

## COMMENT

### Report From the Dominican Republic

Lt. Col. Montez Arache, commandant of the rebel forces in strife-torn Santo Domingo, is worth \$100,000--dead or alive--to the military junta which seeks to crush his rebellion.

On June 4th, while mortar shells fell outside his heavily-guarded, sand-bag-protected command headquarters, I watched him as he wept unashamedly, confessing that his soldiers had shot and killed Negro American GI's in battle.

More than 40% of the approximately 20,000 American troops occupying that tropical island are Negroes, a proportion which must be regarded as a calculated piece of strategy by the Pentagon which sent them there.

Arache told me: "When our military intelligence informed us how many Negro soldiers were among the American troops, we were led to believe that the Americans had come as neutralists to establish a peace zone, rather than as aggressors." The rebel chief, wearing a U. S. chamelon camouflage jungle suit, wiped his brow with a khaki handkerchief not much darker than his face. In America he would have been recognized as a Negro. "Then we learned," he continued, "that our black brothers from the U. S. had come to kill us. They were duped into fighting against our cause. Oppressed citizens at home, they became the tools against our Dominican people's revolution. We had no choice but to kill them."

Few of the GI's stationed in the Dominican Republic would recognize themselves as "tools of Yankee Imperialism." This is a propaganda phrase much overworked and too square to be contemplated seriously.

But there is a vague discontent, an uncomfortable feeling of being an intruder, of somehow being guilty of a

kind of a social faux pas which has embarrassed the family by overstaying your welcome or going to visit on a day when you were not invited or even expected.

If the American GI had little enthusiasm for Korea and less for Viet Nam, he has an even greater sense of reluctance in the Dominican Republic, which--especially in the case of the Negro troops--is perhaps unparalleled in American history.

Said Gary Jones of Miami, Florida, an MP in the 82nd Airborne: "I don't even know who the enemy is. That's what bugs me."

Charles Veneble, Specialist 1st Class with the 82nd Airborne, admitted: "Everyone has treated me nice. That's what I don't like about being ordered to kill them."

Another Negro soldier who did not wish to be named, stated: "I cannot see being here if the Dominican people do not want the U. S. to help them. Why should we help them if they don't care?"

Laurence Henry, writing in the June, 1965 issue of The Realist, Box 242, Madison Square Station, New York, New York 10010.

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