

FROM HIDDEN HAND TO HEAVY HAND: Sugar, the State, and Migrant Labor in Haiti and the Dominican Republic*

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Abstract: For more than a century, the Dominican sugar industry has hosted seasonal immigrations of neighboring Caribbean islanders as harvest laborers (most recently, Haitians). This migrant labor system is fully comparable to systems of labor control after slavery in other parts of the Caribbean. But the regional historical trend toward more liberal labor relations in commercial agriculture seems largely to have been reversed in the case of Dominican sugar. Between the 1930s and 1960s, the recruitment and employment of harvest labor changed from something resembling free wage labor into a government-managed system of semicoerced exploitation. Processes of state formation in Haiti and the Dominican Republic are crucial in explaining this transformation. Fuller understanding of historical change in the case at hand is afforded by broadening the scope of inquiry beyond the direct confrontation between labor and estate owners and by recognizing that governments and their agents have not always acted in accordance with private agro-industrial interests.

In many Caribbean societies, the transition from slave labor to free wage labor did not occur immediately with emancipation but took many years to complete.¹ After emancipation, according to Bonham Richardson, "Caribbean planters attempted to control members of the newly freed working classes by restricting their access to local lands, enacting immobilizing vagrancy laws, and importing thousands of laborers into the re-

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1. Recent reviews of Caribbean labor history after emancipation include Richardson (1992, 70–77), Scarano (1989), and Stinchcombe (1995, chap. 10).

gion in order to drive wages down" (1992, 70). Thus even after slavery was abolished, what could be called "unfreedom" was maintained in the form of limits on civil rights and constraints on freedom of economic maneuver.

The Dominican Republic, despite never having hosted sugar production on an industrial scale during slavery, invites comparison with other Caribbean societies in the post-emancipation systems of immigrant labor control instituted there during the development of its modern sugar industry. The struggles of Dominican sugar estate owners to diminish their workers' alternatives to estate labor and the efforts of rural Dominicans and Afro-Caribbean immigrants to resist planter domination are comparable to contests for control over labor after slavery in other parts of the Caribbean. Michiel Baud (1992) recently went further than any previous analyst toward situating the Dominican Republic in the comparative framework of unfree labor after slavery. He interpreted the preference for immigrant labor over national labor among Dominican sugarcane growers as well as the use of coercion of various kinds in recruiting and employing immigrant *braceros* as evidence of the Caribbean sugar industry's persistent need for unfree labor. For Baud, Dominican sugar exemplifies how free-market capitalist development and the employment of unfree labor have been complementary rather than contradictory processes on the global economic periphery, even as late as the twentieth century (Baud 1992, 302).

In this article, I seek to build on Baud's insights by exploring how recruitment of harvest labor and employment practices in the Dominican sugar industry have evolved over the past hundred years. I will argue that in the Dominican Republic, the main direction of historical change in relations among immigrant labor, sugar estate owners, and the government runs counter to that observed elsewhere in the Caribbean after slavery and seems unusual from the perspective of third world migration theory. Over the long term, immigrant recruitment and transportation as well as efforts to control immigrants' mobility within the Dominican Republic involved escalating levels of direct government interference.² Over the long term, migrants tended to lose rather than gain significant freedoms, reflecting a historical shift from a system in which labor was controlled primarily by market forces, to a government-managed system of semi-coerced exploitation.

In most Caribbean societies, systems of labor control evolved differently than they did in the Dominican Republic. Legal restrictions on

2. *State intervention* refers to actions taken by government agents (those to whom power has been delegated by the central government) that impinge significantly on markets and other relations involving private property. This definition applies regardless of whether these actions are centrally coordinated and spring from explicit policy, are unorganized and pursued mainly out of individual opportunism, or are even contradictory in purpose.

workers' civil liberties gave way over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to systems of economic constraints (albeit often still rooted in an artificial, planter-contrived scarcity of productive resources). Eventually, workers' consumption needs and aspirations combined with market-based rewards and penalties came to assume primary responsibility for mobilizing large surpluses of cheap labor for seasonal employment in commercial agriculture. In brief, the transition from slave to free wage labor elsewhere in the Caribbean, slow and tortuous as it was, led in the end to something recognizable as free wage labor in export agriculture.

In the case of Dominican sugar, however, state involvement seems to have covered the same ground but largely in reverse order, from something resembling free wage labor to a government-managed system of semicoerced exploitation. As in other third world migrations, active recruitment was required to launch large-scale labor circulation from Haiti to the Dominican Republic. Yet this recruitment was at first a largely private venture. Governments on both sides of the island were for decades too weak to impose their will on wealthy sugar planters. Only in subsequent years, as the Dominican and Haitian states grew stronger, did governments in the Dominican Republic (and to a lesser extent, in Haiti) incrementally penetrate and take control of the migrant labor system. They eventually displaced private sugar interests, recruiting and resettling migrant workers, and controlling the mobility of Afro-Caribbean immigrants inside the Dominican Republic. Thus processes of state formation on either side of the island are central to my analysis of how the migrant labor system has changed over the course of its century of history.

This trend toward increasing government involvement in migrant recruitment, resettlement, and control seems unusual in terms of migration theory. Students of third world migration have argued that geographical disparities in income opportunities alone have rarely caused individuals to begin to move in large numbers, even to neighboring societies (Piore 1979, chap. 2; Portes and Walton 1981, chap. 2). Rather, active inducement by government or host employers has usually been necessary to set labor in motion on a large scale. At later stages, active state involvement in mobilizing labor generally wanes as migrants themselves take over the tasks of recruiting and resettling newcomers. Worldwide, migration streams have often become self-perpetuating. The migrations of Haitians and other Caribbean islanders as sugarcane workers to the Dominican Republic present a challenge to migration theory in that government management of these flows from the late 1930s to the 1980s neither diminished nor became less overt but grew progressively more direct, pervasive, and coercive.

My effort to chart the changing contours of labor control in the Dominican sugar industry is based largely on the findings of earlier aca-

demographic studies of this migrant labor system. I will first provide a brief overview of the regional historical context of the Dominican sugar industry and then trace the changing relationships among sugar, migrant labor, and the Haitian and Dominican states. The narrative will unfold more or less chronologically but is basically organized thematically around three sets of linked processes. Each set ran its course primarily during a single historical period. The first of these processes was the formation of the modern Dominican sugar industry between 1875 and 1930. Bridging the first and last periods (and overlapping chronologically with each) was a process of accelerated state formation on both sides of the island, set in motion largely by the U.S. military governments imposed in the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924 and in Haiti from 1915 to 1934. The last of the three processes discussed is state penetration of the migrant labor system, occurring from the late 1930s to 1966, with important continuities into the present.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

Given the Caribbean region's long history of forced immigration and bonded labor, it is not surprising that geographical mobility was one of the first ways that Afro-Caribbean peoples asserted their freedom after emancipation (Richardson 1983, chap. 1). As Woodville Marshall observed, on islands like Barbados and Antigua that were small, densely populated, and dominated by one crop, "those ex-slaves who wished to 'better' themselves away from the estates had to think of emigration" (Marshall 1968, 254). Haiti stood at the opposite extreme from these small sugar islands in land availability, differing not just in size but in the historical circumstances of its independence (Mintz 1979).

After Spain ceded the western part of the island of Hispaniola to France in the late seventeenth century, the French colony of Saint-Domingue (later to become Haiti) was developed on the basis of enslaved African labor into perhaps the most profitable colony of its time for producing export staples. The Haitian Revolution (1791–1803) dealt European fortunes across the island a complete reversal, achieving independence from colonial rule as well as emancipation for the enslaved. After independence was won, Haiti's freed people had the advantage of inhabiting an island with a rugged and sparsely populated interior. Geographical mobility after independence consisted largely of freed people abandoning the coastal plains to settle unused land in the interior (Murray 1977, 18–20).

Only after the turn of the twentieth century did Haiti's patterns of geographical mobility begin to resemble those of its smaller island neighbors. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, Haitians came to work side by side in the cane fields of the Dominican Republic with immigrants

from such classic plantation islands as St. Kitts, Montserrat, and Antigua. At the same time, Haitians joined Jamaicans in emigrating by tens of thousands to the sugar estates of Cuba (Pérez de la Riva 1979). In spite of Haiti's distinctive history and geography, its streams of migrants eventually converged with those of other Caribbean islands. Haiti's colonizers, like those of the other islands that sent workers to the Dominican Republic, had established patterns of external economic dependence from which post-plantation Haiti never fully freed itself (Nicholls 1985, chap. 5; Trouillot 1990, 44–50). As Robert Rotberg has cautioned, even without a successful slave uprising, Saint-Domingue/Haiti would have eventually lost its leading position in world sugar production and joined the list of labor-exporting islands (Rotberg 1971, 38–40).

The Dominican Republic also joined the “relay race” of Caribbean sugar islands, but only as this succession was reaching its end. The history of Santo Domingo/Dominican Republic is a study in contrasts with that of Saint-Domingue/Haiti. Even though Hispaniola was the first place where sugarcane was planted in the Americas, Spanish efforts to produce sugar for export did not endure there beyond the sixteenth century (Ratekin 1954). On the eve of the Haitian Revolution, Santo Domingo lagged far behind Saint-Domingue in population and trade. For much of the first half of the nineteenth century, Haiti was militarily the dominant power. Haiti conquered and annexed Spanish Santo Domingo in 1822, but in 1844, residents of the eastern territory expelled the Haitian occupiers and proclaimed an independent Dominican Republic.

The opposed destinies of the two nations took a new twist in the late nineteenth century. Between 1875 and 1930, the Dominican Republic witnessed the creation of modern mechanized sugar factories and extensive plantations of sugarcane. Although global demand for tropical staples was stimulating the growth of capital-intensive agriculture in the Dominican Republic, Haiti's century-old prohibition on selling land to foreign interests hindered foreign investment. This prohibition remained in place until 1915, when the United States invaded Haiti and established an occupation that lasted until 1934. From 1916 to 1924, the United States militarily occupied the Dominican Republic as well. Before the U.S. invasion, men from Haiti probably had already begun to emigrate as harvest laborers to sugar estates across the border. Export-production levels as well as patterns of labor circulation reflected a shift in the commercial center of gravity of the island from Haiti to the Dominican Republic.

The tardy arrival of the Dominican Republic on the international sugar scene differentiated it from all other Caribbean sugar producers. The Dominican Republic began its sugar experiment well after the emancipation of its slaves and therefore did not go through a stage in which the production of sugar for export on a large scale depended on the labor of

enslaved Africans. Yet in a closely related way, the growth of a modern sugar industry in the Dominican Republic followed a pattern as old and familiar to the Caribbean as sugar production itself. The Dominican Republic's sparse population and easy availability of land caused the country to resemble an open frontier in 1875. The interior still held enough open land to accommodate rural inhabitants displaced by the expanding sugar estates. If left free, rural Dominicans could easily earn a living as independent agricultural producers without needing to sell their labor to large proprietors. As happened so often before in the Caribbean, the new sugar industrialists of the Dominican Republic turned to external sources of labor to assemble a labor force whose access to the island's productive resources could be artificially restricted. Any doubts about the suitability of nonslave immigrants as cane workers were allayed by the success of neighboring territories' experiments with indentured immigration, from China to Cuba (1847 to 1874) and from India to Trinidad and British Guiana (1845 to 1917) (Look Lai 1993).

MEN, MILLS, AND MONEY: THE FORMATION OF THE DOMINICAN MIGRANT LABOR SYSTEM, 1875–1930

The period from 1875 to 1930 saw the incorporation of rural Dominicans as harvest laborers into the rapidly expanding sugar industry, followed by their effective exclusion and replacement by immigrants from nearby Caribbean societies. Importing immigrants as seasonal cane workers gave sugar estate owners several advantages—not just lower wages but increased control over the labor supply and greater ease of maintaining worker discipline. Dominican governments consistently favored the development of large-scale commercial agriculture, but legislation during this period became increasingly hostile to Afro-Caribbean immigration. Even so, the debate was rendered moot by the central government's inability to implement policies that might conflict with increasingly powerful sugar interests. Migrant recruitment and resettlement remained basically private activities under the control of the sugar companies.

In 1874, on the eve of a revolution in sugar production, the Dominican Republic had not experienced much plantation agriculture and exported little to the outside world (Castillo 1981, 37–38). Yet once a measure of stability had been established, the ease with which good land could be acquired in the Dominican Republic attracted foreign entrepreneurs. Investors were also drawn to the country by liberal exemptions on taxes and duties for export agriculture (Castillo 1985, 216; Moya Pons 1984, 407–9).

The sugar industry's growth was aided at every step by a compliant host government. For most of the industry's formative period (1875 to

1930), Dominican governments granted sugar producers exemptions on taxes and duties related to export agriculture (Báez Evertsz 1978, 49–50). And in 1911–1912, the Dominican Congress passed laws giving the sugar companies improved legal grounds for contesting the titles of customary landholders. These legislative tendencies gained even greater momentum after the United States took power in the Dominican Republic in 1916 (Calder 1984, 107–10).

From an early date, the Dominican sugar industry showed a capacity to expand in spite of unfavorable world market conditions (Báez Evertsz 1978, 26–27). To satisfy the new mills' growing demand for sugarcane, mill owners and independent cane growers steadily expanded the amount of land they cultivated, driving off any ranchers or agriculturalists who stood in the way through purchase, litigation, or intimidation (Calder 1981, 21, 44). During the industry's first two decades of operation, the harvest labor force was composed mainly of Dominican nationals. These mostly seasonal proletarians took up wage labor during part of the year but were unwilling to relinquish a foothold on land of their own (Castillo 1981, 39–40; 1985, 228; Hoetink 1982, 171).

In the 1880s and 1890s, this labor supply became a source of increasing dissatisfaction for estate owners. In 1884 a strike by field laborers foiled owners' attempts to cut back wages as a way of reducing costs (Bryan 1985, 236). About this time, cane cutters opened a new avenue of wage negotiation by holding out for payment by task rather than a fixed daily wage (Castillo 1985, 229–30). Whereas payment by task gave the worker a regular opportunity to haggle for higher wages, cane growers preferred to pay a fixed daily wage and to deploy cutters in closely supervised gangs. According to prominent sugar industrialist William Bass, payment by task involved not just "long and heated debate" but "a tacit recognition that the laborer is in a position to impose his demands on the owner" (cited in Castillo 1985, 230). Even if Bass exaggerated the workers' power, his comments suggest that he and other owners viewed the prevailing system of harvest labor as a barometer of labor's bargaining power.

In the minds of many estate owners, all the problems involved in recruiting harvest laborers from the local population had a single solution: import cheaper and more easily disciplined workers from elsewhere. As early as 1884, workers from the Lesser Antilles began to find their way to the Dominican sugarcane harvests. In 1893 leading sugar producers formed an association for the recruitment of foreign *braceros*, the *Sociedad de Inmigración de Macorís*. In the earliest years of recruitment, hundreds of Puerto Ricans went to the Dominican Republic as contract workers, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to settle Canary Island immigrants as cane workers. But before long, migrants from the Lesser Antilles predominated (Castillo 1978, 29, 31–37; Murphy 1991, 47–51).

West Indian Immigration

Each year between 1900 and 1930, thousands of West Indians migrated as cane workers to the Dominican Republic, most from various Leeward Islands that included St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, Antigua, Montserrat, and St. Martin. Most of the West Indians who went to the Dominican Republic were recruited by agents of particular plantations (Castillo 1978, 41–44, 49–50). After the harvest, the majority would return to their home islands, but some stayed on in Santo Domingo. Dominicans dubbed the West Indians “*cocolos*” or more politely, “*ingleses*,” whether they came from British, Danish, Dutch, or French possessions.³

Certain Dominican elites viewed West Indian immigration with alarm, convinced that foreign labor and foreign capital were turning sugar-producing areas of the country into a nation apart. Dominican workers also organized to oppose West Indian immigration. The sugar companies and their Dominican allies, however, resolutely opposed any move to restrict their freedom to bring in laborers from wherever they wanted. In 1912 the Dominican Congress enacted tough restrictions on nonwhite immigration, but these regulations were ultimately ignored in the interest of protecting the sugar producers (Baud 1992, 317–18; Bryan 1985, 242–45; Castillo 1978, 43–47).

Having failed to prevent further West Indian immigration, Dominican lawmakers pushed forward measures aimed at putting more Dominicans to work in the cane harvest. In 1906, 1908, and 1911, the central government enacted measures to punish “vagrancy” that included provisions for forced labor. In 1913 a contract-labor scheme was tried out, offering Dominican nationals the same wages as foreign workers plus free passage, meals, and medical care on condition that the laborer complete the harvest (Bryan 1985, 236–37). Yet as Patrick Bryan concluded, “Persuasion, coercion, and recruitment . . . failed to lift the number of Dominicans working on sugar estates” (1985, 237). Again, Dominican leaders were unable to implement reforms that might have countered the sugar magnates’ preference for immigrant labor.

Forms of Labor Control

West Indian immigration enabled the sugar companies to hold the line and even cut back on wages (Castillo 1978, 30–31). Wage rates as well as forms of payment and work conditions reflected the changing balance of bargaining power between harvest laborers and cane growers. By century’s end, cane growers had ceased paying by the task and reinstated ganged day labor during cane harvests (Castillo 1981, 44). By this time

3. The derivation of the term *cocolo* is unknown.

also, mill owners had standardized their practice of issuing advances on monthly or semi-monthly payments to workers via credit usable only at plantation stores (Hoetink 1982, 15).

Growers also enjoyed a measure of control over West Indian labor that was denied them with Dominican semiproletarians. The West Indians were not just a source of cheap labor but workers who could be subjected to harsh discipline with less hesitation than Dominican nationals. West Indians could be obligated to work at night or on Sundays without overtime pay or left idle and hungry for days, as best suited production schedules. Growers benefited not just from lower labor costs but from the greater assurance with which they could command the pace and timing of fieldwork with an immigrant labor force. Such control was an important consideration in an industry where coordinating output in field and factory might spell the difference between operating at a profit or a loss.

These labor conditions greatly discouraged the remaining Dominican harvest laborers. As the century ended, price inflation also made poor Dominicans increasingly reluctant to recur even seasonally to wage labor (Castillo 1985, 230–31). As the pace of land expropriation quickened, displaced agriculturalists avoided the sugar estates and moved on to claim land elsewhere as their own (Calder 1981, 19). By the 1910s, Dominicans had mostly abandoned labor in the cane fields to immigrant workers (Bryan 1985, 242).

The *cocolos*, in contrast, were rarely capable of retreating from the sugar estates into other forms of employment. Having relied on the sugar companies for transportation to the Dominican Republic, West Indians had no certain means of returning home on short notice. The immigrants did not speak Spanish and lacked enduring ties with Dominican nationals, which made it difficult to go it alone off company property. A steady labor supply was therefore another advantage that immigrant labor afforded estate owners. When employing immigrants instead of Dominican nationals, owners could be more certain that workers recruited at the beginning of the harvest would still be working at the end. Dominican semiproletarians had shown a disconcerting tendency to leave the sugar estates after the first rains of spring or as soon as they had saved a satisfying sum of money, whether the harvest had ended or not (Vidal 1926, 6–7).

On the sugar estates, the ease with which replacement workers could be recruited left the immigrants little bargaining power. In theory, many of the West Indians had consular representation as British subjects. Yet the British authorities probably could have done little to help individual immigrants once they entered sugar company property (Richardson 1983, 128). As if the plantations' enormous size was not enough to assure domination of their surroundings, estate owners looked disapprovingly on any income-generating activities that might create alternatives to work in the fields. In the company compounds for agricultural workers (*bateyes*),

growers owned all the land and buildings and would not permit subsistence gardens or family shops. As Baud observed, the plantations were “well-protected bastions of (foreign) capital with practical sovereignty on their premises” and “their own means of communication, transportation and police force” (Baud 1992, 311). As a result, the *cocolos* had less power than Dominican seasonal proletarians to demand better treatment and pay. Restraints on collective action may also have been self-imposed. As temporary workers, the *cocolos* were interested mainly in earning as much as they could in a short span of time and may have been reluctant to press for improvements that would yield mainly long-term benefits.

By the late 1920s, decreasing numbers of West Indians were going to the Dominican Republic. Many were discouraged by falling real wage rates in the sugar industry (Bryan 1985, 245–46; Castillo 1978, 58; Richardson 1983, 148–50). It may also be that the *cocolos* had become too assertive and well organized in demanding labor rights, leading cane growers to avoid hiring them as agricultural workers (Baud 1992, 310). Over the preceding three decades, the bargaining power of the *cocolos* had probably been enhanced by their having captured at least two employment niches outside the cane fields, as dockers in the port of San Pedro de Macorís and as operatives in the sugar mills (Castillo 1978, 55; 1979, 33; Murphy 1991, 42–43).

Immigration from Haiti

The Dominican sugar producers had already found a replacement supply of labor in Haiti. Official records suggest that as early as 1920, nearly equal numbers of Haitians and West Indians lived on the sugar estates (Castillo 1978, 53). Because movement across the border was entirely undocumented before 1915, neither the starting date nor the early form and scale of emigration to the sugar estates are known (Acosta 1976, 134–35; Castillo 1978, 43). Suzy Castor estimated that between 1915 and 1930, southern Haiti alone “lost more than 80,000 men” to the cane fields across the border (1971, 84).⁴ By 1926 an estimated 100,000 Haitian workers and dependents were living in the Dominican Republic (Knight 1928, 158–59).

By the 1930s, Haitians accounted for a majority of the harvest labor force. The replacement of West Indians by Haitians coincided with a further deterioration of the *braceros*’ economic situation. In 1930 pay cuts halved cane workers’ wages. By this time, cane growers had also instituted piece-rate wages in place of the old system of ganged day labor (Knight 1928, 157; Orbe 1981, 27, 30–31). Under the piece-rate wage system, cane cutters would be paid only by how many tons of cane they cut

4. This and all subsequent translations from Spanish- and French-language sources are my own.

individually, as measured at weigh stations in the fields.⁵ From management's point of view, piece rates were a more efficient way of extracting labor because each cutter's pay was calibrated directly to output and because fewer supervisory personnel were required than with the old day-labor gangs. There is no way to say for sure whether coercion was felt more keenly by the men who had earlier worked under the supervision of a rifle-toting overseer or by those who would thereafter be driven by the impersonal incentive of obtaining a wage if they worked rather than going hungry if they did not. The easing of direct physical supervision in the cane fields probably made it easier for *braceros* to abandon the estates surreptitiously and also gave those who stayed behind greater leeway to fit cooking and other tasks of group maintenance into the work day. Yet it seems hard to deny that piece rates constituted a new economic (rather than physical or legal) instrument of coercion.

THE FALLOUT OF INTERVENTION: STATE FORMATION AND DICTATORSHIP ON HISPANIOLA, 1915–1961

The U.S. military governments of Haiti (1915–1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916–1924) began to set up conditions for the state to take an increasingly active hand in *bracero* recruitment and resettlement. In both countries, the central government gained new powers as a result of fiscal reforms and the establishment of national constabularies under U.S. rule. As an unanticipated by-product of seizing power in both countries, the Yankees had an unprecedented opportunity to reform labor practices across the island. Yet on both sides of the border, what the occupiers failed to do seems more important than what they accomplished on the labor front. U.S. actions concerning labor migration seem particularly timid when compared with what followed once *de jure* sovereignty was restored to both countries. With weak governments on both sides of the island, Dominican sugar industrialists began the twentieth century with a free hand to impose almost any labor solutions they might realistically desire. After 1930, however, they found it increasingly necessary to seek

5. Piece-rate wages differed crucially from the systems of payment by task used in the 1880s and 1890s in that piece rates imposed a standard rate of remuneration for a standard unit of product (e.g., a set number of pesos for each ton of cane cut and carted to a company weigh station). From the perspective of the cane cutters, a big difference often existed in the potential labor productivity of each field (measured in terms of the weight of the cane), depending on the variety and condition of the cane it contained (Le Grand 1995, 575). A "good field" held tall, heavy, straight cane; a "bad field" contained cane that was stunted, thin, fallen, or choked with weeds. Under the older task system, these differences could be taken into account as the pay for each task was negotiated by *mayordomos* and individual workers or work teams. These negotiations could also be influenced by other factors that included personal ties, the worker's negotiating ability and experience, and temporary scarcities of labor.

compromise with newly powerful and sometimes unpredictable government administrations. Thus the contest for control of immigrant labor gained a new dimension, pitting sugar producers against the state as well as against labor.

In Haiti the recruitment of *braceros* was a private affair. Each estate owner hired agents in Haiti to do recruiting and paid each worker's passage. The U.S. military authorities in Haiti at first did not attempt to control emigration but simply levied a modest tax on it (Moral 1961, 69–70). After 1924 the Haitian-American "joint dictatorship" (Haitian in name only) also required that each recruiter carry an official license, for which the regime charged a fee of one hundred dollars for Haitians and five hundred for non-Haitians (Pérez de la Riva 1979, 43). For a time, emigration fees and recruiting permits became the Haitian government's largest internal source of revenue (Moral 1961, 69–70).

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, similar efforts by Dominican officials to collect immigration taxes were regularly rebuffed by ship captains and the sugar companies. More often than not, shipping and sugar businesses simply declined to pay the fees demanded of them, just as they refused to abide by governmental caps on the number of *braceros* that could be imported in a given year (Baud 1992, 311, 315; Castillo 1978, 44, 75–77). Even the U.S. military government promulgated its own share of futile immigration legislation. It enacted decrees to bar the entry of foreign *braceros* not sponsored by Dominican employers and to regularize the residence status of authorized guest workers (Castillo 1978, 47–48). In spite of this legislation, the occupiers made little effort to interdict clandestine entrants at the Haitian frontier or to inspect the sugar estates for undocumented workers. Just as in the decade preceding the U.S. takeover, the Dominican authorities seemed unable to implement labor laws that sugar company owners found inconvenient.

State Formation under U.S. Rule

Probably much more important than the new immigration legislation was the U.S. creation of an effective national police force. Before the invasion, governments on both sides of the island were periodically challenged or even overthrown by regional militias. The creation of a national constabulary in each country to defend the authority of the central state succeeded in suppressing the military dimension of regional factionalism (Castor 1974). Another effect of centralizing state power was the rise of brutal dictatorships in both countries: headed in the Dominican Republic by Rafael Trujillo from 1930 to 1961; and by the Duvaliers, father and son, in Haiti, from 1957 to 1986. U.S.-trained military forces helped these dictators impose absolute control (Calder 1984, 61–62; Castor 1974, 63; Trouillot 1985, 21–22). Both dictatorships extended and entrenched the roles

played by their respective governments in channeling Haitian labor toward Dominican sugar estates.

On the Dominican side of the border, establishment of the Guardia Nacional made policing the movements of Afro-Caribbean immigrants a practical possibility for the first time. Before the Guardia was created, law enforcers were spread thinly across the countryside and held tenuous control at most over the rural populace. The central authorities were hard pressed even to collect duties on the Haitian frontier, let alone keep tabs on immigrants entering Dominican territory (Baud 1993, 49–56). Only after the U.S. occupation were Dominican police officers reported to be rounding up Haitian immigrants in non-sugar-producing areas of the Dominican Republic (Baud 1992, 316).

Fiscal reforms also strengthened the hand of the government. As Baud pointed out, “An essential characteristic of the Dominican state until the 1930s was its weak economic basis. Import/export taxes were the only source of income for Dominican governments” (Baud 1992, 311). The government, financially weaker than some of the sugar companies, under the leadership of President Ulises Heureaux (1884–1899) came to depend on leading sugar industrialists for credit. Such extreme dependence made it unlikely that Dominican leaders would act contrary to the interests of the industry’s existing owners. Lower-level government officials enriched themselves illicitly by doing the mill owners’ bidding (Baud 1992, 316). Worse, much of the sugar industry’s formative period overlapped with a deepening state crisis in finances and foreign debt (Hoetink 1982, 84–93). This outcome led in 1905 to U.S. receivership of Dominican customs. U.S. control of Dominican state finances expanded in the years before and after the U.S. military takeover in 1916 (Moya Pons 1984, chap. 33).

Ironically, U.S.-imposed fiscal reforms ultimately enhanced the Dominican government’s ability to act independently of the wishes of the U.S.-based owners of the country’s largest sugar companies by eliminating the government’s need to obtain credit from large entrepreneurs (Be-tances 1995, 55–56). Under U.S. rule, tax collection was improved, internal revenue rocketed from 10 to 60 percent of total revenues, overall government revenues increased, and much of the country’s foreign debt was liquidated (Calder 1984, 74–75). With the restoration of Dominican financial sovereignty in 1941, a major instrument of direct U.S. control was lifted from the Dominican leadership, and the government generated more ample and reliable revenues than it did before U.S. intervention. Without these revenues, it is unlikely that the central government would have been able to hold sway in all parts of the country, challenge the political domination of U.S. sugar corporations, and otherwise shape the lives of ordinary Dominicans, as it increasingly managed to do under the Trujillo regime.

After 1937 the Trujillo dictatorship also led a propaganda effort aimed at defining Haitians as being not just culturally distinct but racially different from the Dominican people and threatening to them. This racialized concept of Dominican national identity was used to justify excluding Haitians from mainstream socioeconomic opportunities in the Dominican Republic.

By the 1930s, Dominican fears of Haitian military conquest or commercial domination had given way to apprehensions about "*invasión pacífica*" from Haiti. It was feared that Haiti might insidiously gain hegemony over all of Hispaniola via infiltration by its numerically superior population into Dominican territory. Elite observers assumed that Haitian frontier settlers would not assimilate Dominican ways and would be capable of Haitianizing the Dominicans with whom they came into contact. In the words of one prominent apologist of the Trujillo regime (first published in 1939), "The morals of the Dominican peasant in the rural areas where commerce with Haiti has been greatest tend to decline visibly to approach . . . those of their [Haitian] neighbors" (Balaguer 1985, 45). Neither government had much control over the border, and individuals on either side circulated freely between the two countries.

This state of affairs was brought to an abrupt halt in 1937 when Trujillo unleashed the "*corte*" ("mowing down") of Haitians living in the Dominican frontier region and northern Cibao Valley. In a matter of days, as many as twenty-five thousand Haitian men, women, and children were murdered without warning by members of the Guardia Nacional and Trujillo loyalists. What political goal Trujillo intended this colossal atrocity to achieve remains unclear (Vega 1988, chaps. 9–10). But it is significant that the killings centered in areas near the border with Haiti while sparing Haitians who resided on the sugar estates (Crassweller 1966, 155–56). Regardless of the dictator's intentions, no more chilling way could be imagined of conveying to Haitian immigrants the message that the sugar bateyes would be their only secure place on Dominican soil. In response to the massacre, the Haitian government suspended permission for recruitment of braceros.

In the years following the *corte*, the government-controlled press and a subservient intelligentsia crowned Trujillo "Defensor de la Nacionalidad Dominicana" and directed public attention with renewed vigor to "the Haitian menace to the Dominican race and culture" (Vega 1988, 23). Dominican journalists and politicians earlier had directed racist slurs against Afro-Caribbean immigrants (Bryan 1985, 244–45; Castillo 1978, 42–43). Under Trujillo, fear of Haiti was expressed more than ever in racial rather than strategic terms, concerning not land and markets but the bodies and souls of the Dominican people. Trujillo asserted that whiteness,

hispanidad, and Catholicism were not lost or debased characteristics but were immanent in the Dominican national essence as well as manifest in the manners and mores of the Dominican people (Franco 1973, 98–99). He rejected the old elite opinion that the Dominican masses were too Africanized to be capable of democracy or higher learning, thus holding forth hope that Dominicans could be redeemed from Haitian influence simply by removing the Haitians from their midst. The Trujillo regime promoted Hispanicism and attempted to erase memory of the nation's African heritage in the schools, the press and radio, public monuments, and rallies and direct political activities. For example, the categories of racial classification designated in the 1930s for the new national identity card excluded the possibility that any Dominican might be "black" (a term generally reserved for Haitians and other Afro-Caribbean immigrants), classifying Dominicans instead as either "white" or some shade of "*indio*" ("Amerindian") (Incháustegui Cabral 1976, 6).⁶

Many ordinary Dominicans surely recognized the ideology of hispanidad as the empty façade that it was. Yet the authoritative idea that Afro-Caribbean immigrants were racially black and culturally African while Dominicans were nonblack and Hispanic probably resonated with many Dominicans' sense that "their 'own' Negroes . . . [were] racially less 'pure' and therefore esthetically more attractive than those from Cuba, Haiti, or the Virgin Islands" (Hoetink 1970, 117). Defining Haitian immigrants as racial as well as ethnic "others" also facilitated identifying them as "social filth" within the Dominican body politic (Derby 1994), enhancing the rationale and pressure for Haitians to be confined to those areas of the country where their presence was deemed necessary.

Even so, there is reason to suspect that Trujillo and his successors in power stood to gain more from anti-Haitianism as rhetoric than as policy. Trujillo's intellectual acolytes portrayed the whole prior history of the Dominican Republic as one of lost opportunities for nation building and credited him with restoring order, dignity, and integrity to the nation by defending hispanidad (Cassá 1982, 773). Fear of "the Haitian menace" justified not just Trujillo's rule but dictatorship itself: "In the Dominican Republic, there cannot, should not be a government regime so disinterested in force that it is converted, as has happened several times, into an agent of Haitian expansion" (Peña Batlle 1954, 97, cited in Cassá 1976, 81). Even as wealthy individuals and corporations benefited from cheap, compliant Haitian labor, government propaganda against Haitians served to deflect

6. Euphemistic use of the word *indio* has a long history. As early as the seventeenth century, runaway slaves on Hispaniola insisted on being called *indios* (Fennema and Loewenthal 1987, 28). In the nineteenth century, early Dominican nationalists looked back to the island's Amerindian past in their search for forerunners of Dominican nationalism, sparking a revival of the *indigenismo* that had earlier swept continental Latin America (Despradel 1974, 94–95).

Dominican workers' anger away from the national bourgeoisie and U.S. neoimperialism. Subsequent events, however, revealed anti-Haitianism to be an extraordinarily flexible tool that, in Trujillo's hands, need not cut consistently in favor of bourgeois and U.S. corporate interests. In any case, a sizable Haitian presence was tacitly tolerated, even as anti-Haitianism was used for sometimes unexpected political ends.

STATE PENETRATION OF THE MIGRANT LABOR SYSTEM, 1936–1966

Police and bureaucratic restrictions on the mobility of Haitian immigrants became more pervasive and intense after the late 1930s. Coinciding with a period of unprecedented industrial, commercial, and urban growth—fueled largely by Trujillo's burgeoning business empire—these restrictions seemed to dovetail with the interests of the foreign owners of the sugar industry by further isolating Haitian immigrants from mainstream economic opportunities. Initially, estate owners may have been pleased by increased police surveillance and bureaucratic regulations designed to wall off Haitian immigrants from employment in other sectors of the Dominican economy. But the coercive apparatus of the state came to be deployed not just in the service of the sugar companies but increasingly in support of the dictator's ambition to increase his personal wealth and power. From 1953 to 1961, Trujillo put newly powerful government agencies to work in a drive to take over the country's foreign-owned sugar plantations for himself. A key opening step in this campaign was wresting control over the migrant labor system from private hands.

In 1941 Port-au-Prince reinstated official approval for recruitment, only to break it off again a year later, when a diplomatic row broke out between the Haitian and Dominican governments. On this occasion, the Haitian government headed by President Elie Lescot suspended official recruitment again but also attempted to interdict clandestine emigration. According to Jean Price-Mars, after news of these measures crossed the border, "[t]he Dominican reaction was not slow in materializing against the Haitian workers residing in Santo Domingo. Their opportunities were limited by restricting their freedom to move from one place to another, and their salaries were reduced, condemning them virtually to servile peonage" (Price-Mars 1953, 230). The harvest of 1942–1943 set a pattern to which the Dominican authorities returned every time the flow of Haitian braceros was impeded. They sent out troops to round up Haitian men living in non-sugar-producing areas of the Dominican Republic and shipped these detainees to the sugar estates, where hunger forced them to work as cane cutters. Consequently, if President Lescot achieved some success in curbing emigration, he did so largely at the expense of the civil liberties of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic.

Crossing the border clandestinely had always been an alternative

to emigrating with an officially approved recruiter. After 1942 clandestine passage became for a decade the only way for Haitian workers to enter the Dominican Republic. By this time, crossing the border secretly had changed in another important way. After the *corte*, the Dominican government built roads and extended telegraph communications along the frontier (Moya Pons 1984, 520). This infrastructure allowed the military to expand its mobility and control over the border. During the same period, Trujillo increased the army's size and logistical support, building it up into the most powerful military in the Caribbean Basin (Betances 1995, 97). All these developments made it possible for the Dominican military to intercept large numbers of undocumented entrants at the border and transship them to the sugar estates. Military involvement in detaining undocumented entrants and redirecting them to the sugar estates was recorded as early as 1936 (Vega 1988, 286–88). This practice impinged increasingly on undocumented immigrants' freedom to choose where they would work after entering the Dominican Republic.

Capitalist Development outside the Sugar Enclave

A review of developments occurring in the wider society and economy will provide necessary background for understanding changes in the sugar industry's migrant labor recruitment and employment practices. Expanding economic opportunities in the Dominican Republic after World War II held the promise of improving the lot of many Haitian immigrants. Existing tendencies toward monetarizing agricultural labor accelerated in the 1940s and 1950s. Commercial agriculture outside the sugar enclave expanded in areas of mixed cultivation in the northern Cibao Valley and in the south and southwest, displacing subsistence smallholders or converting them into cash-crop producers and creating new demand for seasonal wage labor (Lozano 1985, pt. 2, chap. 2). After 1945 the development of urban-based manufacturing and processing industries was also hastened by import-substitution policies as well as by the growth of General Trujillo's business empire (Cassá 1982, chap. 4).

Sugar producers had reason to fear competition from other rapidly expanding sectors of the Dominican economy. If left free to choose, Haitian immigrants would surely have abandoned the sugarcane fields en masse for any better-paying and less debilitating work elsewhere. A buoyant economy therefore made estate owners all the more inclined to welcome new government initiatives restricting Haitian labor to the sugar industry. Granted, employer discrimination continued to play a part in limiting the employment of Haitian immigrants to jobs perceived as too harsh or poorly paid to attract Dominican nationals. Meanwhile, the immensity of the sugar plantations and their near monopoly on local employment as well as migrants' dependence on the sugar companies for

free transportation and housing tended to keep the braceros on the estates. This combination of employer discrimination, the migrants' social isolation, and heightened police oppression seems to have kept Haitian labor from spreading into employment outside the sugar industry until the 1970s and 1980s (Caroit 1992; Grasmuck 1982; ONAPLAN 1981).

Trujillo Takes Control of the Dominican Sugar Industry

Even though sugar interests continued to benefit from government immigration policy, the Dominican sugar industry was no longer securely dominated by U.S.-based corporations. By the 1950s, Dominican authorities had become so enmeshed in channeling immigrants toward the sugar estates that it was possible for Trujillo to succeed where Haiti's Lescot had failed in stopping the flow of immigrant labor as a political pressure tactic. Selectively restricting the immigrant labor supply was surely less important than simultaneous hikes in sugar export taxes in conveying to U.S. corporations that they were no longer welcome in Dominican sugar. Between 1952 and 1956, these and other methods of harassment forced the foreign owners of ten estates to sell. Trujillo also employed death threats and other forms of intimidation against Dominican landowners, large and small, to engross land for his sugar empire. When he died in 1961, Trujillo-owned mills were producing almost two-thirds of the country's sugar. The dictator justified his drive to purchase all the foreign-owned sugar estates by reviving a latent link between anti-Haitianism and anti-imperialism. Trujillo publicly denounced payment in scrip, company stores, and other forms of unfair exploitation to which the cane workers were subjected. He also blamed U.S. corporations for sponsoring Haitian immigration, pledged to Dominicanize employment in the sugar industry, and falsely promised to divide the sugar estates among Dominican smallholders (Crassweller 1966, chap. 16; Cassá 1982, 241–46). In all these ways, Trujillo sought to portray his acquiring the industry as being in the "national interest."

Trujillo's anti-Haitian stance and his pledge to Dominicanize the sugar industry did not prevent him, however, from reaching a new accord with Haiti in 1952 for recruiting braceros. Whereas the two governments had regulated labor circulation separately under their own laws, this accord placed the matter under an international treaty for the first time. Under its terms, the sugar companies still paid for recruitment, but the Haitian authorities took responsibility for organizing one or more centers each year for issuing contracts to braceros (Dorsinville 1953, 108–14). The wide publicity given to the labor contract may have been intended to convey to concerned members of the public the appearance that the new labor scheme would be an improvement over the old system by establishing legal safeguards against employer abuses. In fact, the labor contract gave employers and Dominican security agents new coercive powers. By legally

committing a *bracero* to work only for the employer who paid the passage from Haiti, the contract handed the security forces a standing justification for forcibly relocating Haitian immigrants to the sugar estates. Any undocumented Haitians found off estate grounds could be detained and shipped to a sugar estate under the pretext that they had abandoned their contractually assigned places of work. In brief, the contract applied a veneer of free and informed consent on continuing forced recruitment practices.

The Era after Trujillo

In 1966 direct government involvement in labor migration peaked when Trujillo's sugar empire was nationalized and responsibility for organizing migrant recruitment and transportation passed to the hands of the Dominican and Haitian governments. In that year, a new migrant labor accord was signed between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. It differed from previous ones in committing the newly nationalized estates of the Trujillo family, the Consejo Estatal del Azúcar (CEA), rather than the two remaining private sugar companies, to pay Port-au-Prince for organizing recruitment centers in Haiti (Moya Pons et al. 1986, 567–72). The million dollars that the Dominicans agreed to pay was largely a bribe to try to ensure the cooperation of François Duvalier. This exchange of cold cash for Haitian workers turned into an international scandal. The level of corruption and violence of the *Tontons Macoutes* at the CEA recruiting centers also became legendary in Haiti and abroad. The Dominican military saw its involvement expand to include the task of assuring that equal numbers of Haitians were repatriated at the end of the harvest as had entered as contract *braceros* at the beginning. The military's indifference as to whether the men being sent back were actually contract workers or even persons who wanted to return to Haiti occasioned tense and even violent confrontations as many Haitians in the bateyes resisted repatriation (Murphy 1991, 85–86). The contract-labor scheme lasted until 1986 and was suspended only when Jean-Claude Duvalier fell from power. Officially approved recruitment has not been reinstated by the military and civilian governments that have succeeded Duvalier in power. In its last years, contract migration brought in more than twenty thousand seasonal workers annually to complete the Dominican Republic's cane harvest (Murphy 1991, 81–82).⁷

Even as contract workers were entering by the thousands, comparable numbers of seasonal migrants continued to enter by clandestine means. Clandestine passage is still called "*âba fil*," meaning literally "under the wire." Many clandestine entrants have crossed the border un-

7. Material drawn from my book *Peripheral Migrants: Haitians and Dominican Republic Sugar Plantations* (1995) is included with permission of the University of Tennessee Press.

detected and paid their own passage plus bribes to Dominican police officers along the way to reach the destinations of their choice in the Dominican Republic. Yet interviews with migrants and returnees suggest that at least in the southernmost portion of the border, most *âba fil* entrants have fallen into the custody of Dominican military or police authorities soon after they crossed the frontier (Martínez 1995, 8–9).⁸ Border guides have often turned entrants over to Dominican law enforcers at the border for a few pesos for each Haitian man or woman they deliver. Other entrants have surrendered themselves to the authorities or been intercepted and detained at some point on their journey into the country. The roads that connect the frontier to zones of greater income opportunity, further inside the Dominican Republic, have funneled the remaining migrants along a few well-monitored routes. Intercity transportation on the highways traveled most by the migrants has been screened by police looking for Haitians on the move. From army garrisons, police stations, or nearby holding pens, army and police officers have handed over Haitian detainees for the equivalent of a few dollars per adult to agents of the CEA for shipment to estates needing harvest laborers (Americas Watch 1990, 5, 10).

DISCUSSION

Amid the welter of events and interlocking processes in this history, at least four overlapping arenas of contest stand out: labor recruitment, employment alternatives, plantation work discipline, and the state versus capitalist interests. Events and processes in these areas were decisive in driving the Haitian and Dominican states toward an increasingly pervasive and coercive role in managing the migrant labor system. By way of conclusion, each of these contested arenas will be discussed in turn.

Labor Recruitment and Resettlement

The migrant labor system set up by Dominican sugar planters represented a variation on an old Caribbean theme. The new sugar industrialists imported workers whose access to livelihood opportunities could be restricted to create a compliant work force for their plantations. Like the slave-owning planters, managers of the new corporate sugar mills sought to eliminate fieldworkers' alternatives to estate labor. In importing immigrant *braceros*, sugar producers obtained workers who were not just cheaper but more coercible than Dominican nationals. Simply because

8. Considerable overlap could be found in the harvest labor-recruitment strategies of the private and state-owned estates. Large numbers of CEA contract workers were clandestinely relocated to the private estate at La Romana, to sugar properties owned by the Vicini family, and to land owned by large independent cane growers (Murphy 1991, 87–88).

they were strangers to the country, the immigrants lacked immediate access to the exit options enjoyed by Dominican nationals.

Nonetheless, it would be erroneous to equate “migrant labor” with “coerced labor.” In countless instances elsewhere in the world, migrants from the south have built networks (Portes and Walton 1981, 60–64) and enacted group-oriented strategies of adaptation (Graves and Graves 1974) that have enabled them to avoid the worst effects of incorporation at the bottom of alien labor hierarchies. Consequently, it should be asked why migrant networks have not worked as well for the Haitian *braceros* as for other third world migrants.

The mechanisms of relocation used most often by the *braceros* have differed remarkably from those favored by most other third world migrants familiar to social researchers. Rather than relocating with the help of Haitian contacts already settled in the host society, the *braceros* have depended on their employers, the mill owners, to supply a *de facto* subsidy for migration. By providing free transportation and housing as well guaranteeing employment on arrival, the sugar companies have lowered both the monetary cost and the economic risk of relocating—decisive considerations for migrants as poor as these. Yet being recruited, transported, housed, employed, and ultimately returned home largely by their employers has had its costs for the migrants. Relocating under employer auspices has tended to isolate the migrants from kinfolk and fellow villagers on either side of the border. Social isolation has in turn reduced the migrants’ scope of independent economic initiative and strategic collaboration and diminished their access to alternatives to working in the cane fields. It is therefore not so much being a migrant *per se* as being a migrant in a relationship of extreme dependence on host-area employers that has deprived the *braceros* of liberties and economic opportunities on the Dominican side. As long as employers retain control over migrant recruitment and resettlement, they can subordinate at least a segment of the migrant population to employer agendas. The unusual persistence and escalation of employer and state control over migrant recruitment and resettlement in this case may be explained in part as a way of maintaining unusually strict control over immigrant labor.

Immigrants’ Access to Outside Employment

During the sugar industry’s formative period (1875 to 1930), Dominican leaders had little power to interdict undocumented entrants, police the movements of contract laborers, or even collect fees from immigrants, boat captains, or their employers. Early regulatory efforts had little effect beyond creating an important source of internal revenue for the Haitian government—emigration taxes and licenses to recruit labor.

Even as employment in the cane harvest remained for most immi-

grants the primary means of migration, some gained access to employment outside the sugar estates via contacts with Dominican nationals and fellow immigrants. Simultaneously, the spread of capitalist enterprise beyond sugar to dominate the entire Dominican economy opened up more alternatives to estate labor. After the 1940s, these trends gave cane growers increasing reason to worry about being able to recruit and retain Haitian labor with their usual ease and at low cost. Formation of the Dominican Guardia Nacional provided a ready means for restricting braceros' access to alternatives in outside employment. After the late 1930s, Dominican law enforcers were increasingly called on to detain undocumented immigrants in non-sugar-producing areas and at the border and to cooperate in relocating these detainees by force to estates in need of harvest laborers. From this time forward, Dominican government administrations (and Haitian ones to a lesser degree) colluded more visibly with the sugar companies by adopting aggressive forms of control at every step from recruitment to repatriation. These measures excluded a segment of the immigrant population from the play of open-market competition.

At roughly the same time, Dominican politicians, bureaucrats, educators, and journalists participated in redrawing the conceptual boundary between Haiti and the Dominican Republic along racial lines. Defining Haitians as African and Dominicans as Hispanic provided further justification for Dominican leaders to take action to keep the two peoples apart. This campaign was carried out not by expelling the immigrants but by adopting increasingly strict measures to keep them where their labor was most valuable, in the sugarcane fields.

Plantation Work Discipline

Deploying the coercive apparatus of the state to police Haitian immigrants has been more than an attempt to preserve a right of first refusal over Haitian labor for cane growers. It has also been a response to the Dominican sugar industry's inherent demand for cheap, plentiful, and coercible harvest labor, workers who are in a word *unfree*.

Even so, this picture must be refined to take into account estate owners' growing reliance on wage incentives and other economic constraints to ensure the smooth operation of the cane harvest. Running the sugar estates "like concentration camps," as one human rights advocate alleged (Plant 1987, 80), has never been an operating economic proposition. Maintaining a level of surveillance strict enough to prevent all braceros from leaving the sugar estates would require hiring an army of supervisory personnel at comparatively high rates of pay. Such an approach would thus undermine the most basic rationale for recruiting immigrant workers: to keep labor costs low. On the contrary, the tendency over the first half of the twentieth century was for cane growers to turn

from direct physical surveillance to wage incentives as the primary means of maintaining discipline among harvest workers. Transitions from one source of labor to another were accompanied by shifts in the system of harvest labor, and each shift represented a reduction in workers' freedom of economic maneuver. Payment by task gave way to ganged day labor as West Indians replaced Dominican nationals in the harvest; and day labor was supplanted by piece-rate wages as the West Indians were replaced by Haitians.

Confronted with the imperative to control migrant labor but to do so cheaply, cane growers and government agencies never succeeded in imposing on the *bracero* what Arthur Stinchcombe has called "a monopoly of the person" (1995, 264–67). Growers and government agents, instead of attaching effective limitations on particular migrant workers, have treated the whole category of Haitian migrant workers as a legitimate target population from which to select individuals, largely by chance, for forced relocation to the cane fields. The *braceros'* condition is more accurately described as "unfree labor" than as "enslavement" or even "involuntary servitude," in part because such labor does not impose lasting labor obligations on particular individuals (Dore Cabral 1992; Martínez 1996; Murphy 1991, 94–97). Perhaps no less general a term than *unfree labor* can encompass the various constraints that have acted to restrict a large segment of the migrant population to a single plantation-dominated axis of geographical mobility. The *braceros'* unfreedom is rooted as much in the discrimination that they encounter, their extreme poverty, and their lack of economic alternatives as in the infringements on their civil liberties experienced in the Dominican Republic.

Relations between the State and Capitalist Interests

Finally, the case at hand suggests that not all forms of coercion directed against the *braceros* should be interpreted entirely as responses to the needs of the sugar industry. The governments of both countries have cooperated with employers in certain ways and at certain times to limit the range of economic alternatives available to immigrant laborers. Yet other conjunctures have brought government and capital into competition for control over the sugar industry and its labor supply.

State direction of migrant recruitment and resettlement has helped assure the sugar industry a steady and plentiful supply of harvest labor. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Dominican military expanded its presence along the Haitian frontier, making it possible to intercept and transship large numbers of undocumented entrants to the sugar estates. Beginning in 1952, labor circulation became regulated under the terms of an accord between the two governments, and responsibility for organizing recruitment passed largely into the hands of the Haitian government. Measures

like these have tended to regularize the sugar industry's labor supply and to limit migrant autonomy.

Yet state control over recruitment and resettlement was a form of power that could also be directed against employers. Controlling the immigrant labor supply created an instrument of pressure for the Dominican leadership, one that Trujillo did not hesitate to use against the U.S.-based owners of the sugar companies after 1950 for his own political and financial profit. Much earlier, the Haitian government had come to regard labor circulation as a revenue-generating opportunity, an attitude that peaked when Jean-Claude Duvalier extorted two million dollars a year from the Dominican Republic for permission to recruit cane cutters in Haiti. Lower-level officials too have regarded the migrant labor system as an opportunity to enrich themselves by preying on vulnerable or inexperienced migrants or accepting bribes to aid recruiters and employers in skirting the law. In brief, institutions designed to sustain coerced exploitation were used by powerholders large and small to advance these officials' own interests, at times even at the expense of the employers whom these institutions and officials were initially committed to serve.

More broadly, the study of systems of labor control after slavery stands to gain much from a focus on change over time and sensitivity to the particularities of period and place. These same attributes represented for Ira Berlin (1980) one way forward in the study of New World slavery. Much can be learned by taking fuller account of long-term trends in the societies of which sugar production is a part and thus broadening scholars' view of the causes of unfreedom beyond labor-management relations or even plantation owners' attempts to manipulate the political system. Foreign economic enclaves, such as the U.S. corporate-owned sugar estates, generally seek to insulate themselves from political and economic pressures in the surrounding society but never succeed indefinitely (Le Grand 1995). Yet as U.S. corporations were pushed out of the Dominican Republic, control over immigrant labor was not diminished but merely passed to government hands. Changing forms of labor control were determined by factors that included cane growers' preference for semi-coerced labor. Processes of state formation in both countries are perhaps equally to blame for launching a spiral of coercion against the braceros. Only by considering institutional dynamics and group interests other than those that directly pitted bracero against mill owner is it possible to understand the seeming paradox of each government taking a more direct hand in mobilizing and directing migrant streams as capitalist labor relations developed and spread further on the Dominican side of the border. Bringing a number of areas of contest into consideration—including the political power structure and nonplantation sectors of the national economy—may expand our understanding of the constraints faced by freed people and their descendants in this part of the Caribbean after emancipation.

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