

MULATTO MACHIAVELLI, JEAN PIERRE BOYER,
AND THE HAITI OF HIS DAY

Toussaint Louverture opened the gate of Haitian liberty, but Jean Pierre Boyer kept it open. Toussaint, "First of the Blacks," may be called the Washington of Haiti, but Boyer was neither "First of the Mulattoes" nor a Haitian Lincoln. He was a colored Machiavelli. Only a Machiavelli would have been ready, willing, and able to lead his country against the greatest obstacles any new nation had faced in modern times.

Hated by the Great Powers because she had been born of a slave revolt against France, Haiti was an outcast, almost an outlaw state. The new nation had been the battlefield of French Revolutionary commissioners, sent to stir up the slaves and the mulattoes against their royalist dominators. Santo Domingo¹ had been devastated by a British invasion in the 1790's and, later, by the brother-in-law of Napoleon, General Leclerc, who attempted to restore French control in the island in 1802. Added to these troubles was the racial war of mulattoes and Negroes for supremacy and, finally, a division of the new nation itself into two hostile states. The land was ruined agriculturally, commercially, politically, and spiritually. So it was from 1804 to 1818 when Boyer gained power. Even a Machiavelli, endowed with the best of human learning and wisdom, would have been befuddled on facing the bitter harvest of this, the New World's bloodiest and most nearly complete revolution.

¹ Columbus called the whole island of Santo Domingo "Hispaniola." The name "Santo Domingo" was later used by the Spanish. When the French took over what is now Haiti, they used the French equivalent, "Saint Domingue." After independence, Dessalines adopted the aboriginal name for the country, "Haiti." Until final independence was won in 1844, "The Spanish Part" (of Santo Domingo) was the popular title for the area still under Spanish influence. After 1844, it was called the "Dominican Republic," as it still is. In this paper, "Haiti" refers only to the "French Part," unless otherwise stated. The term "Dominicans" refers only to the inhabitants of the Spanish Part.

Jean Pierre Boyer was to assume the role of a constructive Machiavelli. On February 28 in the fateful year of 1776, he was born in Port-au-Prince. His father was "a man of good repute, and possessed of some wealth."² He was undoubtedly an enterprising man, for he was both a storekeeper and a tailor in the capital of Saint Domingue. Boyer's mother, a Negro woman from the Congo, had been a slave near Port-au-Prince for some time. Jean Pierre's ambitious father sent him to France to be educated at a military school. At sixteen, the young Boyer joined the French Republican army, and within two years, he was a battalion commander. Boyer's youthful enthusiasm led him to join the cause of the French commissioners, Santhonax and Polverel, and to return to Haiti with them to fight against the Haitian whites and royalists and for the rights of the mulattoes. The English, then at war with the French Republic in 1793, invaded Haiti soon after Boyer's arrival in his homeland. He retreated to Jacmel where he joined the mulatto leader, General Rigaud. When Toussaint Louverture, the champion of the Negroes, turned against the mulattoes, the south of Haiti surrendered to him. Rigaud and the yet unknown Boyer left Haiti for France.

There was a short detour on this flight to France, for the United States and the young French Republic were embroiled in diplomatic misunderstandings from 1798 to 1800, and Boyer's ship was captured by the Americans. This was his only visit to the United States, and, short as it was, he always remembered it vividly. The only white man to hold office and enjoy citizenship under Boyer was the son of the Yankee family that aided him during this episode. This Yankee Haitian became mayor of St. Marc.³ Boyer always admired the Quakers because of the charitable spirit several of them had shown him in America, but the circumstances of the great mulatto's visit and the un-Christian prejudice

² Franklin, James, *The Present State of Hayti*, London, 1828, p. 232.

³ Candler, John, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, London, 1842, p. 67.

Bio

toward his color, could not have created a generally favorable impression in regard to his northern neighbor.

The Franco-American crisis ended, Boyer was soon released, and he proceeded to Paris where he resided until the fall of 1801. As a French captain he then joined Leclerc's expedition to Haiti and the fight against Toussaint's virtually won independence. Leclerc died of the fever; his army was savagely and unexpectedly attacked by fierce patriots. The fiasco of reconquest was complete. Leclerc's mulatto aide, Alexandre Pétion, and Boyer survived. When they learned that the French had planned to restore slavery and reduce mulatto ascendancy, Boyer and Pétion deserted the French cause and joined forces with Jean Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe, both Negroes and successors of Toussaint who had by now been captured and exiled by Leclerc.⁴ The collaboration of Negroes and mulattoes brought an end to French domination, but not to Negro-mulatto rivalry, as Boyer would later know.

Dessalines formally proclaimed Haitian independence on New Year's Day of 1804 and soon thereafter proclaimed himself Emperor Jacques I. When his savage, sadistic, ignorant despotism was ended by an aide's bullet in 1806, Negro Christophe and Mulatto Pétion stood forth as rival heirs to Dessalines' power. Henri Christophe desired to continue the imperial system of his predecessor, while Pétion and Boyer believed a more popular government better for the Haitians. Thus it was that those who thought monarchism and black supremacy most appropriate for the new nation set up Christophe's standard in the overwhelmingly black north, and the mulatto élite who favored a mild republicanism was installed in the predominantly mulatto south. Alexandre Pétion was president of the "Republic of Haiti" in the south. Boyer soon rose to be his republican heir, and aided that leader in promulgating the Republic's constitution, modelled after that of the United

⁴ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

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States.⁵ He became successively Pétion's aide-de-camp, his private secretary, his chief of staff, and finally the general in defense of Port-au-Prince. In this final capacity, he defended the capital against King Henri Christophe's army which repeatedly attacked the shaky Republic throughout Pétion's administration. However often he checked these Haitian royalist forces, Boyer never decisively defeated them. Jean Pierre Boyer's greatest feats were not to be military.

During his administration from 1806 to 1818, Pétion was setting precedents and making errors which his political heir could study and use later as examples of what ought not to be done. Pétion conscientiously endeavored to reconcile individual freedom and public authority by a system neither too mild nor too severe. He never found that formula. Cherishing his reputation for mildness, Pétion avoided quarrels, and in his sincere effort to establish republicanism, he was ever accessible to the public. By the end of his career, however, republicanism seemed a failure in this land not yet ready for unrestrained freedom, and the people had shown themselves quick to take advantage of gentle government. Even Pétion's mildest laws were violated, while in the North Henri Christophe's despotism appeared to be giving peace and prosperity. The well-meaning president was irresolute, cautious beyond reason; he conformed too easily to others' views. It was said that: "He construed every trifling event into a plot against his life. He then grew melancholy, objected to receive his usual visitors . . . neglected his appearance, and finally refused to take his ordinary food."⁶ On March 29, 1818, Alexandre Pétion died of disease and worry. Boyer had been close to his patron. He learned much from Pétion's failures.

Bad example though Pétion's soft rule was, that rule was missed. Pétion had been wrong in feeling himself unpopu-

⁵ *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, "Jean Pierre Boyer," Paris, 1855, VII.

⁶ Harvey, W. W., *Sketches of Hayti*, London, 1827, p. 382.

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lar. His people loved him deeply, more than they have any other ruler. He failed to fill their stomachs, but he filled their hearts. The entire realm was in mourning. Public business stopped. Thousands followed his coffin to its resting place where his remains were buried with pomp and ceremony.⁷

Pétion's Constitution of 1806, amended in 1816, had provided for presidential life tenure and the right of the chief executive to select his successor, with legislative ratification.⁸ As Boyer had long been the logical successor, consequently he was elected and afterward proclaimed his successor. The Senate met immediately after Pétion's funeral to approve his choice. Boyer was elected.⁹ Supreme power had been transferred easily, quickly, legally, and bloodlessly for the first time in Haitian history.

What manner of man was the protégé of the beloved Pétion and the heir to all the troubles of a divided, poverty-stricken land? Although an indulgent idealist and so sensitive that the "tear of sensibility often bedewed his cheek at the sight of slaughter,"¹⁰ yet Alexandre Pétion had been practical enough to analyze Boyer's personality and prophesy the course which he would take. On his deathbed, Pétion told Joseph Inginac, his secretary of state, that Boyer was too set in his ways to take the advice of those who could help him; he was bent on domination.¹¹

The new president's physical appearance harmonized with his dominating and Machiavellian tendencies. According to an English visitor, James Franklin, he was described as darker than most mulattoes ". . . below the middle size, and very slender; his visage is far from pleasing, but he has a quick eye, and makes good use of it, for it is incessantly in motion. His constitution is weak, and he is affected

⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register*, Baltimore, XIV, p. 189.

⁸ Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁹ Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

¹⁰ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹¹ Leyburn, James G., *The Haitian People*, New Haven, Conn., 1941, p. 319.

with a local disease which compels him to be exceedingly abstemious."¹² The same observer remarked that Boyer did not appear often in public and did not overdress, but that he was vain of his person and "imagined it captivating and his manners irresistible." Another more complimentary English visitor commented upon the president's "republican plainness," his "plain black suit" and his quiet dignity. He was charmed by Boyer's French polish. Disagreeing with the earlier presidential guest as to Boyer's health, he reported the Boyer's "robust health and evident activity made him appear much younger," adding, "He is a mulatto with the physiognomy of the French. [Boyer] is rather under than over the average height, and is neither thin nor corpulent; he has a keen expressive eye, and an expressive countenance. With strangers he converses only in French; though he has travelled in America and understands the English language."¹³

L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE

"In union there is strength." This is Haiti's motto; Boyer made it his. The first obstacle for the new president to attack was self-evident. Henri Christophe's realm to the north was a constant threat to the southern republic's very existence, not to mention the strength of Haiti before the world. Only a united Haiti could grow strong, and only a strong Haiti could remain free. An even more immediate danger than Christophe, however, was the position of the bandit rebels in Grand 'Anse who had refused to obey the Republic since 1807. They were led by Gomar, an opportunist whose success depended chiefly on the country's chaotic condition. In January 1819, President Boyer sent a powerful expedition against the rebel, and the bandits soon scattered. Gomar was captured by the republican troops

¹² Franklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233.

¹³ Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

in 1820.¹⁴ With this first simple step toward unity Boyer gave prestige to the tottering state.

Now, the president could look northward toward the constant foe of the Republic though not so very hopefully because King Henri's realm was defended with far better fortresses than his own. Prosperity, order, and even some enlightenment, as well as a well-stocked treasury, were possessed by the northern chief. In comparison, the Republic in 1820 still lay in the ruins created years before in the Revolution's devastation. Disorder was common. Trade declined year by year. The treasury was empty!

And yet, the apparent peace of the North was in reality but the doomed vegetation on a rumbling volcano. Henri Christophe had grown arbitrary and more suspicious of his officers as his reign continued. Reducing his own creation, the nobility, to mere lackies, he rejected their advice, and degraded valuable officers while advancing rascals. His temper grew with his fears. When he had several mulatto women put to death for praying to the Virgin for his death,¹⁵ this stupid act was the atrocity needed to unite all classes against him. Rebellion among Christophe's soldiers broke out at St. Marc in October 1820. They were joined by royal forces sent from Cape Haitien to repel them. The Black Napoleon, partially paralyzed from a stroke, shot himself rather than surrender to his disloyal subjects. Jean Pierre Boyer, still in Port-au-Prince, was notified of the rapidly occurring events and was requested to give his aid. He gathered his army of from fifteen to twenty thousand men and immediately marched north. While Boyer "never showed any disposition to hostile measures, and fighting was a trade to which he was unaccustomed and for which he had no predilection,"¹⁶ this expedition became one of his fortunate adventures, because he became a conqueror with-

¹⁴ *North American Review*, Boston, 1829, XXVIII, p. 154.

¹⁵ Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

¹⁶ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

out a single real battle. Boyer entered St Marc and then continued toward Cape Haitien. The only resistance he met was near the Cape at Fortress La Ferrière, where the royal family had fled. General Romaine, formerly Christophe's trusted chancellor, now headed the rebels, who were unscrupulous opportunists with no intention of loyalty to Boyer. However, at Cape Haitien, several rebel leaders declared for the President; the rest noted what a large army the president had. Romaine deserted and offered to surrender if Boyer would admit him and his family to the privileges of citizenship in the Republic; Boyer readily accepted the offer. Gonaives and other points in the north soon surrendered. The conquest had been almost bloodless, but it would have been impossible if Boyer had not hurried northward with his army at the right moment. He took precautions to remove Henri Christophe's army to the south for duty and sent his own troops to the north.

In Gonaives, on October 21, 1820, Boyer declared Haiti united. The president entered the northern capital, Cape Haitien, on October 26, 1820. Here, he spoke eloquently of the tyranny now ended, concluding; "Oubliez, je vous le répète, tout ce qui s'est passé, et ne songez qu'à l'avenir."¹⁷ Boyer had planned a triumphal entrance on his return to Port-au-Prince, but as a plot to assassinate him as he passed along the scheduled route was found in time, he had to sneak into town by a secret route, like a criminal!¹⁸

It was still necessary for blood to seal the story of victory. The Crown Prince had been killed by the northern rebels, but Boyer had put the ex-queen under his protection. Boyer often regretted publicly that he had been unable to save the prince.¹⁹ When several ex-officers of Henri Christophe planned to burn the Cape, Gonaives, and St.

¹⁷ "Forget, I beg of you, all that has passed; think only of the future." *British and Foreign State Papers*, London, 1819-20, p. 992.

¹⁸ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

¹⁹ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XIX, p. 220.

unification

Marc, and to arm troops against the government, the peaceful president was forced to have them executed, as well as the leaders of two regiments which later mutinied. Of those implicated in the assassination plot, eleven were shot and fifty sentenced.²⁰ In 1822, the wily Romaine revolted against his new master, and spread the rumor that Boyer was selling Haiti to the French. When Romaine was captured and shot "trying to escape," the president issued a statement in which he said that he regretted the incident and ordered his people to put down all alarmists, but to punish them according to law and order.²¹ Boyer had been forced to draw blood to preserve his state, but the price of the death of the former Crown Prince and a few rebel officers was small in comparison to the peace he had achieved.

For all his victories, Boyer still possessed only the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The eastern part was nominally a Spanish colony, although the mother country's influence was indeed small. Twenty years before, in 1801, Toussaint Louverture had temporarily occupied the eastern capital, Santo Domingo. At the time of his fall, Christophe had been contemplating the purchase of the Spanish territory. The visit of the great South American liberator, Simón Bolívar, in 1815 had aroused Dominican enthusiasm for independence, and José Núñez de Cáceres, a prominent Dominican lawyer, soon led the plotting. An uprising occurred on November 30, 1821 at the City of Santo Domingo, and after arresting the Spanish governor, the patriots raised the flag of Colombia, for Cáceres planned to annex the new republic to Bolívar's state.²² Like Christophe before him, President Boyer knew that Haiti's defense against Europeans must be increased, that Dominican

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²¹ *Ibid.*, XXIII, p. 36.

²² Schoenrich, Otto, *Santo Domingo, a Country with a Future*, New York, 1918, p. 41.

resources might well restore prosperity, and that his country would gain prestige and a better position for gaining the recognition of the world. As his supreme excuse for entering upon a career of imperialism, Boyer offered the particular article of the Republic's 1806 constitution which declared the entire island of Santo Domingo to comprise an indivisible Republic.²³

The older people of the Spanish Part feared the Haitians, for they remembered the bloody days of occupation by Toussaint Louverture. Many of the younger people were complacent; they wanted the colony to remain Spanish. But Boyer had been active for three years in his effort to influence the mulattoes of the East to join Haiti. He placed in the Spanish Part agents who received instructions from him and kept in constant communication. There were also some Spaniards who cooperated.²⁴ An old lieutenant of the dead Christophe led the subtle propaganda campaign against Spain, for Boyer considered it vital to avoid bloodshed and make it appear that the Dominicans had begged for unification.

Meanwhile, Núñez de Cáceres decided to send envoys to Boyer in order to get a treaty of friendship and to form an offensive-defensive alliance, even while annexation negotiations were under way with Colombia. But the Haitian president was already informed of the opposition to Cáceres of several Dominican Negroes and mulattoes who had hoisted the Haitian flag at several points. Boyer knew, too, of the imminent state of civil war among the Dominican whites themselves.²⁵ In reply to the request for alliance he refused to recognize Núñez de Cáceres' authority as president. Styling him merely "Political Chief of the Spanish

²³ *British and Foreign State Papers*, London, 1821-22, p. 960.

²⁴ Troncoso de la Concha, M. de J., *La Ocupación de Santo Domingo por Haití*, Ciudad Trujillo, 1942, pp. 22-30.

²⁵ Manning, William R., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860*, Washington, 1935, VI, p. 30.

Portion of the Republic of Haiti," he invited him to raise the Haitian banner. The message, with its thinly veiled threats, indicated the dangers of any opposite determination by Dominicans.

Addressing his people on unification, the Machiavellian mulatto said that he had always considered the Spanish Part as indivisibly Haitian. Only Haiti's unfortunate circumstances had prevented actual union. To have subjected the East to a civil war when all was peaceful in order to liberate it from the Spanish would have been "inhuman," thus it was, he averred, that he had refused protection to earlier patriots.

An enemy to disorder and the effusion of blood, I was determined never to give a partial assistance to the citizens of the East, being convinced that the time had not yet arrived when I might operate a total moral revolution.

Continuing in this semi-sanctimonious manner, Boyer said:

Two separate states can neither exist nor maintain themselves independently of each other in our native island; if the Constitutional Act of Haiti had not decided the question of its indivisibility, reason and the preservation of its inhabitants would have imperiously demanded it.

He concluded in apparent firmness tempered by Machiavellian "humility,"

I shall proceed to visit, with powerful forces, the whole of the Eastern Part, not as a conqueror (God forbid that I should ever entertain such a thought) but, consistently with the laws of the state, as the pacificator and conciliator of the interests of all.²⁶

The infant Dominican state had neither funds nor sufficient arms to resist the Haitians. Civil war seemed inevitable. The people were not united, nor were they determined on any course. Therefore, Núñez de Cáceres submitted. Once more, Jean Pierre Boyer set out on a triumphal march to another fallen capital. The city of Santo Domingo held many who hated him, but it surrendered its keys. Boyer's

²⁶ *British and Foreign State Papers, 1821-22*, pp. 960-962.

seven thousand and more men entered unopposed on February 12, 1822.²⁷ With the occupation of the capital's batteries and port, the conquest of the East was virtually complete. Disgruntled Dominicans blamed the collapse on Núñez de Cáceres, but the unhappy idealist only called the louder for full collaboration with the conqueror. On January 19, 1822, pleading for peaceful acceptance of Boyer's rule, he said of the president:

He comes as a father, a friend, and a brother, to embrace you, and to unite you all under the tutelary safeguard of one single constitution; he will be the harbinger of peace, and we must all act in concord towards each other, . . . The advantages and conveniences which are enjoyed by our countrymen of the west will be extended to you. Open your hearts in gratitude to the generous hand that bestows them upon you.²⁸

As part of his successful campaign, Boyer had promised the Dominicans that they would enjoy all personal, civil, and religious liberties derived from their Spanish ancestors. But now that the entire island was his, Machiavelli could remove his mask. His first act was to proclaim the emancipation of the slaves of the Spanish Part. In vain the foremost Dominicans reminded Boyer of his recent pledge to protect property; it would have been insane to think that the Haitian president would permit slavery in his domains.

Many of the measures to follow were less reasonable and far more arbitrary. The whites dominated the Spanish Part. Boyer had always feared them, and for his own safety, as well as for the satisfaction of his people, he had to check and break them. The first means of attack was the confiscation of the estates of those whites who had fled during his invasion. Many of them had opposed the movement, and feared reprisals. Others thought the Black Revolution might be reenacted.²⁹ Wishing to appear as mild as possible, President Boyer stipulated that the émigrés might

²⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXII, p. 7.

²⁸ *British and Foreign State Papers, 1821-22*, pp. 962-963.

²⁹ *Democratic Review*, New York, 1852, XXXI, p. 139.

regain their lands if they returned within sixteen months and became naturalized Haitian citizens.

Although this initial confiscation brought some lands to the state, the president wanted lands to transfer wholesale to the mulattoes and Negroes. He thought it too barefaced to extend the Constitution's clause to exclude Dominican whites from owning land. As was his way, Boyer proceeded indirectly. All Dominican landowners were required to exhibit the title deeds to their lands or leave them subject to state confiscation, "thus throwing the burden of proof of ownership on the actual and undisputed possessors."³⁰ Titles had been generally handed down by tradition alone for generations, but Boyer refused to accept long undisputed possession as evidence of right. Besides, many large cattle estates had been held in common by the landlords for convenient cattle herding. When Boyer had these estates divided among the individual owners, and then demanded each to show evidence of title, they were mostly confiscated.

Boyer's policy of Haitianization went on. His own civil and criminal codes of Haiti were extended to the Spanish Part; they were printed in French. Disregarding the fact that French was almost unknown in the East, French was substituted for Spanish in all judicial proceedings, both oral and written, and also in all public records. Haitian officials who spoke only French were generally substituted for those of native Spanish origin. A large proportion of the property of the Church in the Spanish Part was confiscated, and extortion was used to get most of the rest. Dominican education suffered greatly under Boyer. Professors and teachers were obliged to leave the country. Even though Boyer had expressed himself pleased with Dominican students in general, the ancient University of Santo Domingo was closed and Boyer ordered its students into the army.³¹ During its submission to Haiti, Santo Domingo was virtually a

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³¹ *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* (Ciudad Trujillo), VI, p. 140.

conquered territory. One contemporary critic of this imperialistic side of Machiavellianism commented: "Bodies of Haytian soldiers were kept constantly stationed in the capital and other towns and posts throughout the Dominican territory, tyrannizing over, oppressing by their exactions and extorting, and overawing the native inhabitants."³²

While Boyer's hold on the East was now secure from any local menace, there was danger still from abroad. In 1830, the Spanish king, Ferdinand VII, the personification of Legitimacy, sent the intendant of Cuba, Don Felipe de Castro, to treat with Haiti for a restitution of the East to his Crown. He argued that although the area had been ceded to the French Republic by the Treaty of Basle of 1795, in 1802, it had been reconquered by Spain and its return sanctioned by the Treaty of Paris of 1814.³³ Determined to maintain Haiti's successful *Drang nach Osten*, Boyer's diplomats, Senator Lespinasse and Colonel Frémont, replied that Spain had had a good opportunity to object to the 1806 constitutional clause uniting the whole island, and that the present was too late for dispute. The tradition-bound Spaniard refused to concede that Fernando's claim was forfeited. Negotiations stalled. Boyer defended the right of revolution of the Dominicans from Spain, citing, for example, the Dutch and Portuguese liberation from Spain. As Spain was in no condition to apply force to the contest, the crisis dissolved, revealing, as the only possible victor, Jean Pierre Boyer.

BOYER AND THE WORLD

A true Machiavelli must be a victor in diplomacy. Although Jean Pierre Boyer looked at the outside world with a slightly unsteady eye, he did not falter in his basic aims. The blue and red banner of the Black Republic now brightened the skies of all Santo Domingo and was challenged by

³² *Democratic Review*, XXXI, p. 140.

³³ *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1829-30, p. 945.

no man. But the country it symbolized was refused recognition in every foreign country. There could never be any but the most limited progress as long as Haiti was humiliated and kept ever alert in fear of invasion by reconquering French forces. France must recognize Haiti's independence. This would be the first fissure in the wall of prejudice the world had built against Christendom's first colored republic. France still claimed Haiti as her colony, although the Republic had been independent for twenty years.

It was now 1823. By this time Europe had only a death grip on Latin America, and that was slipping. France was better disposed toward bargaining. To Brussels in 1823 went General Boyé, envoy of the president. There he met His Most Christian Majesty's representatives, but again negotiations collapsed because the latter did not have enough authority to make decisions. When the French urged a new meeting Messieurs Larose and Rouanez, on behalf of Boyer and with full authority from their president, arrived in Paris on May 1, 1824, hoping to conclude a treaty of commerce on the basis of French recognition of Haiti. Such issues as the amount of indemnity to the French whose lands had been forfeited in the Revolution of 1791 to 1804, the extent to which Louis XVIII was disposed to go in his recognition, and the conditions of the French-imposed commercial treaty, were all discussed in detail.³⁴ But high Haitian hopes soon came tumbling down once more. Briefly put, Louis XVIII would admit the internal independence of Haiti, but he refused to recognize her external sovereignty. The angry Haitian envoys left France immediately. Anxious to obtain a preferential trade treaty, however, the French government offered a treaty by the terms of which France would pay but one-half the Haitian import duty, Haiti would pay 150,000,000 francs indemnity for the Revolution's injustices, and Louis XVIII would then condescend to rec-

³⁴ *Annual Register* (Year 1825), 1826, London, p. 143.

ognize the Republic. In comment upon this document, a contemporary American review stated:

This . . . is no treaty. There is no party to the instrument but the king of France, who grants terms of indulgence to Boyer and his people in the same form that he would to any other rebellious subjects. All the stipulations of a treaty were left for future negotiations, Boyer placing himself entirely at the mercy of his more sagacious antagonists.

The article went further in the same vein:

The grant of independence was not to the country but to the government, nor to the government perpetually, but only to the government of the actual inhabitants.³⁵

Boyer would be reduced to the status of a French viceroy, others said:

For the first time, Boyer's weaknesses were revealed. The Machiavellian mulatto had not lost his ability, but his luck was strained. On July 3, 1825, Boyer met his equal. That summer day, three French warships entered the drowsy harbor of Port-au-Prince and sent ashore under the ironic *white* flag of truce the dispatches of the French government. After tedious and traditional formalities, Baron Macau, the French envoy, was received by the president. Macau brought the treaty.

No one thought to record what Boyer must have thought when he first saw the foreign fleet moored abreast his city. It was ready for action, but Haitian batteries and forts were so poorly placed that any defense would have failed. The capital, as its panicky populace now realized, was not impregnable, and neither was their president. Some one did describe the scene of a few minutes later:

The President, all his officers of state, his troops, and the inhabitants were alike in amazement; and his excellency, instead of setting an example of confidence . . . sunk into a half-stupor, and absolutely shut himself up in his chamber. His officers looked at each other like men bereft of reason through sudden fright, and the

³⁵ *North American Review*, XXXVIII, p. 162.

troops . . . stood motionless, fearing that every moment would bring the signal of attack from the enemy.³⁶

Boyer had always hated violence. He was a man of thought more than action. Now he showed his lack of physical courage. When Boyer found that the French were determined to have their way, but peacefully if possible, he acquiesced. He feared the results of a foreign war. The fateful treaty was ratified on July 11 by the Senate, a senate dominated by Boyer's favored mulattoes. With more bluff than joy, the president announced the treaty to his people. "The French flag, coming this day to salute the land of liberty," he said, "consecrates the legitimacy of your emancipation."³⁷ Cries of "vive la France, vive Haiti, vive Charles X, vive Boyer" were heard all night. Cynics said that Boyer hired men to shout these noisy praises.³⁸

There was more grumbling than cheering. The ghost of Henri Christophe crept back. He had predicted that his rival, Boyer, would some day bow to French interests. The people remembered this warning from the late practical pessimist, and they did not forget the secrecy with which the treaty was foisted on them. The Spanish Part had not been recognized by Louis XVIII as part of Haiti, yet Boyer insisted that the Dominicans share the indemnity payments to France.³⁹ Boyer gagged all sources of information which might have spread news of the diplomatic fiasco. Those who revolted against the treaty were exiled. In spite of all his clever political camouflage Boyer could not turn vanquishment to victory. Efforts were sincerely made to pay off the indemnity by voluntary loans to be redeemed in thirty years at six per cent, but Boyer could not even raise 300,000 Haitian dollars. The poorer classes were unable to pay the

³⁶ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

³⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXXVIII, p. 163.

³⁸ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

³⁹ Davis, H. P., *Black Democracy*, New York, 1929, p. 115.

heavy levies assessed in the rural regions for paying the indemnity.⁴⁰

Haiti defaulted. She did this to save herself from complete ruin. But good fortune was still with Boyer. In 1838 the liberal French king, Louis Philippe, offered a liberal settlement. By this later treaty, no doubt was left as to Haiti's full independence, as Article I revealed: "Sa Majesté . . . reconnaît . . . la République d'Haiti comme état libre, souverain, et indépendant."⁴¹ France received most favored nation treatment commercially, and Haiti's indemnity was reduced to 60,000,000 francs, to be paid at 1,500,000 francs yearly for the first five years, and increasing 100,000 francs every five years until completely paid in 1868. This treaty helped recoup some of the president's prestige, but the loss of public faith had far-reaching consequences.

Jean Pierre Boyer's relations with the United States had two aims: to achieve American recognition and favor and to gain free Negroes for a pool of skilled labor and increased population. The recognition by the United States was impossible of achievement even for a Machiavelli. The South was absolutely opposed to the recognition of a nation which had won freedom by way of a slave uprising. In July 1822, the Haitian Secretary of State, Inginac, invited the United States, as the first New World republic, to be the first nation to recognize the second New World republic.⁴² President James Monroe, in his message to the United States Senate on February 26, 1823, communicated the American attitude. He spoke of the Haitian "provisions which prohibit the employment in the government of all white persons who have emigrated there since 1816, and who may hereafter emigrate there, and which prohibit also the acquisition by such persons of the right of citizenship

⁴⁰ Franklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-263.

⁴¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, XXVI, p. 1093.

⁴² Montague, Ludwell Lee, *Haiti and the United States, 1714-1933*, Duke University Press, 1940, p. 50.

or to real estate in the island . . . [this] evinces distinctly the idea of a distrust of other nations."⁴³ The Haitian president well knew the refusal was not based on Haitian "distrust of other nations" but he realized that further attempts would be vain. By 1824 he hoped only for an American assurance of neutrality, should France try to regain Haiti. Nevertheless, Yankee friends of the first Latin American republic were more idealistic, and probably less practical than Boyer. Petitions from Northerners came before Congress again and again. The *Niles' National Register*, a vocal advocate of recognition, published news of bills and debates; Southern senators and representatives meanwhile defeated these bills, ranking them "marks of incendiaryism."⁴⁴

Boyer's second goal for United States relations realized somewhat better results. Thomas Jefferson had thought Haiti an ideal spot for the colonization of American free Negroes, for he did not desire a separate Negro state or territory within the Union.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Boyer sent a mulatto, Jonathan Granville, to New York City to persuade six thousand freedmen to emigrate. They were to be provided with four months' provisions and "a reasonable amount of land."⁴⁶ Granville made several addresses in New York. In August 1824, he said that the language problems were simple, for English was well known in Haiti. Religious differences were not too great or important, Granville insisted. Besides, young people could easily be habituated to social and climatic changes, and his appeal was definitely to youth.⁴⁷ Granville was courteous, well-educated, and his appeal was very effective. Fostered by the African

⁴³ Manning, *State Papers*, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁴⁴ *Niles' Weekly Register*, LI, p. 349.

⁴⁵ Montague, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁴⁶ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXVI, p. 270.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

Colonization Society,⁴⁸ the idea of immigration to Haiti took the form of a crusade. Thirty Negro families sailed from Philadelphia on August 23 under Granville's encouraging direction. Granville had promised that artisans, so vitally needed in the new state, could easily earn from six to twelve Haitian dollars per week, or more, according to their talents and activity. Added to this appeal to the purse was the inducement of \$40 paid for the passage of each adult.⁴⁹

Boyer, always vocal in an age of flowery speeches, prepared these words for his pet project:

Our past sufferings—our unexampled efforts to regain our primitive rights—our solemn oath to live free and independent, the happy situation of our island . . . the astonishing fertility of the soil . . . our wise constitution which insures a free country to Africans and their descendants, all lead us to believe that the Hand of Providence has destined Hayti for a land of promise, a sacred asylum, where our unfortunate brethren will . . . see their wounds healed by the balm of equality, and their tears wiped away by the protecting hand of liberty.⁵⁰

He told a member of the Society for African Colonization in April, 1824, that it would be impractical to send civilized Negroes to barbaric Africa. In Haiti, the new blood would receive all the land a family could cultivate. He promised, "They shall not be meddled with in their domestic habits, nor in their religious belief, provided they do not seek to make proselytes."⁵¹ By 1828, thirteen thousand Negroes had reached Haiti. Boyer had paid out of his own purse the passage of fifty Negroes who worked on his estate, and the Haitian government had financed the immigration of about 6,000 when, in April 1825, the subsidies were stopped. Boyer told an American visitor that the reason for this was

⁴⁸ The Society for African Colonization was organized by philanthropically-minded Americans in 1821 to solve the slave problem by sending American freed Negroes to Liberia. The emigration of ex-slaves to Haiti was a later and shorter episode in the humanitarian history of the Society.

⁴⁹ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XV, p. 117.

⁵⁰ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XVIII, p. 326.

⁵¹ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXVI, p. 272.

that an American agent, who had "obtained considerable funds for transporting free people of color to the island . . . had absconded with the money in his pocket."⁵² Vagabonds had come with the industrious, and some had speculated with their money.

The scheme was at best going poorly. It began to grow worse. The American freedmen could not overcome the lingual, religious, and social differences. The newcomers did not like the system of working on shares. Native Haitians had in some cases discriminated against their new neighbors. The American Negroes had known a higher standard of living. They wanted to go home. As early as 1825, two hundred returned.⁵³ Boyer's well-advertised country, vaunted as a promised land, proved a disappointment. Moreover, the immigrants probably soon discovered what a Haitian dollar really was. Boyer became disgusted with his crusade, and, ever the Machiavelli, it was said that he began to fear that the introduction of the more enlightened American freedmen would crystallize intrigue and undermine his government.⁵⁴

As more and more American Negroes returned home, less and less interest was shown in the mass migration scheme. Nevertheless, Benjamin Lundy, a missionary sent to Haiti to learn of the conditions of immigrants, observed that eight thousand United States Negroes were there in 1827. He said that quite a number had prospered and were actually influential. Some American Negro missionaries had gained native converts.⁵⁵ General Lafayette, in February 1830, added the influence of an international hero to the campaign to revive interest in immigration. He wrote to Boyer, addressing him as "Citoyen Président," and lauding the holy cause of emancipation. He expressed his hopes

⁵² *North American Review*, XX, p. 209.

⁵³ *The Missionary Herald*, Boston, XXV, p. 333.

⁵⁴ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

⁵⁵ *Missionary Herald*, XXV, p. 333.

that Granville's ideals would not be abandoned, for Lafayette believed that the Negroes of the United States would find liberty, work, and happiness in Haiti.⁵⁶ In spite of this last vain effort, American friends of the Negroes now sent their funds to Liberia. Although President Boyer's aim had only been achieved in part, his regime gathered in, through its advertisement of this enlightened plan, a new reputation in the capitals of the world, that of a humanitarian administration. Legendary benevolence can always be useful as a Machiavellian mask.

Jean Pierre Boyer disliked the British. This was an unusual example of the stupidity of a very clever man, but Boyer's dislike was due to a very human weakness rather than to the calculated thoroughness of Machiavellianism. The president could never forget that the British agent, Home Popham, had requested him in 1820 not to attack Henri Christophe's realm, because this would prejudice British trade.⁵⁷ Boyer was almost alone in his stubborn hatred. His close friend, the secretary of state, was an Anglophile; the Haitian people, too, respected the English above all other foreigners, for, in the spirit of self-interest, Great Britain had strongly favored Haitian independence. In 1825, the prejudiced president, who had fought the English and never trusted them, withdrew the British customs privileges⁵⁸ which Pétion had granted Great Britain in the expectant hope that Haitian recognition would follow in a just exchange for favored nation treatment. When Great Britain recognized Mexico and Colombia in 1823 and disregarded Haiti, Boyer struck back.⁵⁹ When Great Britain

⁵⁶ *Mémoires, Correspondence, et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette*, Paris, 1838, VI, p. 352.

⁵⁷ Léger, J. N., *Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors*, New York, 1907, p. 174.

⁵⁸ The British paid seven per cent customs duties while other nations paid twelve per cent.

⁵⁹ Great Britain finally recognized Haitian independence in May 1826, due to the recent French recognition of the Black Republic.

finally recognized Haiti, the people were anxious for the arrival of the new British consul-general, Charles Mackenzie. Learning through his spies that the populace was going to outdo itself in celebrating the British envoy's arrival, Boyer let it be known that he would take these greetings as a personal insult. When Mackenzie landed at the capital's docks, prepared to assume his position as consul-general, he was greeted by warm weather but a cold welcome. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, however, was on hand to greet him, but Boyer was not present, nor did he send even a minor aide!⁶⁰ In later years, Boyer's government and that of Great Britain did agree on the Franco-British Conventions of 1831 and 1833 to suppress slave trade, but only deep feelings and a cause as close to Boyer's heart as this could put aside his deeper feelings of anglophobia. Boyer's British relations are a perfect example of that part of his nature which was stubborn, stupid, and sincere, but not Machiavellian.

Now that France and Great Britain had granted recognition, smaller powers hastened to establish diplomatic relations with the Caribbean's only independent nation: The Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden soon had envoys at Port-au-Prince, but when in that year of 1826, Simón Bolívar called the Congress of Panama, he invited all the New World states except Haiti. This must have been the greatest indignity Boyer ever received from a foreigner, for the Haiti of Pétion had shown Bolívar perfect hospitality as his asylum and base in 1815 for a new liberating campaign. The Liberator had remembered 1822 better, the year Boyer had conquered Spanish Santo Domingo as it was about to join Bolívar's Gran Colombia! Boyer might prove that republicanism (severe as his brand of it was) could work in Latin America, but Hispanic-America, ironically, would snub him, and Haiti.

Jean Pierre Boyer was no dogmatist in religion; the French revolutionary philosophy had influenced him too

⁶⁰ Franklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-259.

much. Nevertheless, he realized, as any Machiavelli must, that his relations with the Holy See were of vital importance. Under Boyer the Church had become a political tool; a Quaker visitor could say in 1842:

The jurisdiction of the Pope at Rome has been repudiated; the archbishop [at Santo Domingo City] has banished himself to a distant country, and the president, following the example of Henry the Eighth, has become head of the Church.⁶¹

This had come about more through the ruin of European domination in Haiti than through Boyer's achievements. By Boyer's time, the priesthood was completely degenerate; there were no archbishops, bishops, or deans, and the ignorant, low-bred Corsicans who were the priesthood were a completely mercenary crew. It was all superstition and no religion. The atheistical Dessalines and Henri Christophe, a cynic, had done nothing to prevent and much to encourage spiritual destitution. Boyer did not want to increase the diminishing number of priests, for the poverty of his state required church revenues. Besides, he could appoint compliant priests, although papal censures were sure to follow. Nevertheless, the chief executive soon realized that he must get better priests from Europe to help maintain law and order, which the Corsican clerics he had never could do.⁶²

In 1834, Gregory XVI wrote to Boyer informing him that he was sending John England, Bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, to treat with him on church affairs, to deliberate on the choice of pastors, to "form a national clergy, to establish ecclesiastical discipline, and provide for the spiritual wants of the people."⁶³ The Pope wanted to appoint a Vicar Apostolic for Haiti. Boyer was adamant. He insisted on the right to appoint the archbishop and bishops, and to permit the Pope only to confer investitures. Noth-

⁶¹ Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁶² Leyburn, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁶³ *Niles' Weekly Register*, LIX, p. 49.

ing came of the attempted reconciliation, and Bishop England departed in 1836. The Pope refused to receive or approve the concordat he had achieved. The next year, President Boyer refused to receive Bishop England as administrator of the Church of Haiti.⁶⁴ An honest attempt to improve the religious conditions of Haiti had been made, but an anti-clerical trend, evident throughout Ibero-America, had not spared Haiti.

Boyer's relations with the Protestants were also far from satisfactory. Freedom of religion was only theoretical in Haiti. Boyer persecuted the Wesleyan Methodist ministers who arrived in 1811. They fled, but returned in 1824. Having reconsidered his previous action, the president protected them this time. Boyer held no animosity toward Protestants, but he feared they would stir up the people, and as a staunch conservative, he felt safer when the *status quo* was preserved in all things.

It is clear that, although Jean Pierre Boyer was not as expert in his dealings with foreigners as with his compatriots, he did gain surprisingly much and surrendered nothing irretrievable. He had gained the recognition of every power worthy of his notice, except the United States. Haiti had been saddled with a great debt which weakened her, but she was strategically stronger, for she needed no longer to fear a European invasion. The blue and red national ensign now flew over the whole island of Santo Domingo, and it was saluted at Haitian ministries throughout the world.

ECONOMIC HEADACHES

Rulers have tended to procrastinate in solving those puzzles most difficult but most important to all their people—the social and economic problems. Boyer had good reason to postpone his efforts to improve internal conditions, but by the mid-twenties Haiti was united internally and recognized externally. She was sovereign for the first time. This

⁶⁴ Léger, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187.

was not the time for taking bows, for Haiti's socio-economic plight was worse than ever. The long wars of liberation (1791-1804) in Haiti had ruined the land far more than had similar conflicts anywhere else in Latin America. The French ruling class, which knew the science of optimum cultivation, had been liquidated completely. Incomparably more property had been destroyed in Haiti than in Ibero-America, and the people, devoid of education, and free for the first time, thought freedom meant idleness. Those who had nothing were now everything. There had been no transitional period. In northern Haiti, Henri Christophe had used force ruthlessly to control his almost uncontrollable people. As a result, a measure of agricultural prosperity had been restored, but the south had remained in virtual anarchy and poverty. Jean Pierre Boyer inherited the whole sick, idle and poverty-stricken land. By this time, stagnation had spread over the whole island. European visitors said of the vaunted capital: "This city, which once contained 60,000 people, is now in a ruinous state and can with difficulty count 5,000, including a portion of Boyer's standing army. . . . There are . . . many splendid buildings, or remains of such, crumbling to pieces for the want of a few days' labor. The streets were once beautifully paved, and had commodious sidewalks, but . . . they are going to ruin."⁶⁵ Another reported, "With all its advantages of situation, with every inherent capability of being made and kept delightfully clean, [Port-au-Prince] is perhaps the filthiest capital in the world."⁶⁶ Yet Port-au-Prince was the glittering metropolis of the Republic. A look at the rural areas was more surprising. The sugar fields were semi-abandoned; coffee, which needs expert care, was poorly tended, or grew wild. Even the president's estates were described as only half-cultivated, and exhibiting signs of neglect.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XLVI, p. 867.

⁶⁶ Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Intelligent advisors warned Boyer that drastic means had to be taken in order to begin rehabilitation. The president hated unnecessary force, and because of this he had abandoned the semi-fendalism of the agricultural policies of his predecessors.⁶⁸ But Boyer's ruling passion was to make Haiti great and respected. His decision to use force was reached slowly, for he was ever a cautious man. Forced labor had been used at his estate, a sort of testing ground. The results there were good, and Inginac, who had long advocated copying the *encomienda* system of neo-slavery, now won his point.

The result of Boyer's long delayed action in remedy of agricultural decadence was the Code Rural. This legislation was passed on April 21, 1826 by the Chamber of Communes, approved by the Senate on May 1, and signed by the anxious president on the sixth of May. It was mainly the work of the statesman, Joseph B. Inginac, with the aid of Boyer and several senators and representatives. On May 1, the day of the Fête de l'Agriculture, the president promised his people a revival of agriculture, admonishing them to plant the sturdiest crops and aim at national self-sufficiency. The landed cultivators did not applaud. It was a certain omen of stormy days ahead.⁶⁹

The Code Rural initiated a degree of state control the people had never before known under Boyer. "The Law for the Better Observance of the Culture of the Soil" which had preceded the Rural Code, had merely compelled all farm workers to remain on the land, except on week ends; but the penalty had not been great enough to discourage disobedience. Now the Rural Code actually established state feudalism by control of labor and agriculture. "This code, in plain English, reduced the body of Negroes to slavery without any guarantee of protection during sickness or old

⁶⁸ Leyburn, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁶⁹ Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

age," *De Bow's Review* stated.⁷⁰ By the Code's provisions, those rural inhabitants not under contract to a proprietor or renter, were declared vagabonds and subject to arrest. The justice of the peace was to imprison vagabonds until they were bound to a contractor, presumably of their own choice. If after eight days, such a vagabond refused to be bound to a landowner, he was to be put on public works construction until he did agree to the contract. Besides that, anyone anywhere who had no visible means of support was in danger of falling under this modern *encomienda* system. Every worker found idle or lounging on a week day was to be imprisoned for twenty-four hours. Farm labor commenced at sunup, continued until a half hour pause for a noontime breakfast, and then resumed until sunset. There was to be no absence without the overseer's approval. Under this system, the real petty despot was the justice of the peace. His absolute power would have pleased any Machiavelli. No worker might leave the country to live in the city without his sanction, and such permission was only to be given when he was certain of the applicant's ability to be independent economically in town. The justice of the peace had to give his consent if a laborer wished to send his child to school (naturally in town), if he wanted to be apprenticed in town, or if he wanted to establish a shop, sell his produce, or build a house not connected with agriculture in the country.⁷¹

The Rural Code failed. It failed as all efforts to control totally the private life of the people have and always must fail. "Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytians to labour," wrote the English observer James Franklin.⁷² Coercion had been tried. It failed. The people had not yet found necessity strong

⁷⁰ *De Bow's Review*, New Orleans, 1859, XXVII, p. 543.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

⁷² Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

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enough to compel the indispensable self-discipline. One of the many contributing factors to the failure was Boyer's otherwise practical policy of establishing small land grants of from ten to fifteen acres. Machiavellian machinations had created owners to satisfy soldiers and honor-seekers. But the Code did not subject owners to its prohibitions against idleness! Added to these difficulties was the general ignorance in regard to soil improvement, fertilization, cultivation, and other European farm techniques then quite recently advanced. Consequently, even the small landowners who were the most industrious profited little.⁷³

Some critics blamed the severity and arbitrary nature of the Code itself for its failure. This was only partly to blame. The common people were accustomed to mild government, and they simply refused to obey the Code. The standing army, equally disobedient and twice as lazy, failed to uphold it. By crop sharing, the laziest farmhand got as much as the busiest. The president saw the danger of this, and hoped for eventual distribution of goods according to the industry of the worker, but he never developed any scheme for realizing it.⁷⁴ The landlords lost faith in the plan, an impractical project which took a quarter of their crops for the workers. The president was not one to cling to a fiasco. As he had once abandoned his crusade for American Negro immigration, he now abandoned his Rural Code. Agriculture at least grew no worse for the present, thanks more to good weather than to intricate Machiavellian codes.

As has been shown, public works had been neglected for a generation. A conservative building campaign slowly got under way. A Machiavellian might see this as a symbol of the future and a hope of prosperity. By 1840, the cathedral of Cape Haitien was being rebuilt. At the same time, the new military hospital, "a noble edifice, with kitchens, and

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁷⁴ Leyburn, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

hot and cold baths'' was functioning.⁷⁵ Public roads were still imaginary, by European standards, but Boyer had re-established the forced labor used in French colonial times to keep up the highways. This was an unpopular measure. Prisoners and ne'er-do-wells, roped together in pairs, worked on the so-called highways. National poverty, however, was not conducive to the expression of much engineering skill.

A penniless Machiavelli is hardly Machiavellian at all. The Haitian counterpart knew this. Although when filled by the spoils of the northern conquest of 1820, the treasury looked bottomless, it was soon empty. The republican government's aims were high in expenses as well as in quality. Boyer's administration spent five million Haitian dollars yearly. Of this, 2,200,000 was derived from duties, the same amount came from taxes and licenses, and a half million was borrowed.⁷⁶ In 1826, Mackenzie reported to Canning that the treasury was empty and the soldiers and civil servants unpaid.⁷⁷

Boyer realized that foreign trade was the most substantial source of government revenue and national prosperity. However, Haiti had long hindered commerce by prejudice and by short-sighted legislation. Since Pétion had authorized the issuance of three million Haitian dollars in a composite metal, 19 parts tin and one part silver, foreign merchants had lost faith in Haiti's governmental stability. Importations and revenue fell off.

For centuries the Haitians had suffered under European rule. Fear and distrust of whites built on such a foundation as the human heart could not easily be dissolved; therefore the white race was a proscribed race in Haiti. Foreign traders had to procure special annual licenses to trade. Furthermore, they were obliged to find Haitian part-

⁷⁵ Candler, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁶ Leyburn, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

⁷⁷ *British and Foreign State Papers, 1828*, p. 667.

ners through whom they might do business. No white person could own land, marry a Haitian, or be naturalized. These restrictions further tended to discourage the inflow of foreign capital. The courts of law joined in the general persecution of foreigners. "The exactions made upon the persons and pockets of foreigners are as capricious and unjust as the wind, and it is thought will compel the whole of them to leave the island,"⁷⁸ complained a pessimistic foreigner. Because of these restrictions, exports fell fast.⁷⁹ Drought had been blamed in part, but it did not extend over half a century! Boyer ordered that all duties be paid in specie, but this only ruined trade the more.⁸⁰ Add to this the trouble the Haitian government had in 1822 with the French and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, where the slave trade resulted in Boyer's forbidding all trade with the Leeward and Windward Islands, and no trade was carried on with any land which failed to respect the Haitian flag.⁸¹ Customs revenue was further reduced at home, for unscrupulous customs officials often falsified the customs house returns to render unto themselves what was Caesar's.

Bad as it was, commerce was not quite so hopeless as the pro-slavery men often pointed out. By 1826, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish ships first traded at Port-au-Prince. It was claimed that in 1839, Haiti sent more merchandise to the United States than any European state except Great Britain, France, and Russia.⁸²

Boyer had ordered that all import duties be levied in gold or silver so that he could pay off the French debt, his greatest concern. His government had defaulted on the 1825

⁷⁸ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXXIV, p. 314.

⁷⁹ In 1789, over 47 million pounds of cloyed sugar, 7 million pounds of cotton, and 76 million pounds of coffee were exported. By 1840, annually, only 741 pounds of sugar, 922,575 pounds of cotton, and 46 million pounds of coffee left Haiti ports. See *De Bow's Review*, XXVII, p. 530.

⁸⁰ *Niles' Weekly Register*, LII, p. 402.

⁸¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, X, 1822-23, p. 1036.

⁸² Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

treaty payments, and he was determined to show his good faith by living up to the terms of the treaty of 1838. By 1840, four and one-half million francs had been paid, leaving 55,000,000 francs due.⁸³

In the year 1841, agriculture showed a little improvement, as did the export trade. Until that year, the national revenue was less than the expenditure, but since 1837 the income had been increasing and Boyer's reputation for thrift had reduced expenditures somewhat. Boyer had issued a great quantity of paper money, but this could have been gradually withdrawn by having foreign merchants pay part of their customs duties in paper. Boyer hoped for a national bank as an answer to this problem.⁸⁴ An unscrupulous New Yorker by the name of Hamilton, and later a Frenchman, introduced counterfeit coin and bank notes to Boyer's already bankrupt land. The Frenchman was caught, tried, and executed, and Boyer offered five hundred Haitian dollars for the head of Hamilton.⁸⁵ The severest measures were taken against those who would further weaken the weak state.

All in all, Jean Pierre Boyer's Achilles' heel was in the realm of political economy. His cleverness was of no avail in trade and money questions beyond his ken. He was no financial wizard. Neither was Niccolo Machiavelli.

MACHIAVELLIAN STRATEGY

The strength of Jean Pierre Boyer lay in his ability to play the role of a canny diviner of the wants, wiles, and weaknesses of his people, and to use this knowledge in keeping himself in power in order to achieve all possible good. He was called a Machiavellian disciple in his own day, and he certainly was one in his methods. His belittlers would have styled him one also in his purposes. But Boyer

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118-119.

⁸⁵ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXXV, pp. 41, 386.

was not cold and devoid of human feeling. He based his calculated, even ruthless, policy on progress, and used it for a social end. Haiti, the most unpromising of the new republics, had shown only signs of being at the depths of human development, but Boyer deserved immortality for giving it one of the most promising governments when the more advantageously endowed republics could only be compared to his with sad conclusions.

What were the successful Machiavellian methods which won the victories? The first stratagem was to gain political security. Boyer was a mulatto. The Negro-mulatto rivalry was strong and maturing. He was a member of the distrusted ruling minority. The power of this influential minority might fall at any moment. Everyone knew, however, that Boyer's predecessor, tutor, and fellow mulatto, Pétion, was Haiti's most beloved ruler. Therefore, when Boyer came peacefully to power, he spoke in his first address of "mon prédécesseur, Pétion," in near-sacred terms. Of course, Boyer admired his friend and superior, the man who had made him his successor, but this was more than gratitude. He was building Pétion, instead of Toussaint, into the national hero. He knew that some of the built-up popular emotion expressed for the memory of Pétion would fall to him, his heir. Ordinary caudillos would have revelled in their own fame and vainglory, but not the quiet, retiring Haitian statesman who dressed in simple black. Under Boyer's direction, a bust was made for the legislative chamber. On it, below the head of Pétion, was engraved: "Il n'a jamais fait couler de larmes à personne, sauf à sa mort."⁸⁶ The body of the late founder of the Republic— "Encased in a coffin, lies in an open cenotaph fronting on the government house, and by the side of it, that of his daughter; both coffins are occasionally decorated with simple votive offerings; a picture of the Virgin, and a cross are

⁸⁶ "He never made tears fall from anyone until his death." See Candler, p. 164.

placed on a pedestal behind the coffins, to arrest and elevate the devotions of the faithful."⁸⁷ Boyer was building a political religion around Pétion, a stratagem familiar to those who know present-day fascism and communism.

As the upholder of the Republic, Boyer wished to appear a model of republican simplicity. Because of this, while he lionized Pétion, he always represented himself as a most humble man. His presidential mansion was the largest building in Port-au-Prince, but it was exceedingly humble in comparison to the late Henri Christophe's magnificent residence, *Sans Souci*, which was now abandoned. An observer said of Boyer's house. "It was as little like a royal palace as any republican could desire. . . It has in front a spacious court in which are lodges for the military guard of horse and foot."⁸⁸

President Boyer was the acknowledged head of the mulattoes, and yet he was forced to conciliate the Negro leaders. His mild treatment of Henri Christophe's former officers was partly calculated to please the Negroes. Every time Boyer promoted a mulatto, he tried to balance the promotion with the advancement of a Negro. He also used this policy not only to prevent the blacks from deposing him, but to prevent his fellow mulattoes from growing too strong. Divide and rule is the first principle of Machiavelianism. Toward the end of his rule, when the mulattoes wanted a new leader, new ideas, and reform, it is said that Boyer actually fomented the prejudices of the Negroes!⁸⁹

The champion of thought rather than force, President Boyer still used the army as a political weapon. It was said that Haiti was a nation of soldiers. It was true. The Reverend Dr. S. W. Hanna, in 1835, reported that military men held civil offices, and ex-generals were judges and customs

⁸⁷Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁸⁹*Littell's Living Age*, Boston, II, p. 68.

officers.⁹⁰ However, the truth was that about one per cent of the population was actually in the army at one time. An army of 28,000 and a militia of 40,000 was too expensive and too large for any nation. It diverted strong arms that could have farmed.⁹¹ The army's forts and guns were pathetically outmoded. The navy was a farce. But as a protection from foreign invasion and a threat to political foes, the armed forces were very useful.

Education is a more powerful and dangerous weapon than any army or armament. Jean Pierre Boyer well knew this. He discouraged education for the common people because he feared it. Boyer either closed or did not extend the schools founded by his predecessors. There were two public schools in Port-au-Prince in Boyer's time; one was for the poor, the other a secondary school. Both were supported by the government, and the position of teacher was a political sinecure. The elementary school was predominantly for mulatto boys, and the higher school almost entirely so. The mulatto élite obviously monopolized education to perpetuate its class and power.⁹² About one per cent as much was spent on education as was allocated for the army. Foreigners censured him for this. He was an intelligent man, educated in France, they said, and he should be denounced for failing to appreciate the value of instruction.⁹³ But Boyer deeply appreciated education's value, and to his everlasting shame. It was ironic that Haiti's republicans were too cautious to permit education, while the more ignorant royalists had patronized it. In this same spirit of letting well enough alone, Boyer kept the people ignorant of artificial wants, so that they would not be discontented but would work the soil, Haiti's most immediate concern.

While Boyer neglected education at home, he tried to

⁹⁰ Hanna, S. W., *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Hayti*, London, 1838, p. 97.

⁹¹ Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

⁹³ *De Bow's Review*, XXIV, pp. 532-533.

"educate" the outside world by propaganda in regard to his great accomplishments. The census of 1824 was compiled with both difficulty and inaccuracy. Boyer provided prominent visitors with statistics of Haiti's population, trade, education, and general progress. They were extravagant claims. One critic referred to them as "Boyer's bravados" and compared the propaganda to the remarks of Lemuel Gulliver.⁹⁴ In Haiti, with the press completely gagged, nothing blocked the president's propaganda at home.

The use of propaganda, although Machiavellian, was not an entirely evil political stratagem, for Haiti was ruthlessly vilified by the forces of slavery abroad. Boyer replied to them:

Let our enemies, denying towards us the rules of religion and morality, persist in recognizing only their proud prejudices; the Haitians will still continue to give proofs of the generous sentiments which characterize a free nation.⁹⁵

A fellow Haitian, one M. L'Instant, wrote a prize essay on color prejudice, and said in part:

What other state has ever in so brief a space of time done so much as Haiti with means so circumscribed and against obstacles so formidable? [Pro-slavers] call everything barbarous that does not copy London or Paris, and they assert that a people must be a horde of brutal savages, if they cannot all at once boast of operas, sumptuous parks, and public walks. . . . The wretched hovels of Europe in the Middle Ages . . . dark, narrow and filthy as they were, gave few signs of the brilliant luxury of the present day. When the doctrines of political freedom, of social equality, and chiefly that of brotherly good feeling between nations, are still mysteries for most other men, how shall we suddenly become familiar with them?⁹⁶

The most effective stratagem to insure the maintenance of Boyer's rule was the complete control of all branches of

⁹⁴ Barclay, Alexander, *A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies*, 2d ed., London, 1827, pp. 352, 362.

⁹⁵ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XXV, p. 397.

⁹⁶ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, London, III, 1842, p. 63.

government. Haiti was no democracy, it was a republic only in name. Democracy was impossible in a land where the people were destitute, illiterate, and unaccustomed to organized living. The constitution itself was an aid to President Boyer in exercising arbitrary power. All laws originated with the president. He received an annual salary of forty thousand Haitian dollars with an extra salary of thirty thousand for travelling expenses. Of course, he was chosen for life by his predecessor. Senators were selected from lists presented by the president to the House of Assembly. Boyer carefully presented his lists of potential senators so that the names were arranged in an order that would insure the election of his preferences. As the representatives were usually quite poor men, they were subservient to the president; they did not want to lose their salaries and they knew that by his influence, Boyer could force the Assembly to expel any ambitious member.⁹⁷ Boyer was truly "governor for life, generalissimo of the forces, head of the church, and fountain of honor and awards."⁹⁸

The government of Hayti is in fact a military despotism in the hands of a single man, mild and merciful, it must be confessed, and desiring the welfare of his country, but mistaken in some of his views, and therefore acting on some occasions in a manner utterly opposed to the public good.⁹⁹

The best illustration of this statement was the dispute on the formation of the Senate between Boyer and the House. The legislature had been meek for a generation, but here at last was defiance. Boyer, as usual, planned to put his own favorites into the Senate in 1838. The idealistic, reforming group, persisted. Therefore, the president called out the troops, and "Roamed over the whole town like a

⁹⁷ *Niles' Weekly Register*, LXIV, p. 114. The Senate, weak as it was, vainly but bravely fought to abolish the life presidency. The Constitution of 1816 was supposed to have been revised again in nine years, but as Boyer realized that his life tenure would be repealed, he never called a convention.

⁹⁸ Candler, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

madman, and placed a force at the door of the house of representatives, forbidding the entrance of such as would not yield to him. The orders were to let in but one more than half the members, and to be careful not to let the leading men get in."¹⁰⁰ Boyer was again the victor. The House yielded, and the five leaders of this parliamentary revolt were expelled. A presidential proclamation forbade the people even to talk of the political tempest.

In 1842, Hérard Dumesle, one of the reformists, and André Laudun, a recognized liberal, were elected from Aux Cayes. Laudun was actually chosen president of the Assembly, and invested with the office. By threats and persuasion, Boyer again got his way, and another vote reversed the earlier one. The liberal was removed. Laudun was a noted fighter against unconstitutionality and Boyer recognized him as a serious adversary.

The scales of justice were unbalanced by Boyer's heavy hand. Boyer's own civil and criminal codes were as enlightened in their letter as any elsewhere in the world, but their spirit was based on prejudice, politics, and procrastination. All decisions were subject to Boyer's review. Before the judges gave their opinions, they first informed themselves whether or not their president was of the same mind. James Franklin stated that . . . "should the president differ and the question be one in which the state is a party, or any state officer, then they are obliged to reconsider the case, and to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue."¹⁰¹ This same James Franklin commented further on the intimidation and perversion of the judges' integrity. In Haiti, the Grand Judge was the supreme justice of the land. He could stay execution and review all cases. Monsieur Freshnell, an infirm mulatto of about eighty, who had been a pirate before rheumatism set in and who naturally had not a whit of legal knowledge, was

¹⁰⁰ *Niles' Weekly Register*, LVII, p. 193.

¹⁰¹ Franklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-386.

appointed to this dignified office. To his credit, he refused this offer from President Boyer, for he knew his limitations. Boyer insisted, saying . . . that it did not require talent or legal knowledge to execute the duties of it, that he had only to do as he was directed by such orders as he might receive from the bureau of government.¹⁰² Boyer gained a superannuated puppet which he could turn as he willed. A symbol of the spirit of the times is the fact that it had become the custom to dig the graves of those accused of treason before they were tried.¹⁰³

Jean Pierre Boyer's memory failed him on one vital matter. He forgot the fate of Dessalines and Henri Christophe when they had become too dictatorial. Arbitrary action may be the strongest political weapon, but it is not static. It must be ever nourished, like a fire, but also like a fire, it often destroys its maker. Boyer was a Machiavelli turned Dr. Frankenstein.

GRUMBLING CITIZENS AND RUMBLING RAMPARTS

The causes of the people's dissatisfaction with Jean Pierre Boyer were as numerous as the thoughts of the mind, as personal as the heart. They do, however, fall into distinct groups. The foremost reason for the alienation of Boyer's support was his arbitrariness. The young, idealistic mulattoes, who had no opportunity to express themselves because their elders had monopolized the government, wanted a change. Many intelligent Haitians complained about Boyer and asked foreign travellers if they could induce the British and French presses to set forth their grievances for the world to see.¹⁰⁴

The center of the reform movement was Aux Cayes, the home of the reformist Hérard. The underground movement grew with the people's grievances. In 1842, the principal

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 388.

¹⁰³ *Littell's Living Age*, II, p. 67.

¹⁰⁴ Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

reasons for the opposition were set forth: (1) Boyer's neglect of agriculture due to the Rural Code fiasco. (2) Neglect of elementary education. (3) Taxes which bore unequally on the lower classes. (4) Destruction of freedom of press and trial by jury, and the growing rule of corrupt judges. (5) The impossible condition of the debased currency, and the national debt. (6) Election of senators by presidential fiat. (7) The forcible expulsion of deputies from the Chamber of Assembly. Boyer had again and again let it be known that he intended to redress these grievances. He promised also to establish local self-government, reorganize the army, and purify the Church. All these things were to be realized in some vague tomorrow. The conspirators' grumblings grew into a revolution that year (1842) when they heard the liberal, André Landun, had been ousted from the Assembly. After accumulating arms, they rebelled, but an army of 20,000 sent by the equally active president, nipped the unripe movement in the bud.¹⁰⁵

Another point to stir an already restless people, was the traditional racial antagonism of Negro versus mulatto, which Boyer had tried to underplay with one hand and to prevent from perishing with the other. The mulattoes wanted a colored aristocracy. The Negroes wanted vengeance against the ruling minority. Boyer had appeased both and pleased neither, but had at least kept the smouldering fire down to little more than smoke for a quarter century.

To these big sources of opposition were added such minor charges as the unpaid salaries of soldiers (mostly Negroes) and the army of bureaucrats, the heavy French debt, and the humiliation of seeing their government salute the Spanish flag in a crisis when Haitian pirates attacked Spanish ships off Cuba.¹⁰⁶

The culmination of all these irritations was no mere

¹⁰⁵ *Littell's Living Age*, II, 1844, p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ *Niles' Weekly Register*, LXIII, p. 416.

straw on a camel's back but an act of nature. On May 7, 1842, at a little past five in the evening, "The whole island began to shake and quiver, and roll like a drunken man. The loftiest mountains trembled, chasms opened on every side, streams hung suspended in their course, houses, towers, churches, palaces, came to the ground. . ."¹⁰⁷ Not a single town escaped without a casualty. Cape Haitien was hit worst. No wall stood and only one family was without death. The North had always been distrustful of Boyer, and now it needed a government that could give relief. Savage looters swept over the ruined towns, massacred the wounded, stole everything and everywhere. The army was unable to stop them. In January of 1843, a fire occurred in Port-au-Prince. Once again the armed forces were ineffective. The people realized how weak the government was. It could not even repress unorganized looters. What would it have done against a carefully organized uprising of the whole people! The superstitious saw the temblor as an omen of divine disapproval of an evil administration. Addressing the sufferers of the earthquake, President Boyer promised, "The ever watchful and guardian care of the Republic will not forsake you in your distress. . ."¹⁰⁸ But he could not keep his word. Too many were hurt and homeless. Their distress made them desperately willing to try any measure of relief. There were many men desperately willing to lead them. Jean Pierre Boyer's luck had run out.

THE FALL OF AN ENLIGHTENED DESPOT

The second great Haitian Revolution commenced by the mulattoes, fortunately was concluded by them before it could get out of control. The mulattoes were victors for the moment. Major Charles Hérard, one of the Aux Cayes reformers, took up arms on January 27, 1843 at his own plantation. As the conspirators of Jérémie were also active, Boyer

¹⁰⁷ *Littell's Living Age*, II, 1844, p. 68.

¹⁰⁸ *Niles' National Register*, LXII, 1842, p. 321.

ordered the commandant of Jérémie to call out the National Guard to check this disturbance over the arrest of several of their number. The commandant refused. This was on January 31. Two hundred rebels arose immediately and spread from the south. Within a few days, the whole south was under their control. They set up a provisional government at Jérémie. Foreigners, who had often bewailed Boyer's machinations, had at least known safety and political stability under his rule. Now they began packing!¹⁰⁹

President Boyer had sent Inginac to Petite Goave to help the expedition of regular troops. His efforts were in vain. He tried to return to the capital, only to fall back to Gressier in order to avoid a bloody battle. The first battle was at Pestel on February 21. Only twenty men were lost, but among them was Boyer's commander who was shot by his own officers. The second battle took place near Jérémie on February 25. It lasted two and one-half hours. Twenty loyalists and a hundred rebels were killed. This time, another of Boyer's generals was fatally wounded and his men were routed.¹¹⁰ The third and final important encounter occurred at Léogane on March 12 where the president's army was decisively defeated by Hérard. Over 8,000 armed rebels were now marching on the capital.¹¹¹

Jean Pierre Boyer realized that further resistance was useless. That same day, the president made his final address to his risen people. "Gentlemen of the Council", he began,

Twenty-five years have elapsed since I was called to fill the post of president, then made vacant by the death of Pétion, the founder of the Republic. Since then I have endeavored to carry out his views, which I had of all others the best opportunity of knowing. I have endeavored during my administration to conduct the affairs of government with a strict attention to economic management of its finances. In proof of my labors on this subject, there are now

¹⁰⁹ *Niles' National Register*, LXIV, pp. 2, 48, 65.

¹¹⁰ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, IV, p. 171.

¹¹¹ *Littell's Living Age*, II, p. 71.

one million of dollars in reserve besides other funds deposited in Paris to the credit of the government. Recent events, which I do not desire to characterize, have brought upon me calamities which I did not foresee, nor am prepared to meet. In this emergency, I deem it due to my dignity and honor to make a personal abnegation of the powers with which I have been clothed. . . . I have lived to see independence of the nation acknowledged and its territory united. . . . I wish Haiti to be as happy as I strove to render her.¹¹²

In this rather pathetic, yet dignified way, Boyer at 67 resigned an office which he had entered at 42. He had ruled longer than any other Haitian leader. He kept his nation at peace internally and externally when most of the rest of Latin America was fighting, first the Spanish and then each other, during their most critical era. Now Boyer stood uncertain between Scylla and Charybdis. He turned to Scylla. The British warship "Scylla" lay at anchor in Port-au-Prince harbor. Boyer boarded it, but: "After being some time on board, the president requested Captain Sharp to go to his palace for several articles and money. . . but on the captain's reaching the palace, it was surrounded by the military, who refused him entrance, observing that the president was welcome to what he already had taken, but that what remained was the property of the Republic."¹¹³ That day, the ship left Port-au-Prince, and Jean Pierre Boyer never saw his birthplace again. On March 19, 1843, *H. M. S. Scylla* reached Kingston, Jamaica, and Boyer, who had been uneasy about things British, sought sanctuary in a Crown colony. He and his thirty-two followers viewed their new exile-home.¹¹⁴

No man is indispensable, but the Haitian Machiavelli had done a master job in making himself essential. Haiti without Boyer seemed at first a Utopia to the victorious young mulattoes. On April 4, 1843, Charles Hérard entered Port-au-Prince as provisional president. His government declared Boyer guilty of high treason and all his property

¹¹² *Niles' Weekly Register*, LXIV, p. 97.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹¹⁴ *London Times*, April 21, 1843.