The Conquest of Santo Domingo

By LEWIS S. GANNETT

SANTO DOMINGO is conquered territory. The Dominican has less independence and fewer rights than had a Belgian under German occupation. He has not even the consciousness that there are crusading nations to defend his rights. "The rights of small nations" do not include his country. American boys died to free Poles, Czechoslovaks, Jugo-Slavs, and Belgians; but in this hemisphere they suppress Dominicans.

Some Americans may salve their colored consciences by the thought that Haitians are black, and that what we do to Haitians must therefore be discounted. Dominicans are white: we have not even the invalid excuse of color. We, the United States of America, who prate of democracy and republicanism and small nations and rights, have driven out the lawful officials of the Dominican republic, dissolved the congress, forbidden elections, ruled by martial law and sanctioned atrocities—and with an ironic honesty unequalled even in Prussian annals we solemnly declare that we will continue to rule "in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Santo Domingo in so far as these are not modified by the military government."

There is no President in Santo Domingo, no cabinet, no congress, and there has been for four years; there is only the arbitrary rule of the United States Marine Corps.

There is a censorship so dictatorial and so humorless that the word "Liberty" is stricken out of the program of the Teatro Libertad in the capital city. By official order of the United States authorities it is now plain "Teatro." And this in the name of America, while we were fighting to make the world safe for democracy!

American intervention in Santo Domingo began in 1905 and culminated in 1916. It was precipitated by financial adventuring and chronic revolution. Bond issues had been issued freely at usurious rates of interest. An American financial expert in 1905 found the national debt to be $40,000,000. Much of this had been taken over by a New Jersey corporation entitled the San Domingo Improvement Company, which secured control of the Dominican customs, but effected only one improvement—the completion of a railroad, and this with Dominican funds. The origin of the debts was unsavory, the interest payments irregular or in default, and dissatisfaction was general. In 1904 the Improvement Company, which some years before had been ousted from the customs houses, re-secured control of the customs of the port of Puerto Plata, and this led to uneasiness and threats of similar control by French and Italian creditors. The Dominican government appealed to the American, and President Roosevelt, in the spring of 1905, named a General Receiver of Dominican customs, who succeeded in scaling down the foreign debt to $20,000,000 and getting a loan for that amount from an American bank.

A treaty ratified in 1907 confirmed this procedure. It was part of this agreement that the Dominican government should not, until this debt was paid, increase its public debt unless with the consent of the American Government.

But a new series of revolutions beginning in 1911 led to an increase of the internal debt, which was in 1912 transferred to another New York bank. The American navy repeatedly given moral support to one side or the other in various disturbances; in April, 1916, when a new revolution threatened further harm to American interests, the navy, with the consent of one faction, landed marines near Santo Domingo, took the capital on May 15, landed at the principal other ports in June, and finally "pacified" the entire country, with a loss of seven Americans killed and fifteen wounded, as against several hundred Dominicans. For a few months a nominal Dominican Government persisted. The American military authorities insisted that the Dominicans agree to a treaty similar to that which had been forced upon Haiti, providing for collection of customs under American auspices, the appointment of an American financial adviser, and the establishment of a native constabulary force officered by Americans. This they refused to do, and the American authorities thereupon cut off their income. The Dominican Government was left penniless and impotent.

A proclamation of November 29, 1916, frankly put supreme power into the hands of the American military government. That proclamation recited that because of failure to carry out the treaty of 1907, and in a desire to obtain domestic tranquillity—"the republic of Santo Domingo is hereby placed in a state of Military Occupation by the forces under my command, and is made subject to military government and to the exercise of military law applicable to such occupation... with no immediate or ulterior object of destroying the sovereignty of the Republic of Santo Domingo but on the contrary to give aid to that country in returning to a condition of internal order..."

The original of this proclamation, signed by Captain H. S. Knapp of the U. S. S. Olympia, contains marginal annotations in the hand of Woodrow Wilson. A censorship decree followed, and, on December 4, Executive Order No. 12:

It being necessary to the purpose of the occupation that the offices of Secretary of State of the Departments of War and Marine, and of Interior and Police, be no longer administered by Dominican citizens but be administered by officers of the United States forces in occupation,

It is ordered that until further notice Dominican citizens are ineligible to hold, and cease to hold, such offices, which are hereby vested in Colonel J. H. Pendleton, U.S.M.C., Commanding the forces of the United States on shore in Santo Domingo.

H. S. KNAPP,
U. S. S. Olympia, December 4, 1918.

Captain, U. S. Navy.

Other orders followed in rapid succession, removing the ministers of Foreign Relations, Finance, Justice, Agriculture, etc., and naming officers of the American navy to fill these offices and administer them, in the choicest of phrases, "according to the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Santo Domingo, in so far as these are not modified by the military government." Executive Order No. 12 was brief; it declared that "for the present and until further notice no elections will be held in the Republic of Santo Domingo.

No. 18 is longer. It should be noted that some Dominicans who still clung to independence, had held local elections and attempted to reassemble a congress:

As no quorum of the Dominican Congress exists, due to the expiration of the terms of office of certain members of the Senate and House of Deputies, and to the fact that such elec-
The Tragedy That Is Poland*

By BENJAMIN GINZBURG

PARIS, June 10.

It is difficult for the traveler who passes through the immense expanse of territory that goes to make up the present Republic of Poland to gather any other impression than that of hopelessness and despair. The war has never ended in that section of Europe, and the atmosphere of war seems to lie like a pall of cloud over everything, spelling inevitable and eternal doom. Talk to the common people—the common people to whom politics has always seemed the fatal play of powers beyond their control—and they will tell you that the war is eternal. They do not openly doubt your word when you tell them that the war is over for part of Europe and for America, but they remain incredulous. It is too big a tax on their imagination to conceive of a state of things in which peace has been restored. By a curious twist of human psychology these people have become accustomed to war as the normal thing, and almost come to dread peace as bringing with it the dangers of the unknown.

There are others besides the common people who have become a prey to the abnormal psychology of war. The aristocratic and cultured ruling classes have organized the new state under a philosophic conception of things remote from the normal realities of life. They have begun with a romantic and idealistic notion of the Polish nationality, and the desire to return to historic medievalism, like the pre-Raphaelites in art. They have left no room in their speculations for such a reality as the distasteful presence of 5,000,000 Jews [in Poland proper, the Jewish population is about 3,000,000, the higher figure including the Jewish population of White Russia and the Ukraine, to which Poland lays claim], and when they find themselves face to face with this reality they lose their heads. More than one Polish publicist has shrieked for the extermination or expulsion of the entire Jewish population of Poland so that the Republic of the White Eagles might better realize the abstract and a priori conception of nationality. The waves of pogroms and Jew-baiting riots in which the Polish intelligentsia frankly encouraged the destructive passions of the masses are the expressions of rage of the visionary when brought into hard contact with reality.

The same estrangement from reality is manifest in the economic and political policies of Poland. Economically, the plight of Poland is lamentable. Poland is today living on what it can get from the Allies as the warrior-defender of civilization against Bolshevism. While it may be true that civilization has to be defended from the menace of the Soviets, a more realistic people than the Poles would have asked themselves whose business it was to defend civilization, and whether they could afford to ruin themselves in a war which they fought single-handed for the interests of other nations.

The naked truth of the matter is that while England and France are putting hundreds of millions into Poland for war purposes, they are not putting in one shilling or one cent for purposes of reconstruction and peace-time production. As a field for investment, foreign capital is afraid to venture into Poland, fearing the unsettled conditions, but it is good business for England to hire the Polish army to

*This article was written a month ago and its evidence is more than confirmed by current events in Poland.