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Cuando los Negros Luchaban (the Black Struggle): 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic

Melissa Chapman & Carol Anderson

On April 22, 1965, in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, left winged military men launched a coup against the U.S. backed president in order to restore the presidency of Juan Bosch, a proclaimed populist whom the United States had helped oust from power only months before. The backlash of the April coup involved the invasion of 14,000 U.S. troops into the Dominican Republic. In the eyes of the U.S. Department of State, the Dominican Republic, whose population contains ninety percent of individuals of African heritage, would not become another Cuba. In the United States, the stage of 1965 is set with contentious involvement in the Vietnam war, a large-scale civil rights movement steadily rolling along and gaining momentum and headed by African Americans, and a host of fearful and zealous Latin American foreign policies. Observing this scene, this paper raises the questions: How did black Americans respond to the United States' use of force towards their presumed "brothers" to the south? Did ideology override race in the international relations between blacks of the African Diaspora? Are the bonds of the African Diaspora as strong as intellectuals have historically suggested and advocated? Or are these bonds products of myth and merely tools for empowerment? Are they simply broken and in need of repair? Are there valid arguments for unity between members of the African Diaspora? In response to these inquiries, the paper places obstacles before the perpetrators of modern-day "racial" classifications, cultural perspectives, and political assumptions, in preparation to renew the discourse surrounding blacks of the world.