The omnipresence of Communism in the US-Haitian Relations under Eisenhower and Duvalier

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Until the late 1950s, the fight against communism was present in the relations between the United States and the Caribbean, but it did not really dominate these relations. With General Paul Eugene Magloire leading in Haiti, General Flugencio Batista in Cuba and Leonidas Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, who were all rightist military and very close to the United States, the region appeared to be safe from Communism. There were certainly some organized communist movements in those countries. Popular leaders like Juan Bosch, Dominican Republic, and Daniel Fignolé in Haiti have been wrongly or rightly indexed as Communists. However, there was not any possibility for a leftist movement or even a liberal leader to come to power and establish a popular democracy. For proof, Fignolé, who became president in May 1957 in favor of the chaos that followed the overthrow of Magloire, only lead the country for 20 days. Bosch spent only a few months as president in 1963.

In a country like Haiti, for example, International relations were not characterized by the Western-Eastern disagreement that dominated the Cold War era. The United States conducted their struggle for domination against France and the Catholic clergy. The US-French “war of influence” dominated the 1957 election between the mulatto candidate Louis Déjoie and the black candidate François Duvalier. The Haitian mulattoes, who received a French education in prestigious schools that were led by French priests, were the best defenders of the French language, culture, and position in Haiti. Therefore, it was not surprising for France and the Catholic clergy to support Déjoie. On the other hand, the United States had known Duvalier. Former fellow of the School of Public Health, in Michigan, he worked for 14 years in the U.S. medical mission in Port-au-Prince. According to the French ambassador to the United States

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Hervé Alphand, Duvalier was seen in Washington as the man who could offer the most advantage to the United States.¹

Few studies have been conducted on the role of communism in the US-Haitian relations under Duvalier and Eisenhower. Most scholars specialized in US-Latin America relations simply do not take Haiti into account in their analysis of the period. Even Stephen Rabe ignores this issue in his very prestigious Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism. Nevertheless, it is evident in scholarly writing that is available on US-Haitian relations that Duvalier received the full support of the United States to conquer the presidency and remain in power. The Kennedy presidency was an exception (Gérard Pierre-Charles, 1987). The overall context of the Cold War clearly comes out in academic works focusing on support provided by the Eisenhower administration to François Duvalier. However, the communist threat coming from Haiti appears vaguely. Some believe that Duvalier had initially sympathized with communist activists (Lesly Manigat, 2003) and facilitated their operation (Rony Gilot, 2006). They, therefore, did not represent a threat either to Duvalier nor the United States. Others argue that the president did not have control over all the communist militants, but those who might have had intentions to overthrow the government and establish a socialist state in Haiti were powerless because they were divided and disorganized (Bernard Diederich, 2005).

There is no doubt that Duvalier was among the leaders who grasped that the United States was greatly obsessed with communism and decided to take advantage of this. Indeed, in this period of history of international relations, ideological, military, economic and geopolitical rivalries widened between the capitalist bloc led by the United States and the communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. Each of these powers decided to increase material and financial assistance in order to attract the most allies possible in their camp. Also, many developing countries used this situation as their hobbyhorse and took advantage of them by voicing their grievances and demands. As stated by Eric Roorda (1998), some dictators like Dominican General Rafael Trujillo y Molina put forth their anticommunism to receive important aid from the US that they used to consolidate their power and increase their capacity to suppress their opponents.

In spring 1960, the Caribbean, which seemed to be “safe from communism”, saw its largest island, Cuba, turn to Moscow. In March, Fidel Castro had expressed to Alekseiev, KGB representative in Havana, his choice of the Soviet model. This extension of the Cold War displeased the United States. While the US was scarcely absorbing the blow and thinking about a turnaround, another Caribbean island threatened to move to the east. On June 21, 1960 in a speech delivered in Jacmel, a town located in southeastern Haiti, President Duvalier threatened to turn his back on the capitalist bloc to embrace the “Red Flag,” which is the symbol of communism, if the United States did not accept to pay “the price.” Recalling the existence of “two great poles of attraction, one in the New World, the other in old Europe,” Duvalier said his duty was to “seek the welfare of his people where he is assured of finding it.” Was the Haitian president about to follow the path of his Cuban neighbor? Was his approach a real menace or pure blackmail to the United States?

Very few scholars took Duvalier’s threat seriously. Most of them simply present the speech as blackmail. Specialists who have paid attention to Duvalier’s politic conclude that the “Cri de Jacmel” should be included in the line of Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier’s diplomacy, which was in all circumstances, “diplomatic blackmail.” In other words, Duvalier, in 1960, did not have necessary resources to turn Haiti into a socialist State. However, we find some nuance by analyzing carefully the communist presence in Haiti and its use in the relationship between Duvalier and Eisenhower. It is interesting to note that 1960 was the end of Eisenhower’s presidency, and his Vice-President Richard Nixon was campaigning to become president. Accordingly, the “Cri de Jacmel” can be considered a high point in US-Haitian relations. To apprehend the role of communism in these relations, this paper will focus on four aspects. In first place, there will be an overview of US-Haitian relations since Duvalier came to power. It will be then necessary to analyze real and imaginary links between Duvalier and the communist bloc. Thirdly, emphasis will be put on US, Soviet Union, and Haitian communist’ reactions to

Duvalier’s speech. Finally, the post-June 21 relations between Port-au-Prince and Washington and treatment of communist activists by Duvalier will be viewed.

François Duvalier, from the beginning of his presidency, placed his regime in the camp of US allies. In his first press conference, the president revealed his desire to see Haiti becoming like Puerto Rico “the spoiled child” of the United States. Economic assistance and military support to Haiti were the main components of the partnership between Washington and the Duvalier regime. The first indication came during the summer of 1958. On the night of July 28, armed men secretly landed in Port-au-Prince and seized the Casernes Dessalines, which is located a few meters from the presidential palace. The attackers might have overthrown Duvalier if their expected supports had arrived. The plane that was preparing to take off from Miami airport to drop men, weapons, and extra ammunition to Port-au-Prince was seized by US authorities. The Haitian president remarked the weakness of his army against a foreign attack. From that date, he adopted a posture of defender of the Western world against international communism.

Duvalier did not accuse the United States even though the attack came from the US territory and several American citizens including a deputy sheriff were among the assailants.\(^6\) He did not publicly consider the question as relating to inter-American relations by bringing it before the Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) as he will do a year later for the attack coming from Cuba. Duvalier called the assault “an act of international brigandage.”\(^7\) If there should be a culprit, it would have been communism. In his letter to Eisenhower on August 2, 1958, Duvalier emphasized on the danger that would represent an international communist conspiracy against Haiti and other countries in the Caribbean.\(^8\) Also, he asked the US president for military assistance to deal with threats that could come from “communist henchmen.”\(^9\) Eisenhower, in return, stated: “I understand your concern in this regard and I think

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it would be very helpful if you could provide further information on this issue to my ambassador to help determine the best way we can cooperate to preserve the integrity of our institutions against that threat." Since then, the two governments positively developed their relationship based on the defense against the communist threat.

It was not the first time Duvalier had asked for a mission of Marines to come to Haiti. Nonetheless, prior to August 1958, Washington had taken into consideration the suspicions of the American ambassador in Port-au-Prince. Gerard Drew had always warned the State Department on the fact that Duvalier would use any presence of Marines to strengthen his dictatorship. As of August 1958, the regime's image radically changed in the US. For the Eisenhower administration, Duvalier was the man who could provide better solution to Haitian difficulty. His regime, in the new American perception, was preferable to that of any opposition groups and the worthiest to bear. Of course, the Haitian president was given a free hand. He even declared the American military attaché persona non grata for “unprofessional conduct” during the attempted coup. Washington protested, but not vigorously. Instead, On December 24, Duvalier obtained his Marines. The two countries signed the military cooperation agreement that provided a US Naval Mission to Haiti. It was twenty-five years after the end of the American occupation of Haiti (1915-1934).

10 Eisenhower, Dwight D. To François Duvalier, 8 August 1958. Ibid.
11 Ambassador Gerard Drew had from the outset opposed the sending of a mission of Marines in Haiti: “I find myself becoming increasingly repelled by the thought of a mission here when jails are crammed of political prisoners …; defeated candidates … are beaten, tortured and hounded into exile: when a retrained opposition press had been ruthlessly snuffed out of existence; and when masked night riders, … operate from their headquarters in the National Palace.” In Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, vol. 5 American Republics, Washington (DC), United States Government Printing Office, 1991, p. 818. Moreover, in one of his secret telegrams to the State Department, Drew focused on three points: (1) the current policy in Haiti is moving toward a dictatorship, (2) a military mission serve to prolong the difficult situation in Haiti, and (3) the State Department should consider the possibility of changing the political situation in Haiti instead of sending a military mission, which would surely rank the United States as supporter of dictatorship; in Charles T. Williamson, The U.S. Naval Mission to Haiti, 1959-1963, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999, p. 21.
The first garrison of the Naval Mission arrived in Port-au-Prince in January 1959. It was mainly composed of members of the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard. The head of the mission, Colonel Robert Debs Heinl had previously served at Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, and Korea. During the year, sixty officers and NCOs of the Marine Corps landed in Haiti. They worked on several fronts. At the army’s headquarter, they took part to General Staff meetings of the Haitian Army Forces (FAD’H). At the National Palace, they advised the Presidential Guard, the unit specializing in presidential security. At the military hospital, they provided care to military and some civilians. At the Military Academy, Camp d’Application, and Casernes Dessalines, they trained Haitian military. In the provincial barracks, they studied the needs of the FAD’H in terms of military supplies. They took part in the battle against Cuban troop that invaded Haiti in August 1959. Duvalier’s opponents suspected them to participate in training and equipping of paramilitary groups. Haitian people generally associated them to Duvalier’s militia by calling them “White Tontons Macoutes.”

At the multilateral level, Haiti took position alongside the United States in international institutions. In the United Nations, Haitian delegations always voted in line with those of the United States. Instruction from the Department of Foreign Affairs of Haiti had always been clear. Generally, the Department carefully consulted the US Embassy to be informed of the State Department position on matters that were debated at the UN. The government even curved the traditional position of Haiti, which consisted of supporting independence of African countries. In line with the State Department, Port-au-Prince ordered its delegation to the UN to vote against African countries like Libya and Algeria. At the Organization of American States, Haiti’s position was more flexible because of the neutral political in Caribbean affairs advocated by Duvalier. But again, the Haitian delegation, when it did not abstain, voted repeatedly against Cuba to meet US’ will.

Additionally, Eisenhower received many offers from Duvalier to establish submarine bases and training camps for the U.S. army in Haiti.\footnote{[HA], Telegram No SG/CONF.A-INT:47, Haitian Department of Foreign Affairs, Port-au-Prince, July 13, 1959.} Duvalier explained, this would be part of the Haitian contribution to the defense system developed by the United States in the context of the Cold War. François Duvalier made a smart move. The only U.S. base in the Caribbean was situated at Guantanamo. Cuba, at that time, was not a communist country. However, the nationalism expressed by Castro, who was more and more critical vis-à-vis the United States, brought the suspicion that he would focus on the space on which the US had its military base after nationalizing US companies. Therefore, Mole St. Nicolas, located a few miles from Cuba, would be a strategic location that the United States could use for “the extension of control in case of war.”\footnote{Ibid.} Eisenhower declined the offer. The US, he said, did not need permanent military installations in Haiti. Nonetheless, he did not eliminate the Haitian proposal as an option. If the need arose, he wrote to Duvalier, the United States would use the Haitian space occasionally for amphibious training.\footnote{Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, vol. 5, American Republics, Microfiche Supplement, HA-18.} In return, Duvalier assured Eisenhower that “any site needed would be made available immediately and that Haiti would vote alongside the United States in the United Nations.”\footnote{Eisenhower, Dwight D. To François Duvalier, August 8, 1958. Op. cit.} 

Financial support was by far the most significant US contribution to Duvalier’s regime in that period. Since his first day in office, in October 1957, there was a constant factor in Duvalier’s strategy: the US aid was indispensable. However, it was only after mentioning the threats that could come from “communist henchmen,” in August 1958 that Duvalier began to receive significant financial support from the US. In October, the Eisenhower administration announced the disbursement of 1.5 million dollars to the government. The fund, which was managed by the United States Operation Mission (USOM), was used to import to Haiti essential commodities that would help provide relief for nutritional problems of the population. Subsequently, in January 19, 1959, while the Marines were being landed in Port-au-Prince, the
Haitian National Bank received through the USOM 2 million dollars to strengthen reserves of currency for the country.\textsuperscript{25}

In fact, the year 1959 was particularly difficult for Haitian economy. The collapse of coffee in the international market had a huge impact on government revenue. Coffee was the main product exported from Haiti. The government, to reduce the budgetary deficit, had implemented a “policy of austerity.” As part of decreasing public spending, the government had withheld one month's salary of public sector’s employees including military. This had proved to be inadequate. Duvalier, then, called upon the US for aid.\textsuperscript{26} Responding positively to Duvalier’s request, Eisenhower granted 6 million dollars as budgetary support for the year 1959. This aid, which was given under the title of Emergency or Contingency Fund,\textsuperscript{27} represented 30\% of Haiti’s budget. Moreover, the United States increased their technical assistance and food distribution programs to Haiti. In the meantime, the Development Loan Fund approved a loan of more than 7 million dollars to be given to the Duvalier administration. All these funds made a significant boost to the Haitian economy, but the deficit was still to the order of 2.5 million dollars. Also, for the fiscal year 1960, Duvalier asked Eisenhower further assistance from the “Emergency Fund.” This time, he requested a budgetary aid totaling 20 million dollars for the next four years. Duvalier clearly expressed that his request was related to the fund the US provided to fight communist influence in the world. For proof, in his letter to Eisenhower, he made the following political considerations:

“... I had to take all appropriate measures under the constitution and laws of my country to block the disarray and close the route of both the development and infiltration of subversive communism. The moral support of your government contributed to the success of these measures. Now that the energy put forth

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{La Phalange}, January 22, 1959.
\textsuperscript{26} National Archives of the US [NA], Correspondence from the Haitian President François Duvalier to the US President, Dwight Eisenhower, Port-au-Prince, January 12, 1959.
\textsuperscript{27} In correspondence between Dwight Eisenhower and François Duvalier, we note a difference of terminology in the designation of funds given to Haiti during the year 1959. To Eisenhower, it was the “Contingency Fund,” which was a fund provided by the US to assist countries with urgent financial problems. Duvalier, on the other hand, used the concept of “Emergency Fund,” which was a fund voted by the US Congress in 1954 to fight communist influence in the world and reduce spread of communism. This difference in terminology, we shall see, is not trivial.
produced the positive outcome of inner peace in my country, it must be consolidated by assuring the
provision of bread and work for my people...”

 Obviously, for Duvalier it was a question of obtaining from the leader of the Western world the economic aid needed to consolidate democracy in Haiti. Democracy, in the context of the Cold War, was the antithesis of communism. The last paragraph of Duvalier’s correspondence was absolutely clear: “I have the firm conviction and expectation of receiving this aid early, which would prove your good faith to this country and its government that decided to invariably stand alongside the United States for better or for worse.” Underlying statements such as “early,” “good faith,” and “being alongside the United States” foreshadow a threat.

Eisenhower’s response was succinct, but clear: the United States did not wish to provide additional budgetary aid to Haiti for fiscal year 1959-1960 nor the next three years for the following reasons:

“... Present United States legislation precludes making a commitment for the type of subject. Also, the Contingency Fund over which the United States Congress gave me a discretionary authority is intended to provide assistance only in extreme emergencies – such as occurred in Haiti last year because of the severe decline in coffee exports and prices.”

In short, Eisenhower stressed to Duvalier that it was the Contingency Fund Haiti had received for the fiscal year 1959. It was in this context that 10 million dollars was granted “to help solve the emergency financial problems of the government and investing in economic development.” In Eisenhower’s correspondence, there was no reference neither to the Emergency Fund, nor democracy, nor communism. In other words, Eisenhower underlined that his aid to Haiti had nothing to do with Duvalier’s alignment with neither the Western bloc nor his positions in favor of the United States at international conferences. François Duvalier noted these remarks. A few weeks later, as if he was responding to Eisenhower’s statement, Duvalier declared he cannot afford to remain much longer in the Western bloc. He announced the possibility of joining the Warsaw Pact. “If a leader of the third world does not find satisfaction in the West, it is logical

28 [NA], Correspondence from the Haitian President François Duvalier to the US President, Dwight Eisenhower, Port-au-Prince, February 23, 1960.
29 [NA], Correspondence from the US President Dwight Eisenhower to Haitian President François Duvalier, Washington, March 15, 1960.
and legitimate to turn to the East, which always keeps its arms outstretched for fraternal welcome,” said Duvalier in his speech now known as the “Cri de Jacmel.” Did the Haitian president have the potential to shift to the communist bloc at hand? Was there a real communist threat in Haiti?

During his first 33 months in office, François Duvalier had already censored the press, exiled opponents, and fought the French hierarchy of the Catholic Church. However, in relation to the leftists the president practiced either favoritism or “laissez-faire.” First of all, many communist militants occupied important position in his staff. The most famous, Jules and Paul Blanchet, whom US reports had denounced in many occasions, held several positions in the government. Duvalier never dismissed them during his years in power. Lucien Daumec, who was Duvalier’s brother-in-law and private secretary, and Andre Boyer, who was Vice-minister of the government, had also been listed by US agencies as militants of communist parties in both Haiti and abroad. Secondly, Duvalier encouraged young communists exiled under his predecessor to return home and put them under his protection. They were mostly employed in the public sector, particularly in education. The one with the most influence Rene Depestre was a notorious communist who was suspected by the French services to have received special training as an “agent de choc.” Depestre had been expelled from Cuba under Batista and forbidden to enter France and Italy. Arriving to Haiti, he encouraged Duvalier to lead the country toward socialism. Leslie Manigat testifies that “Duvalier told Depestre he cannot do what Depestre wanted, but he could prepare to have things done in the way Depestre intended!” The CIA then concluded: “Duvalier was “drifting leftward” because the ailing dictator had delegated authority to a “click of leftist.”

Despite being warned by the U.S. embassy, Francois Duvalier didn’t remove communist activists from his government and immediate entourage. Instead, in the year 1960, the

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34 [FA], Telegram No 230/AM, Ludovic Chancel, French Ambassador to Haiti, Port-au-Prince, May 5, 1952.
The communist movement was gaining momentum. Debates around the Marxist-Leninist doctrine were publicly held. Communist publications were openly distributed in academic circles. The Cuban revolution was for the first time exalted in the newspapers. The National Union of Haitian Students (UNEH), a leftist organization, held its first national congress in Port-au-Prince. The Minister of Education, Father Hubert Papailler, represented the government at the inaugural meeting. Slogans castigating the United States were launched throughout the conference. The regime ensured that students’ anger had echoed enough to reach Washington through the US Embassy in Port-au-Prince. On May 18, which was the Flag Day, the French ambassador observed for the first time anti-American demonstrations in Haiti openly. In Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitian, hundreds of students marched shouting, “Down with Yankee imperialism,” “Down with racial segregation,” “Down with colonialism,” “Our country needs other opportunities.” Colonel Charles Williamson, who was a member of the US Naval Mission, noted it was the only time a student protest was allowed during the reign of Duvalier. The dictator was planning his brilliant maneuver. Accordingly, in June 21 when the president himself announced in his speech “The breaking point is reached,” the United States took it very seriously. To top it all, positive reactions to Duvalier’s speech denouncing “American stranglehold” proliferated in Haitian media. Additionally, the UNEH sent a letter of solidarity to the delegates who met in Cuba on the occasion of the Youth Congress. Haitian press, of course authorized by the government, published the entire text.

The Eisenhower administration promptly reacted to what seemed like a leftward move of the Haitian government. The US embassy issued detailed account of American aid to Haiti during the decade 1950-1960. According to this statement, the United States had granted 40.6 million dollars to Haiti. Of this amount, 21.4 million, which was 50% of the global aid, had been given to the Duvalier administration since October 1957. However, in Duvalier’s view, the country had only received for the last 33 months “smiles, encouragement, recommendations, hesitation, and slow expectations” from the US. Duvalier argued that what he had received was

39 [NA] Foreign Service Despatch, “Reaction to President Duvalier’s Jacmel Speech,” Despatch No. 486, June 29, 1960; No. 6, July 6, 1960; CERP Section D, Item II-B-1; and No. 14, July 14, 1960;
not equivalent to his government's resistance to international communism, coupled with positions taken by his country at international conferences in favor of the US. He also declared having “refused to provide to other nations what I offered to the United States and its government.” Now, he said, to avoid shifting, the United States must put a new “massive investment” in Haitian economy. The Eisenhower administration understood the message. By the end of 1960, the Duvalier government had received from Eisenhower “a special economic assistance” of 9.5 million dollars and an additional 2.06 million dollars as technical assistance.

Duvalier’s menace was fruitful. He received more than the 5 million dollars he had previously asked for to balance his budget. Now, it was pay back time for the communists of Haiti. “Le Cri de Jacmel,” as noted by a witness, was interpreted by the leftists as “a government endorsement for their official entry into the public arena. They openly congratulated each other for having lived in the bush and finally allying with the government, which allowed them to now operate openly.” However, the president did not let communist enchantment last much longer nor allow students to indefinitely extend their movement. By early fall, police arrested many students and members of leftist groups. Students organized a strike to obtain liberation of their fellows. The functioning of the university and some secondary schools were quickly paralyzed. Duvalier then declared the strike “illegal” and accused the students of being paid by international communism. He imposed vacation from school the last week of November, which would normally be by the end of December. Students and teachers were arrested in large numbers. French Catholic priests, including the archbishop of Port-au-Prince, Francois Poirier, were declared persona non grata and expelled from the country. The archbishop was accused by Duvalier of donating 7,000 dollars to “communist students” to overthrow the government. The repression took a general expansion. Strikers, leftist activists, asserted or potential opponents of Duvalier dictatorship, even right-wing people were killed, jailed, or exiled.

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During his first months in office, Duvalier failed in his attempts to receive American aid. In August 1958, after alerting Eisenhower about the red menace, he received from the US administration necessary assistance to the regime's survival. Duvalier’s experience showed how US foreign policy in Latin America was shaped by the Cold War. Melvin Small is correct in asserting, “American diplomacy, politics, culture, religion, science and technology, and the institution of the family were all dramatically affected by the nation’s longest “war”, the Cold War.”

Indeed, US government developed various forms of assistance to support through financial, cultural, and military means any dictator in any country in the world who promoted the capitalist system and espoused anti-communist ideas. Posturing as a rampart against the spread of international communism in the Caribbean, François Duvalier received all forms of US assistance in 1958-59. And when in 1960 Eisenhower refused to approve a budgetary assistance to Haiti Duvalier raised the communist specter and threatened to shift to the left.

It is clear that François Duvalier, despite his threats and his entourage, was not fundamentally communist. Let’s quote the last analysis expressed by Leslie Manigat, a prominent historian and witness of the period: “Duvalier was an ethnologist with radical beliefs that made him both an anti-communist (race first - for him, racial fanatical is not in any case epiphenomenal) and a pro-communist (solidarity among the wretched of the earth). At first, he started a friendly relationship with the communists.” The key for him was to keep all cards handy, so he could use them at the appropriate time.

We cannot say the Haitian president considered socialism as a real alternative. His policy was so rooted in the United States that turning to Moscow in a jiffy would have been difficult and even impossible. Duvalier, said Manigat, was aware that any open expression of anti-Americanism would be fatal because the CIA was helping him destroy his enemies abroad and defeat the attempts of invasion. Would he have been ultimately opened to establish a socialist state in Haiti? It could be possible only if he had remained in power. The policy of François Duvalier, both internal and external, converged on one goal: the power. According to Sauveur

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43 Melvin Small, “Presidential Elections and the Cold War”, in Robert D. Schulzinger (Ed.), op. cit, p. 419.
45 E-mail from Professor Leslie Manigat, Port-au-Prince, January 6, 2010.
Pierre Etienne, Duvalier had only one governmental program: conserving the power. For Duvalier, the power was an end in itself. To achieve this end, he installed a regime that applied an internal policy of corruption, propaganda, systematic elimination of opponents, and a foreign policy of red blackmail. However, in the archives, we did not find any trace of official contacts between Duvalier and the USSR during the period 1957-1960. Therefore we cannot gauge the interest of the Soviet bloc for Haiti.

A few weeks after launching the “Cri de Jacmel,” the United States opened the floodgates of dollars. Duvalier, on the other hand, resumed his position as defender of the democratic camp. He led a severe repression against both communist militants and opponents to his regime. This attitude did not displease Washington, which could not stand having a “second Cuba” in the Caribbean. Duvalier, however, did not dismiss his staff members suspected of being communists. In fact, leftist personalities who were part of the Duvalier government were above all Duvalier’s men. They were Duvalierists first and then communists. For proof, none of them had resigned following government repression against communists. In January 1960, the Unites States had a new president and a new ambassador to Haiti, but communism remained pervasive in US-Haitian relations. “Papa Doc” Duvalier knew he had to evoke the specter of communism to fool Washington. He would apply the same strategy under the presidency of John F. Kennedy.