link contemporary Haitian politics to

the new order display great knowledge, his analysis is unconvincing. The first chapter of *Haiti in the New World Order*, "Meanings of the New World Order," basically stands alone. The connection between the reality of the new order and that of Haiti is remote at best. Dupuy overreaches in linking the 1994 invasion to "the implementation of Washington's neoliberal agenda" (p. 2). The fact is, Haiti is a negligible player in the world economy. As non-Haitian analysts never tire of repeating, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. The value of U.S. trade with Haiti, while significant by Haitian standards, is insignificant by U.S. and international standards. The United States has much more at stake economically in, say, the Dominican Republic than in Haiti.

In deciding to invade Haiti, the Clinton administration probably had only two objectives in mind: stopping the flow of refugees into South Florida and achieving a foreign policy victory at minor human costs, especially in U.S. lives. U.S. foreign policy since the cold war has not been made with the farsightedness and sophistication required to support Dupuy's hypothesis. The United States is undeniably the world's preeminent military power and the standard-bearer of global capitalism. Except in cases involving a clear threat to U.S. military security (such as North Korea), any U.S.-led intervention since the cold war is likely to have either a humanitarian or pro-capitalist bent, or both. But the reasons are the U.S. position in the world economy and the effects of elite socialization, not that U.S. policy makers are hell-bent on imposing neoliberalism around the world no matter the costs. It is a safe bet that if Haiti were located further away from the U.S. mainland, Operation Restore Democracy would not have occurred. The fact that the United States has been a nonplayer in such "faraway places" as Rwanda, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo proves the point all too well. It is not that absolutely no link exists between U.S. intervention in Haiti and neoliberalism, only that such a link exists more out of ideological conviction than out of economic necessity.

Dupuy is to be credited for placing the Haitian dilemma in a broader international context. Although it ultimately will be up to Haitians to lift Haiti from misery to at least dignified poverty, the effort cannot be completed without participation by the international community. Haiti, with a collapsed economy and a growing population, simply does not have the resources to pull itself up by its own bootstraps. Haiti needs everything—from competent police and judges to clean water (Gros 1998; de Beer 1997). Various proposals have been floated in recent years to achieve renewal in Haiti. They fall into two broad categories: those that advocate greater market penetration of the Haitian economy through privatization, free trade, and multinational investment in the assembly subsector; and those that advocate Haiti-centered development through a revival of agriculture and artisanal activities. For purposes of simplification, the first set of proposals will be referred to here as neoliberalism, the second set as populism.

*Renewal Solutions: Neoliberalism versus Populism*

The neoliberal approach can be found in virtually all of the works produced by U.S. analysts of Haiti in recent years. One contribution to *Haitian Frustrations, Dilemmas for U.S. Policy: A Report of the CSIS Americas Program* envisages creating in Haiti “a competitive business climate” that would make the country attractive to foreign investors. In *Haiti Renewed: Political and Economic Prospects*, contributor Clive Gray makes the neoliberal case more pointedly: “Given the weakness of domestic purchasing power and the degradation of its farmland, Haiti has no choice but to integrate itself into the global economy by attracting investors to develop niches in two world markets, those of light manufacturers and tourism” (p. 185). Later in the same essay, Gray recommends that Haiti be turned into “a free trade area.” Gray’s enthusiasm for free trade is tempered somewhat by Michel Laguerre’s analysis of the Haitian diaspora. Haitians send at least five hundred million dollars a year back to Haiti, a sum larger than the foreign aid provided by other countries. Greater integration of the Haitian diaspora into Haiti’s economic and political affairs, as explored by Laguerre, could make highly unpopular neoliberal prescriptions less essential to a reform-package strategy.

In *The Haitian Dilemma*, Preeg makes a more nuanced case, but he too falls into the neoliberal camp. The U.S. ambassador to Haiti between 1981 and 1983, Preeg advances a rural development strategy and an urban one. The first involves reforestation and family planning. Preeg’s urban development strategy aims at creating private-sector employment using Haiti’s supply of cheap labor. He gives top priority to assembly manufacturing, which at its peak before the 1991 coup employed fifty thousand Haitians. Preeg laments the fact that many assembly plants were closed during the embargo years (1991 to 1994). Their return en masse to Haiti hinges on the Haitian government taking urgent steps, such as improving basic services like roads, telecommunications, electricity, and security. Preeg also recommends a macroeconomic program of free trade, privatization of state enterprises, and fiscal reform (pp. 49–50).

Others are skeptical of neoliberalism, including an influential wing of the ruling Lavalas movement. They do not believe that the free market, backed by a more competent and less predatory state, can pull Haiti out of grinding poverty. They support policies that might be termed populist because they are aimed at improving the well-being of the rural populace. Unlike neoliberalism, with its emphasis on economic growth and urban industrialization based on cheap labor, populism focuses on equity in general and improving the peasant economy in particular. Economic populists favor reinvigorating Haitian agriculture in order to make Haiti self-sufficient again in food production, along with small-scale artisanal and non-wood-burning businesses, increased wages for assembly plant workers, union-

ization, some protection of domestic industries, selective privatization of state-owned enterprises, and greater state investment in education, health, and the environment.

As Preeg and others concede, Haiti's problems are extremely complex. Their resolution will likely require approaches that are bold and innovative, not the one-potion-heals-all economic concoctions of the International Monetary Fund. The underlying assumption behind neoliberal solutions, like those contained in structural adjustment programs, is that countries have too much state, which stifles market activities. Removing the state in key areas is therefore necessary to unleash the full forces of the market. No one needs to teach Haitians about entrepreneurship. A trip to any rural town on market day in Haiti (*jou maché*) or a conversation with a *madan sara* (an itinerant Haitian market woman who travels throughout the Caribbean to buy and sell) will quickly prove that point.

The problem in Haiti is not too much state but too little in an environment of unregulated private monopolies owned by an unpatriotic proto-bourgeoisie (Gros 1996). Indeed, if a case study exists arguing against the uncritical acceptance of privatization as a tool of economic policy, Haiti is it. Nearly two hundred years of informal "privatization" of the state have left Haiti lacking the capacity to deliver even the most basic of public services: security and justice. While the Haitian state has to be downsized in number, it must simultaneously be upsized in efficiency and effectiveness. Although the idea may go against the natural tendencies of neoliberals, putting Haiti on its feet will require expanding the state in some key areas (public health, education, the environment, policing, and the justice system) while cutting it in others. Thus far, the emphasis has been on reducing the size of the state rather than strengthening its capacity to perform its remaining functions.

The post-cold war world has witnessed a Procrustean fascination with privatization, as if it were the solution to all problems. Privatizing Haiti's nine or so state-owned enterprises will have zero effect on the lives of most Haitians, however, because their problems lie elsewhere. What immediate good will it do Haitian peasants to have TELECO (the state-owned telephone company) privatized when there are only sixty thousand phone lines, at least 80 percent of them in Port-au-Prince? The point is not that privatization should not be considered in Haiti but that its effects are likely to be so modest as to go unnoticed. Thus to present privatization as a panacea in Haiti is to be either naive or intellectually dishonest. Haiti's history documents that privately owned monopolies can be at least as detrimental to a country's well-being as publicly owned ones.

There are no magic bullets for Haiti. Solutions will have to be crafted from all angles. But surely the peasants, who still make up 70 percent of the population, will have to play a key role in any recovery strategy. This approach does not mean returning Haiti to autarky but that rural develop-

ment should be of greater concern. Land reform, reforestation, road building, marketing cooperatives, and greater farmer access to inputs, credits, and storage facilities should all be part of a comprehensive effort to revive Haitian agriculture. Because farming takes place in an environment of low productivity and high dependency, most Haitian farmers derive income from nonfarming activities, such as producing and selling charcoal. Rural job creation will be necessary along with land reform and other peasant-friendly measures to raise income.

Trade, although no panacea, could benefit Haiti if properly calibrated. Haiti could take advantage of its comparative advantage in some "exotic" fruits, plants, and spirits, such as mango, vetiver, rum, and gourmet coffee (Haitian Bleu is a hit among coffee connoisseurs in the United States). As the richest import market in the world, the United States could help Haiti by dropping some of its protectionist policies toward certain agricultural products. An urban strategy would have to involve not only assembly plants but tourism and the artisan subsector. Haitians are excellent painters and wood carvers. With modest start-up capital, they could turn shacks into "brain shops." Neoliberals lament too much the loss of "sweatshops" where Haitian workers are mere cogs in a dependent industrialization machine dominated by U.S. capital and cultural symbols (like the Disney characters, Victoria's Secret, and Barney the purple dinosaur). They lose sight of the ingenuity of the Haitian people, who for nearly two hundred years have shown an extraordinary capacity to survive against long odds.

Yet one wonders how realistic the populist prescriptions are. Haiti is one of the most dependent countries in the world. Fully two-thirds of the Haitian government's budget comes from foreign aid. The international community's experience with rural development has produced few successes. This track record has left donors deeply suspicious of economic strategies aimed at peasant farmers in the developing world. But without international support, it is doubtful that Haiti can ever hope to reinvigorate its agriculture. Populists always lash out at the low-wage jobs in the assembly sector, yet the individuals who take those jobs are not irrational. They must believe that it is better to be an overexploited worker than an unemployed one, otherwise many of the jobs on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince would have remained unclaimed. Populists are right to be morally outraged at the low wages and poor working conditions in Haiti's sweatshops. But what are the immediate alternatives to hunger for many Haitians?

Neoliberals and populists agree that the Haitian problématique will persist as long as Haiti is not at peace internally. This is the main thesis of Chetan Kumar's short but excellent *Building Peace in Haiti*, which bridges the gap between neoliberals and populists. The case Kumar makes is simple but not trivial. Haiti's problem is essentially political; everything else

(economic development, environmental rebirth, a working bureaucracy, smooth relations with neighbors) flows from that. Haiti will experience neither stability nor prosperity nor democracy “until a vital and substantive dialogue—aimed at developing a common vision of the country’s future and a living social pact—is established between all sectors and political tendencies in the country” (p. 31).

Kumar gauges correctly how profoundly divided Haitian society is—and has been since colonial times. Haitians have displayed unity only when faced with foreign threats. Otherwise, Haitian public life has been marred by conflicts among rival factions determined to exclude the majority and each other from the benefits of an ever-shrinking national pie. Haitian politics exhibit an almost kamikaze quality: short-term victories for a few and by any means necessary are pursued with a zeal matched only by the certainty of defeat for Haiti as a country. What strikes anyone familiar with Haitian political life is how seldom politicians deal with each other openly and in good faith (Paquin 1983). Nothing is ever above board and transparent. Issues are confronted instead in an atmosphere of circumlocution, suspicion, and recrimination.

### Conclusion

An impressive amount of work has been produced on Haiti in recent years. Haiti has received more press and scholarly coverage since 1986 than it did during the twenty-nine years of the Duvalier dynasty. Yet as the books reviewed here reveal, scholarship on Haiti is fraught with problems. The volumes are uneven in quality and reflect a profound schism. Disagreements continue over the root causes of Haiti’s problems and their solutions, with divisions between Haiti-born scholars and non-Haitian scholars, between neoliberals and populists. An intellectual rapprochement is needed among Haitian specialists of all ideological strands and nationalities, for the truth surrounding Haiti’s predicament lies somewhere between the archaic structures of Haitian society, including the moral bankruptcy of the Haitian elite, and the patronizing (and I daresay racist) policies of the international community.

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