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Genocide Next Door:

The Good Neighbor Policy, the Trujillo Regime, and the Haitian Massacre of 1937

In October 1937, the Dominican army systematically massacred thousands of Haitians resident in the Dominican Republic. As the Franklin Roosevelt administration soon realized, the Dominican authorities had carried out a kind of genocide with "ruthless efficiency," apparently at the personal instigation of Rafael Trujillo, dictator since 1930. Although estimates of the duration of the massacre and its death toll vary widely, it seems likely that twelve thousand Haitians died during at least a week of violence throughout the country.[1]

The Haitian massacre threatened to damage the Roosevelt administration's Good Neighbor policy toward Latin America by calling attention to dictatorship in the Caribbean area, where a generation of consolidated authoritarian regimes developed in the wake of U.S. intervention and the Great Depression. Rafael Trujillo was a legacy of the U.S. Marine occupation of the Dominican Republic, 1916–1924, who rose to high rank in the national guard created and trained by the Marines. Six years after the departure of his American mentors, Trujillo seized power and established a strict military regime that maintained and greatly elaborated the civil order

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1. Minister R. Henry Norweb to the secretary of state, 11 October 1937, and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles to Franklin Roosevelt, 19 October 1937, in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs*, ed. Edgar Nixon (Cambridge, MA, 1969), 7:121–25. News of the massacre was first reported on 7 October 1937 by the American customs inspector in the Dominican border town of Dajabón and by the United States legation in Port-au-Prince, which reported the arrival of twelve hundred Haitian refugees in the city during the preceding days. General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, 738.39/23–24, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter RG, 59 with filing information). Bernardo Vega, *Trujillo y Haití, 1930–1937* [Trujillo and Haiti, 1930–1937] (Santo Domingo, 1988), 386–87, lists fifty-four estimates of the death toll made between 1937 and 1987. These estimates range between five hundred and thirty-five thousand.

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and infrastructural development initiated by the Marine occupation.[2] The Haitian massacre focused international attention on the Trujillo regime's brutal authoritarianism and invited comparisons with Hitler and Mussolini. In fact, the event was part of the worldwide paroxysm of racist, nationalist violence from 1937 to 1945 that included the rape of Nanking, China, by the Japanese Army (which began two months after the killings in the Dominican Republic), and the genocide of European Jewry by Nazi Germany. Trujillo's attempt to obliterate Haitian ethnicity within his nation's borders was a Caribbean manifestation of the brand of militarism that precipitated World War II but that occurred within the zone of U.S. hegemony. The subsequent diplomatic standoff between the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the mediating nations of Cuba, Mexico, and the United States threatened to undo the work of the Good Neighbor policy in promoting inter-American cooperation.

The Good Neighbor policy changed the tactics but not the objectives of U.S. hegemony in the American republics, substituting the carrot for the stick in eliciting cooperation. Stable military leaders, though not preferred, were assumed to prepare the ground for cultivating U.S. commercial and strategic interests in their respective bailiwicks. In turn, Good Neighbor programs, which included regional consultation, loans, and military assistance, tended to strengthen the regimes. But as the case of Trujillo demonstrates, the dictators proved difficult, and often impossible, to control. Their ability to manipulate U.S. diplomacy for their own goals, and in fact to set the agenda of inter-American relations, has been underestimated. The

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2. Besides Trujillo (1930–1961), who was the first and most durable among them, Good Neighbor-era dictators included Fulgencio Batista in Cuba (1933–1944, 1952–1959), Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua (1934–1956), Jorge Ubico in Guatemala (1931–1949), and Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador (1931–1944). Irwin Gellman, *Roosevelt and Batista: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in Cuba, 1933–1945* (Albuquerque, 1973); J. O. Baylen, "American Intervention in Nicaragua, 1909–1933: An Appraisal of Objectives and Results," *Southwest Social Science Quarterly* 35 (September 1954): 128–54; Kenneth Grieb, "American Involvement in the Rise of Jorge Ubico," *Caribbean Studies* 10 (April 1970): 5–21; idem, "The United States and General Jorge Ubico's Retention of Power," *Revista de Historia de America* 71 (January–June 1971): 119–35; idem, "The United States and the Rise of General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 3 (November 1971): 151–72. Hernández Martínez carried out a massacre of his own against leftists and Indians soon after coming to power. See Thomas P. Anderson, *Matanza: El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932* (Lincoln, NE, 1971). For the Marine occupation and the Dominican military see Bruce Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the United States Occupation of 1916–1924* (Austin, 1984); Marvin Goldwert, *The Constabulary in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua: Progeny of United States Intervention* (Gainesville, 1962); Valentina Paguero, "Trujillo and the Military: Organization, Modernization, and Control of the Dominican Armed Forces, 1916–1961" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993). A U.S. Army study concluded that the *Guardia Nacional* "was bound later to play into the hands of a dictator." "The United States Military Government in the Dominican Republic, 1916–1922: A Case History," U.S. Army School for Military Government and Administration, New York, 2d section, group 5, 14 August 1943, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

Haitian massacre of 1937 is a graphic example of the inability of the United States to keep "puppet" strongmen on the string.[3]

The Roosevelt administration succeeded, however, in shaping the aftermath of the Haitian massacre into a seeming victory for the cooperative Pan-American spirit it promoted with the term "good neighbor." This accomplishment demonstrates an unseemly variant to the "massive public relations effort" that was the "most fundamental innovation" of the Good Neighbor policy.[4] Seeking some unobtrusive resolution to the crisis, the Roosevelt administration abstained from public judgments against Trujillo and advocated a settlement through international mediation. But Trujillo would not cooperate with multilateral efforts to investigate and adjudicate the dispute, opting instead to pay a cash indemnity to Haiti without admitting that the killings had even taken place. Nevertheless, the Roosevelt administration cited this resolution as a success for Pan-Americanism and the Good Neighbor policy. Trujillo's international image, which he took pains to polish, was nonetheless damaged by the massacre. To prove to the world that he was not a "miniature Hitler," Trujillo offered to accept into the Dominican Republic one hundred thousand Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. He donated a parcel of land for the creation of a refugee colony and was rewarded by well-publicized and uncritical praise from Roosevelt and other refugee advocates. Trujillo then reneged on his sweeping offer to accept one hundred thousand refugees; ultimately, only a few hundred Jews settled at the Sosua refugee settlement.

The U.S. reaction to these two important but neglected events in Caribbean history demonstrates the failure of the Good Neighbor policy to oppose state-sponsored racial violence and ethnic manipulation in the proximity of the United States. In each case, calls for international action on behalf of Haitians and Jews were not as strong as the administration's desire to preserve relations with a dubious ally, one whom U.S. policymakers erroneously believed could be depended upon to take his cues from Washington.

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3. The most thorough critique of the Good Neighbor policy's objectives and its tendency to "entrench" dictators is David Green, *The Containment of Latin America: A History of the Myths and Realities of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Chicago, 1971). See also Bryce Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York, 1961); Michael Grow, *The Good Neighbor Policy and Authoritarianism in Paraguay: United States Economic Expansion and Great-Power Rivalry in Latin America during World War II* (Lawrence, KS, 1981); Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933–1945* (Baltimore, 1979); Gerald K. Haines, "Under the Eagle's Wing: The Franklin Roosevelt Administration Forges an American Hemisphere," *Diplomatic History* 1 (Fall 1977): 373–88; Lloyd C. Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (Madison, 1956); and Frederick C. Adams, *Economic Diplomacy: The Export-Import Bank and American Foreign Policy, 1934–1939* (New York, 1976). This thesis supports the contention that the ability of states "to resist external exploitation has been considerably more varied and extensive" than students of U.S. foreign relations have recognized. Thomas J. McCormick, "Something Old, Something New: John Lewis Gaddis's 'New Conceptual Approaches,' " *Diplomatic History* 14 (Summer 1990): 427.

4. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy*, 73; Fred Fejes, *Imperialism, Media, and the Good Neighbor* (Norwood, NJ, 1986); Graham White, *FDR and the Press* (Chicago, 1979).

That this notion was misguided was proven again and again during the balance of Trujillo's thirty-one-year rule, as he expropriated U.S. economic interests, threatened neighboring republics and their leaders with war and assassination, and earned a reputation as the rabid dog of the region.[5]

The societies that share the island of Hispaniola are markedly different, and their relations have been tense and often violent. Despite the recurring conflict, the arid, mountainous frontier has only imperfectly separated the Spanish- and Creole-speaking populations. By the 1930s, there was a large Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic, one comprised of two groups. One was the predominantly male brigades of *braceros*, or agricultural workers, who contracted to work on the sugar cane plantations in the south and east. The seasonal migration of these workers began in the early twentieth century and was regulated by the Dominican government for the benefit of the sugar companies, many of which were American owned. The other, more firmly rooted, group included families of workers, smallholders and entrepreneurs, established in the north and west. Many of these people were Dominican by birth but culturally and ethnically Haitian. Over the course of years, these independent immigrants and their progeny, who tended to be darker skinned than the Dominican inhabitants, established a bicultural identity for the border provinces of the Dominican Republic. The prevalence of Haitian Creole, the religion of *vodun*, and the Haitian *gourde* as a medium of exchange demonstrated that the region was less "Dominican" than the nationalist Trujillo preferred.[6]

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5. Of particular use to the historian of the Trujillo years are the collections of currently classified Dominican government documents compiled by Bernardo Vega: *Control y represión en la dictadura trujillista* [Control and repression in the Trujillo dictatorship] (Santo Domingo, 1986); *Nazismo, fascismo, y falangismo en la República Dominicana* [Nazism, fascism, and felangism in the Dominican Republic] (Santo Domingo, 1985); *La vida cotidiana dominicana: a traves del archivo particular del Generalísimo* [Dominican daily life: From the Special Archive of the Generalissimo] (Santo Domingo, 1986); and *Unos desafectos y otros en desgracia: sufrimientos bajo la dictadura trujillista* [Some dissidents and others in disgrace: Sufferings under the Trujillo dictatorship] (Santo Domingo, 1985). These collections offer substantiated details about the nature of Trujillo's regime. Also see Andrés Mateo, *Mito y cultura en la era de Trujillo* [Myth and culture in the era of Trujillo] (Santo Domingo, 1993); Franklin J. Franco, *La Era de Trujillo* (Santo Domingo, 1992); G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The United States and the Trujillo Regime* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1972); Howard J. Wiarda, *Dictatorship and Development: The Methods of Control in Trujillo's Dominican Republic* (Gainesville, 1969); Robert D. Crassweller, *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator* (New York, 1966); Arturo R. Espaillat, *The Last Caesar* (Chicago, 1963); Juan Bosch, *Causas de una tiranía sin ejemplo* [Causes of a dictatorship without parallel] (Carcacas, 1959); German E. Ornes, *Trujillo: Little Caesar of the Caribbean* (New York, 1958); Jesus de Galíndez, *La Era de Trujillo: Un estudio casuístico de dictadura latinoamericana* [The era of Trujillo: A causal study of Latin-American dictatorship] (Santiago, Chile, 1956); and Albert Hicks, *Blood in the Streets* (New York, 1946).

6. For a portrait of the society and culture of the frontier see Lauren H. Derby, "Haitians, Magic and Money: *Raza* and Society in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands, 1900–1937," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36:3 (1994): 488–526. I am indebted to Ms. Derby for sharing her knowledge of the borderlands and the *matanza* so generously with me. The U.S. dollar was the official medium of exchange in the Dominican Republic until the removal of the U.S. general receivership of Dominican customs in 1941. Trujillo subsequently established the Dominican *peso*.

Rafael Trujillo began to assert his control over the poorly demarcated frontier and the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic soon after taking power. His primary objective was to formalize the border itself, a process initiated by a 1929 treaty between Trujillo's predecessor, Horacio Vásquez, and President Louis Borno of Haiti, whose country was under U.S. Marine occupation until 1934. The 1929 treaty set up a mixed commission to determine the boundary between the two countries but did not prevent occasional clashes and the threat of war during the first years of Trujillo's regime. In October 1933, Trujillo traded border-town visits with his Haitian counterpart, President Stenio Vincent. Negotiations over the boundary and Haitian labor migration continued for the next three years, punctuated by Trujillo's visit to Port-au-Prince in November 1934 and Vincent's to Santo Domingo in February 1935. The talks ended with the signing of a boundary treaty in March 1936 in which the Dominican Republic yielded a strip of land in return for an unambiguous line on the map. The U.S. legation considered the treaty to be the "major achievement" of the Trujillo regime to that point. Trujillo also sought to reduce the number of Haitians on his side of the border. He imposed a quota on the percentage of non-Dominican sugar workers that an estate could employ and deported Haitians who could not produce papers establishing their place of birth and nationality. As a corollary to his effort to expel black Haitians from the frontier, Trujillo attempted to recruit white immigrants from Puerto Rico. He wrote to Roosevelt offering to take some of the "excess population" from that island and interested Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes in the project. The Dominican minister in Washington, Andrés Pastoriza, repeated Trujillo's "firm inclination to supply land for establishing *colonias*" of Puerto Ricans less than a month before the massacre began.[7]

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7. The border incidents of 1931 are detailed in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1931* (Washington, 1946), 1:771–92. U.S. diplomats also ameliorated "frontier episodes" in February 1932 and April 1933. "Outline of the First Term of the Trujillo Administration," 10 August 1934, RG 59, 839.00/3797; Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 18, 87–99, 122–33, 167–72. The signing and ratification of the treaty were the occasions for another exchange of visits by the two presidents. Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 172–270. "Outline of the Sixth Year of the Trujillo Administration," 8 August 1936, RG 59, 839.00/4050. Trujillo had himself and Vincent nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for the treaty, news of which he triumphantly wired to Roosevelt. Trujillo to Roosevelt, 3 February 1936, Official File (hereafter OF) 138, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter FDR Library). The American-owned estates, supported by the legation, protested the quota on Haitian workers, and it was annually rescinded until 1937. That year the Dominican government held firm in allowing only 40 percent of the workers to be Haitian; seventy percent Haitian labor had been permitted previously. "Outline of the Sixth Year," 8 August 1936, RG 59, 839.00/4050. It is unclear how many immigrants were rounded up and sent to Haiti under Law 1343, or how many found their way back into the Dominican Republic, but the new border seems to have remained nearly as permeable as the old one. Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 284–89, 304–9. The restrictions came at the same time as similar legislation in Cuba against Haitian cane cutters, whose repatriation added to the problems facing depression-era Haiti. Memorandum of conversation, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes with Hull, 3 February 1936, RG 59, 839.52 PUERTO RICANS/5; Welles to Roosevelt, 13 October 1937, in Nixon, *Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* 7:120.

Trujillo's frontier policy aimed to integrate the region into the kind of Dominican society imagined from the perspective of the capital,[8] to change its racial and cultural composition to more closely resemble the self-consciously Hispanic population further east. That this policy was not succeeding became clear to Trujillo during August and September 1937, when he toured the route of the "international highway" being built along the border. This firsthand inspection of the least "Dominican" part of the nation apparently convinced him to take drastic action against the Haitians, though the assault may have been planned in advance and set in motion by Trujillo's order. Whether the massacre was spontaneous or premeditated, the dictator stated his intention to eradicate the Haitian presence once and for all at a gathering in the border town of Dajabón on the night of 2 October 1937.

During the next week, Trujillo's forces carried out his will across much of the country. The army did not target those Haitians resident in the sugar colonies, but all of those found outside the cane fields, even Haitians who were Dominican citizens by birth and those who had lived in the country for many years, were seized and killed. Although the news emerged slowly from the frontier region of Hispaniola, a catalog of atrocities committed during the Haitian massacre gradually reached American diplomats, journalists, and the general public over the course of the following months. They learned that Haitians had been rounded up by Dominican soldiers and slaughtered en masse. The soldiers mainly used machetes to convey the impression that local civilians had murdered the Haitians in their midst, although in some instances they were not so careful about appearances; they killed one group of Haitians in a courtyard between government buildings in the city of Santiago and forced more than a thousand others off the pier at the port of Montecristi to drown. Many of the survivors who fled across the border to Haiti had seen their entire families murdered, the adults hacked with machetes or strangled, the children dashed against rocks or tree trunks.[9]

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8. See Derby, "Haitians, Magic and Money"; and idem and Richard Turits, "Historias de terror y los terrores de historia: la massacre haitiana de 1937 en la República Dominicana" [Histories of terror and the terrors of history: The Haitian massacre of 1937 in the Dominican Republic] *Estudios Sociales* 26 (April–June 1992): 65–76.

9. Derby and Turits, "Historias de terror y los terrores de historia"; Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 275–76, 298–303, 314–15, 319–24, 384–87; memorandum of conversation between J. C. McClintock and Paul Rosenfeld, 17 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/133. Contemporary accounts of the massacre include Quentin Reynolds, "Murder in the Tropics," *Collier's*, 22 January 1938, 15–16; and Harold Courlander, "Not in the Cables: Massacre in Santo Domingo," *The New Republic*, 24 November 1937, 67. Secondary literature on the event includes Derby and Turits, "Historias de terror y los terrores de la historia"; Thomas Fiehrer, "Political Violence in the Periphery: The Haitian Massacre of 1937," *Race and Class* (October–December 1990): 1–20; Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 325–87; R. Michael Malek, "Dominican Republic's General Rafael Trujillo and the Haitian Massacre of 1937: A Case of Subversion in Inter-Caribbean Relations," *SECOLAS Annals: Journal of the Southeastern Conference on Latin American Studies* (March 1980): 137–55; Juan Manuel Garcia, *La matanza de los haitianos: genocidio de Trujillo, 1937*

A week after the U.S. legation in Ciudad Trujillo (formerly Santo Domingo) cabled its first reports of the onslaught to the State Department, Minister R. Henry Norweb spoke with Dominican Secretary of Justice Julio Ortega Frier, who "coolly asserted that the Haitians were leaving the Dominican Republic 'alive or dead.' " Ortega's comments confirmed Norweb's suspicion that the murders had been carried out "apparently with the approval of President Trujillo." Sumner Welles brought Norweb's dispatch on the "Slaughter of Haitians on [the] Northwest Frontier," dated 11 October, to Roosevelt's attention on 19 October. Welles observed that President Vincent of Haiti had "behaved with an extraordinary measure of prudence" in the affair, which had not yet been reported in the press.[10]

Roosevelt had several reasons to be concerned with this development and to proceed cautiously in treating it. The bloody animosity between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was "endangering the success of our good neighbor policy with special reference to the Caribbean," judged the U.S. minister to Haiti, Ferdinand Mayer. The threat of war between the two countries became increasingly tangible in the following weeks. Mayer also pointed out that the Trujillo dictatorship was of "the same ruthless character as that in Germany, Italy and Russia." Trujillo's mimicry of Hitler's style of leadership was an alarming development; he had begun wearing a greatcoat and jackboots (unusual attire for the tropics) and had recently mandated that members of the Partido Dominicano, the only legal political party, greet one another with a kind of "Sieg Heil" salute instead of the usual handshake. Mayer advocated "putting Trujillo in his place" with "firmness and strength." But Trujillo was a potential ally in the unfolding effort to erect a "Fortress America" against European fascism, and it was not in the administration's strategic interests to take a hard line against him, even though he seemed to be developing a Caribbean version of the same ideology.[11] Instead, the massacre was treated as

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[The massacre of the Haitians: Trujillo's genocide] (Santo Domingo, 1983); Luís Arias Nuñez, *La política exterior en la era de Trujillo* [Foreign policy in the era of Trujillo] (Santiago, Dominican Republic, 1991), 31–126. Pertinent documents are compiled in José Israel Cuello H., *Documentos del conflicto dominico-haitiano de 1937* [Documents from the Dominican-Haitian conflict of 1937] (Santo Domingo, 1985). For a novel on the subject see Freddy Prestol Castillo, *El masacre se pasa a pie* [The massacre that went on foot] (Santo Domingo, 1973).

10. Memorandum of conversation, Norweb with Dominican Minister of Justice Julio Ortega Frier, 13 October 1937, RG 59, 839.5511/unnumbered. Norweb presented his credentials to Trujillo at his mansion in San Cristóbal on 8 October 1937, just as the massacre was drawing to a close. Welles to Roosevelt, 19 October 1937, Nixon, *Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* 7:121–25.

11. Minister Ferdinand Mayer to secretary of state, 23 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/132. For photo see Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 294; for a description of the "Trujillo Salute" see Norweb to secretary of state, 30 September 1937, RG 59, 839.001 TRUJILLO/289; for an overview of ideological competition with National Socialism see Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933–1941* (New Haven, 1967). Mayer to secretary of state, 23 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/132. David G. Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of United States Strategic Thought, 1936–1940* (Albuquerque, 1984); Lester Langley, "The World Crisis and the Good Neighbor Policy in Panama, 1936–1941," *The Americas* 24 (October 1967): 144–46.

an opportunity to demonstrate the efficacy of multinational mediation and the Good Neighbor policy.

The State Department's first public response to the massacre was to send Minister Norweb, who had left the Dominican Republic to attend the Havana Radio Conference, back to his post. Sumner Welles made it clear to Dominican Minister Andrés Pastoriza that Norweb's "sudden return" was "at the express desire" of President Roosevelt, who wanted thereby to send "his personal message" to Trujillo. Welles announced the move to the press, which reported that "considerable concern" had been engendered at the State Department over the "wholesale killing" on the border. At a press conference on 9 November, a reporter asked Roosevelt if he was "giving personal attention to the Haiti-Dominican trouble." With characteristic tact, the president replied, "Yes and no. I am familiar with it as it goes on." He downplayed the fact that he had met personally with Mayer before the conference and claimed that his meeting with Haitian Minister Elie Lescot scheduled for the next day would be a "tea visit" unrelated to the massacre. Even so, Dominican Minister Pastoriza responded the next day by criticizing the "unusual" interest shown by the U.S. government in what he termed a local incident and complained that such attention was contrary to inter-American principles. In a press conference of his own, Sumner Welles averred that the United States was vitally interested in hemispheric peace "on the grounds of the 'good neighbor' policy and the inter-American declaration adopted at the Buenos Aires peace conference, which asserts that any menace to the peace of the American continent is a matter of concern to each American republic." Though the Dominican government asserted that it had not mobilized troops and that it considered the "frontier incident without importance," the *New York Times* reported the Dominican army massing at the border. In the midst of this charged atmosphere, the administration let it be known that it was "ready to help if [an] invitation is received."[12]

President Vincent was reluctant to issue such an invitation for mediation. He feared that the Spanish-speaking nations of the hemisphere were opposed to Haiti and thought Trujillo's response would be violent were he to "lose face" with his Latin American peers in an arbitration procedure with Haiti. The Dominican armed forces were much more powerful than the Haitian, and the potential for military disaster in the event of a war weak-

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12. Welles to Norweb, 4 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/67A. Dominican Minister Andrés Pastoriza to Ciudad Trujillo, 5 November 1937, *caja* 7, *tomo* 232, Archivo General de la Nación, Santo Domingo (hereafter AGN). All Dominican government documents cited hereafter are from the records of the Dominican Legation in Washington, *caja* 7. All translations are mine. *New York Times*, 7 November 1937; press conference, 9 November 1937, Nixon, *Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* 7:197. For a description of this "tea visit," at which discussion of political affairs was apparently avoided, see the journal of Walter Woodson, Naval Aide to Roosevelt, 10 November 1937, Mss. 48, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. Welles to Norweb, 10 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/87A; *New York Times*, 10 November 1937; Acting Foreign Minister Ortega to Pastoriza, 6 November 1937, *tomo* 231, AGN.

ened Vincent's position. Haiti had also been the most diplomatically isolated country in the hemisphere since the slave revolt that led to its independence in 1804, and it could not rely on outside assistance should fighting break out with Trujillo's modern army and new air force. Trujillo had promised to initiate a "judicial investigation" into the killings, but the chances of this being an impartial review were slim. The man in charge of the inquiry would be the newly appointed acting foreign minister, Julio Ortega Frier, who was known to be "personally dedicated to a strong anti-Haitian policy." The Haitian minister in Washington, Elie Lescot, told Sumner Welles that any investigation conducted by Ortega would be "a whitewashing." Lescot thought the best option for the Haitian government would be to request the good offices of Cuba, Mexico, and the United States as mediators, despite the risk of rejection by what might be unsympathetic third parties. Welles advised him to go ahead with that plan. Accordingly, Vincent cabled Roosevelt on 12 November asking his services as a mediator, and Roosevelt, invoking "the spirit displayed by all the American Republics in the Conference at Buenos Aires," agreed. Mexico and Cuba followed suit.[13]

Although Trujillo had said that he would welcome the counsel of the United States, the Dominican government asserted that the Haitian request for good offices "had come as an unwelcome surprise." Norweb, who had taken part in what a Dominican witness considered a "very cordial and satisfactory" visit with Trujillo soon after returning to his post, reminded Trujillo that his refusal to comply with the procedure "would aggravate the already widespread unfavorable publicity" of the massacre. Roosevelt followed up with a telegram (published in its entirety in the *New York Times*) expressing his confidence that "the proposal for mediation would be welcomed" by the Dominican Republic. In response, Trujillo characterized the murders as just another minor squabble "between Dominican and Haitian

13. Harold Finley (chargé d'affaires in Port-au-Prince) to secretary of state, 4 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/68. In 1937, the Dominican army had a standing force of three thousand, a reserve force of ten thousand, and eight airplanes. Paguero, "Trujillo and the Military," 230, 239. The relative strengths of the armies are suggested by the orders they placed with the Remington Arms Company on 29 October 1937; Haiti asked for two hundred thousand Springfield cartridges and the Dominican Republic for seven times as many Springfield and Colt cartridges. Selden Chapin to Welles, 2 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/84; "Outline of the Eighth Year," 7 November 1938, RG 59, 839.00/4209; Norweb to secretary of state, 8 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/74; memorandum of conversation, Haitian Minister Elie Lescot with Welles, 10 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/83. Lescot himself had been on Trujillo's payroll since his days as Haitian minister to the Dominican Republic (June 1934–March 1937), which may have further weakened Haitian diplomacy. Lescot's actions in Washington are not an indication of that, however; it was his suggestion that third countries investigate and mediate the dispute. But Lescot later cooperated with Trujillo to destabilize Vincent's regime (with the help of General Démosthène Calixte, Marine-trained former head of the Garde d'Haiti in exile in the Dominican Republic) and was elected president himself in 1941. After their falling out, Trujillo publicized their damning correspondence just before Lescot was ousted in January 1946. Crassweller, *Trujillo*, 160–63; President Stenio Vincent to Roosevelt, 12 November 1937, Nixon, *Roosevelt and Foreign Relations* 7:213, 227.

campesinos," as no different from "the many that have occurred since 1844," and defined the problem as an internal affair.[14] While Roosevelt emphasized the part of the Good Neighbor policy that called for collective amelioration of conflicts within the community of American states, Trujillo stressed the other side of the same policy—the sanctity of each nation's sovereignty.

Employing this broad definition of what constituted interference into Dominican internal affairs, Trujillo protested American scrutiny of the massacre. He accused Franklin Atwood, chargé d'affaires during Norweb's absence in Havana, of having "given grossly exaggerated and distorted versions of the alleged atrocities." The Dominican foreign ministry complained that Atwood was "provoking strong feelings against the Dominican Government and trying to mobilize the Diplomatic Corps in order to provoke scandalous investigations" into the bloody events on the frontier. Asked to investigate this charge upon returning to his post, Norweb sided with Trujillo, even though Atwood's accounts were understatements of the actual events. Atwood, he said, had "left himself open to being used," apparently by the Haitian government, as a result of "incautious . . . unguarded conversations" concerning the massacre. Norweb, taking his cue from the State Department, preferred meliorative diplomacy to disclosure of the atrocities. He decided that Atwood had become "a blunt tool" for such purposes, and replaced him.[15]

Back in Washington, Andrés Pastoriza looked for common ground with the State Department. Pastoriza, educated in the United States and entering his third year at the Dominican legation, was an experienced observer of American social conditions and class attitudes. Gauging the circumstances of race relations in the United States and the likely perspective of the elite white diplomats he knew, Pastoriza suggested a different tack for Trujillo to take in his response to the offer of mediation. He thought the response should emphasize that "illegal Haitian penetration seriously obstructed the Dominican Government's aim to improve the low Dominican standard of living; to defend the clean, traditional customs of our citizens; to protect Dominican property on the frontier from Haitian bandits; and to preserve our racial superiority over them." Pastoriza believed that an "intelligent and discreet" explanation of these justifications would "incline the American people to our sympathy." He "amply expressed" the racial causes of the frontier bloodshed to Cordell Hull when they met on 23 November, refusing the offer of mediation and "insist[ing] that the State Department conform with the Pan-american treaties and the proper nature of good offices

14. Memorandum of conversation between Norweb and Ortega, 15 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/98; Subsecretary of Foreign Relations Ernesto Bonetti Burgos to Pastoriza, 9 November 1937, *tomo* 231, AGN; memorandum of conversation between Norweb and Ortega, 15 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/98; *New York Times*, 15 November 1937; Ortega to Pastoriza, 6 November 1937, *tomo* 231, AGN.

15. Welles to Norweb, 8 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/76A; Ortega to Pastoriza, 4 November 1937, *tomo* 231, AGN; Norweb to Welles, 9 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/81.

which cannot proceed except in the presence of a legal question." Hull replied that he was "extremely sorry" to see "the splendid progress" of inter-Americanism threatened by the conflict in Hispaniola. Hull said he had "long considered President Trujillo as one of the biggest men" in Latin America, "a big, broad-gauged man" who should offer better leadership for peace. The secretary listed his acts of friendship toward the Dominican Republic; he had gone to "great pains" to suppress an unfavorable *March of Time* newsreel, "had striven real hard" for a higher sugar quota, was "most anxious to cooperate" regarding the Dominican debt situation, and had "never lost an opportunity to show friendly interest in President Trujillo." Hull exhorted Pastoriza to accept mediation without further delay, advising the minister of the wisdom of extinguishing a fire while the flames are still low.[16]

Sumner Welles, who had been on friendly terms with Pastoriza since the 1920s, was less patient than Hull with the Dominican stance. In a conference with Pastoriza and Manuel de Jesus Troncoso de la Concha, a "special envoy" recently arrived from Ciudad Trujillo, Welles accused the Dominicans of dodging Vincent's demand for mediation. Pastoriza, discerning the reluctance on the part of Cuba, Mexico, and the United States to involve themselves too deeply in the conflict, advocated an informal meeting with the mediators. He hoped to convince them to accept the results of the Dominican investigation and to pressure the Haitian government to arrive at a direct, bilateral agreement to settle the affair. His proposal for an unofficial consultation had the support of the Mexican ambassador, Pastoriza reported. Now he proposed informal talks to Welles, who reluctantly agreed on the condition that the meeting be held secretly. Hull agreed more readily three days later.[17]

Welles represented the United States in two days of talks that took place at the Mexican embassy in Washington during the first week of December 1937. After hearing both sides of the story, the representatives of the mediating governments agreed that, since the incident had taken on an "international aspect," an investigatory commission should be sent to Hispaniola to prepare a report. The Dominican government, which had never formally agreed to mediation, gave no answer for eight days, then declined. Rebuffed

16. Pastoriza to Ortega, 15, 23 November 1937, *tomo* 232; Ortega to Pastoriza, 18 November 1937, *tomo* 231, AGN. For a description of the offending film, which was entitled "An American Dictator" and characterized Trujillo as "the dictatingest dictator who ever dictated," see Raymond Fielding, *The March of Time, 1935–1951* (New York, 1978), 151–54; for the film itself, see *March of Time* (1936), VT 200 MT 2.7, Motion Picture Division, National Archives; for Hull's efforts to limit its distribution see memorandum of conversation between Hull and Pastoriza, 13 July 1936, Cordell Hull Papers, box 57, Library of Congress. Memorandum of conversation between Hull and Pastoriza, 23 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/140; Welles to Norweb, 23 November 1937, RG 59, 738.39/136A.

17. Pastoriza and Manuel de Jesus Troncoso de la Concha to Ortega, 26 November 1937, Pastoriza to Ortega, 18 November 1937, Pastoriza and Troncoso to Ortega, 26 and 29 November 1937, *tomo* 232, AGN.

again, the mediators then recommended that the Haitian government invoke the existing inter-American arbitration pacts—the Gondra Treaty of 1923 and the Convention of Conciliation of 1929—and essentially take Trujillo to court. Mexican Ambassador Francisco Castillo Najeras confided to Pastoriza and Troncoso that Haiti was on the verge of breaking relations with the Dominican Republic, which would be a disaster for Dominican foreign relations, and had been dissuaded only through the intercession of Welles. The State Department also had proof that the Dominican army had carried out the massacre, said Castillo, though Welles had remained silent on that subject. He advised the Dominican diplomats to accept arbitration without further delay in order to head off a crisis.[18]

As Trujillo stalled, commentary on the Haitian massacre gained greater circulation in the press and reached the House of Representatives. *The Nation* called Trujillo a "miniature Hitler" and called for the State Department to conduct its own investigation and to sever ties with the dictator. *Life* magazine ran photos of Trujillo and his victims. Representative Hamilton Fish of New York called the massacre "the most outrageous atrocity that has ever been perpetrated on the American continent." Trujillo fought back with a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* claiming that the border incident was a skirmish between farmers and squatters. The statement cited Dominican government census calculations showing that only 105 Haitians had died. A news report published in the same edition put the death toll at 8,000.[19]

Haiti's invocation of the Gondra and Conciliation treaties and the spate of bad press forced Trujillo's hand, at least temporarily. In order to avoid the appearance of guilt, Trujillo had to agree publicly to arbitration, which he did on 19 December. He added a voluntary element to his acquiescence by offering an "Anti-War Pledge" to President Vincent as a "Christmas gesture." Vincent declined the pledge, perhaps because his flaccid reaction to the massacre had stirred accusations in Haiti that he was "leagued" with Trujillo and his government was beginning to look "pretty wobbly." The threat of a general strike in Haiti loomed on the day Trujillo accepted arbitration, and Vincent strengthened his rhetoric in response, denouncing Trujillo's "mass murder" of his countrymen.[20]

Roosevelt, on the other hand, issued public congratulations to Trujillo for

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18. The meetings were also attended by Pastoriza, Troncoso, Haitian Foreign Minister Georges Leger and Minister to Washington Elie Lescot, Mexican Ambassador Francisco Castillo Najera, and the Cuban chargé d'affaires. Circular telegram from Hull to all diplomatic missions in the American republics, 14 December 1937, RG 59, 738.39/200A; Pastoriza and Troncoso to Ortega, 9 December 1937, *tomo* 232, AGN.

19. *The Nation*, 27 November 1937, 577–78; *Life*, 6 December 1937, 73–77; *New York Times*, 19 and 22 December 1937.

20. *New York Times*, 19 and 27 December 1937; memorandum of conversation between Francis White and Haitian Foreign Minister Georges Leger, 13 January 1938, Francis White Papers, box 18, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

accepting the arbitration procedure. Under the terms of the arbitration treaty, the matter would be investigated by a commission comprised of four members, two nominated by Haiti and two by the Dominican Republic. Both countries named an American as one of their representatives (diplomat Hoffman Philip for Haiti and Donald Richberg, a partner of Trujillo's lobbyist Joseph E. Davies, for the Dominican Republic), but these men were to act in a private capacity with no affiliation with the State Department. The Roosevelt administration seemed relieved that its "good offices" were no longer required and that its brief official connection with the controversy had ended. Sumner Welles emphasized to the secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Walter White, that the Roosevelt administration had washed its hands of the affair: "The United States Government has no connection with the commission and is without authority or intention with respect to the Haitian-Dominican controversy." As Welles's statement to White suggests, the interest of African American organizations in the massacre was without effect. In fact, Pastoriza informed his superiors that the attention paid to the event at the National Negro Congress in New York in December "could be beneficial to our case, because the racial division here is so marked, any hostile activity by the negro organizations could gain us the sympathy of the other race. So far we have seen no coverage whatsoever in the white press about this meeting."[21]

International pressure and publicity soon waned, allowing Trujillo to evade the consequences of the arbitration agreement. He offered to pay $750,000 to Haiti to settle the affair immediately, without an investigation by the arbitrators, and Vincent agreed. Roosevelt responded with a public statement of congratulations to Trujillo and Vincent crediting the Gondra and Conciliation treaties with the settlement. The agreement, said Roosevelt, was "added proof, if such had been needed, that the peaceful solution of international controversies has become the established practice of this hemisphere." He ignored the fact that Trujillo had rejected formal mediation and that no independent investigation of the massacre had been conducted. The irony was not lost on *The Nation:*

> Washington's main concern has been to prevent war between the two countries, and that is understandable. But what of its announced determination to prevent the growth of fascism in the Western Hemisphere? . . . A thorough official investigation by the mediators that identified and indicted the murderers of the 10,000 would have an excellent effect on the little Hitlers of South and Central America. Instead Trujillo is now in

21. *New York Times*, 21 December 1937; Welles to NAACP Secretary Walter White, 31 December 1937, Papers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, box C-330, Library of Congress. The NAACP's publication, *The Crisis*, was silent on the issue, though an article by a Haitian dissident critical of Vincent appeared later, *The Crisis* (May 1939): 212. Pastoriza to Ortega, 15 December 1937, *tomo* 232, AGN.

a position to whitewash a major crime – with the concurrence of all "good neighbors."[22]

In the case of the Haitian massacre, Good Neighbor diplomacy meant not protesting the destruction of what one Dominican diplomat labeled a "miserable proletariat" of dark-skinned "pariahs." In its account of the massacre, the U.S. legation claimed that "no such ordered and cold blooded extermination of human beings had been known [in Latin America] since the days of the Conquest," yet Trujillo's punishment for the crime was confined to a dose of bad press. The legation described it as "a bitter lesson" in public relations for Trujillo, who was said to have "little publicity sense."[23] But the legation underestimated Trujillo's resourcefulness and political dexterity, which served him well in repairing the damage done to his international image by the Haitian massacre.

Trujillo seized on a value-laden issue, that of Jewish refugees from Hitler's Third Reich, as a means of scouring his soiled reputation. In the spring of 1938, Franklin Roosevelt began showing interest in the plight of European refugees. Sumner Welles pointed out to the president that the problem would require "the cooperation of all interested Governments," not just the United States. Although the United States traditionally had been a haven for the oppressed when "land was cheap or free," Welles noted that the Depression had changed the situation, and immigrants would now be a "burden." Roosevelt initiated a conference on the refugee problem to be convened at Evian, France, in July 1938 to determine which countries would be willing to accept exiles from Germany and Austria. Trujillo used the Evian conference to portray himself as a humanitarian leader, sending his brother Virgilio as a delegate to deliver a speech praising Roosevelt and to announce that the Dominican Republic would open its doors to Jewish immigrants. At the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees in London the following month, he made the offer more specific: The Dominican Republic would accept one hundred thousand refugees.[24]

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22. Memorandum of conversation between Welles and Ortega, 10 February 1938, RG 59, 839.51/4594. Some $525,000 of the indemnity was paid. "Outline of the Ninth Year," 27 September 1939, RG 59, 839.00/4223. Roosevelt to Trujillo, 5 February 1938, Nixon, *Roosevelt and Foreign Relations* 7:240–41; *The Nation*, 5 February 1938, 146.

23. *The Nation*, 1 January 1938, 730; "Outline of the Eighth Year," 7 November 1938, RG 59, 839.00/4209. This report came to different conclusions than Roosevelt on the efficacy of inter-American mediation in the case of the Haitian massacre: "The diplomatic negotiations attendant upon its settlement also emphasized certain weaknesses in the present treaty machinery for the settlement of controversies between the American states, especially when one party to an international controversy is almost wholly wrong and, therefore, extremely loath to come before the court either of public opinion or of juridical settlement." Secretary of the Legation Eugene Hinkle report on massacre, 9 September 1938, RG 59, 839.00/4206.

24. Welles to Roosevelt, 11 April 1938, OF 3186, FDR Library; Mark Wischnitzer, "The Historical Background of the Settlement of Jewish Refugees in Santo Domingo," *Jewish Social Studies* 4:1 (1942): 42–58. For Roosevelt's policy toward Jewish refugees see Leo V. Kanawada,

The idea of settling Jewish refugees in the Dominican Republic was not a new one. Latin American expert Samuel Guy Inman had visited Santo Domingo in February 1935 to ask about such a possibility, and in January 1937 Dr. Howard Blake had come on behalf of the American Jewish Congress for the same reason. Trujillo expressed interest in the plan, especially after Blake pointed out some of the benefits that he would accrue: "Trujillo, the Emancipator! Trujillo, the Liberator! . . . Who would be the first to buy your tobacco? The Jews! Your coffee? The Jews! Everything that you can export? The everlastingly grateful Jew!"[25]

Jewish immigration would also tie in with Trujillo's "ruthless demographic policy," which Laurence Duggan of the State Department judged to be "the root" of the Haitian massacre. Trujillo continued to be interested in attracting light-skinned immigrants to replace Haitian and West Indian laborers in his country and asked the U.S. government to loan him a team of immigration experts to draft a law that would "facilitate 'neo-white' immigration." Cordell Hull honored Trujillo's request and sent two Labor Department officials to conduct a study and suggest legislation. They stayed in the Dominican Republic for a year, and their proposals were accepted verbatim as the basis of a racist immigration law. Trujillo also invited refugees from the Spanish civil war as part of the same initiative.[26] Jewish immigration was even more attractive than Puerto Rican and Spanish, however, since it promised to ingratiate Trujillo with Roosevelt and the participants in the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees.

The U.S. legation in Ciudad Trujillo was highly skeptical of Trujillo's offer to settle as many as one hundred thousand Jewish exiles. It reported that, in the four months after the offer was made in London, the Dominican government had approved only twenty out of the two thousand visa applications from Jewish refugees. Despite Trujillo's guarantees, the legation be-

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Jr., *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Diplomacy and American Catholics, Italians, and Jews* (Ann Arbor, 1982), 103–11; David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941* (Amherst, MA, 1968); and Henry Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938–1945* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1970). For a detailed examination of Trujillo's motives in establishing Sosua see Hyman J. Kisch, "The Jewish Settlement from Central Europe in the Dominican Republic" (Ph.D. diss., Jewish Theological Seminary, 1970); and idem, "Rafael Trujillo: Caribbean Cyrus," *Judaism* 29:3 (1980): 368–77. For the context of Jewish agricultural colonies in Latin America see Judith Laiken Elkin, *Jews in the Latin American Republics* (Chapel Hill, 1980), 125–55; and Haim Avni, "Latin America and the Jewish Refugees: Two Encounters, 1935 and 1938," in *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, ed. Haim Avni and Gilbert W. Merkx (Boston, 1987), 45–68.

25. Dr. Howard Blake to Trujillo, 5 January 1937, RG 59, 839.52 JEWISH COLONIZATION/1.

26. Laurence Duggan (chief of the State Department Latin American Division) analysis of Dominican immigration policy, 29 January 1938, RG 59, 839.51/4570; Chief of Visa Division Avra Warren to Norweb, 29 April and 12 October 1938, RG 59, 839.55/75 and 87; memorandum by Hull, 27 July 1938, RG 59, 839.55/83; memorandum by Warren, 2 May 1939, RG 59, 839.55/85; Legation report, 18 August 1939, RG 59, 839.5552/2. For a detailed study of these efforts see C. Harvey Gardiner, *La política de inmigración del dictador Trujillo* [Immigration policy under the dictator Trujillo] (Santo Domingo, 1980), 33–92.

lieved he would "be willing to take in only a handful of carefully selected immigrants whose services will be of particular value." Legation Secretary Robert Mills McClintock discerned that "the participation of the Dominican Republic on [the intergovernmental] committee . . . was largely an attempt on the part of General Trujillo to make a show of cooperating in a policy sponsored by the United States." Despite the legation's unfavorable judgments, Roosevelt decided to pursue the possibility of the Dominican Republic becoming a "supplemental Jewish homeland." Haiti's simultaneous offer to accommodate fifty thousand refugees was "discouraged."[27]

In the spring of 1939, Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees sent "a mission of technical experts" named by Isaiah Bowman, president of Johns Hopkins University, "to study the possibilities of refugee colonization in the Dominican Republic." Roosevelt envisioned an "experimental settlement by carefully selected and supervised pioneering groups along Civilian Conservation Corps lines," and the technical mission recommended this plan after six weeks of study in the Dominican Republic. The mission was "given active assistance by the Dominican Government" in its survey of potential locations for a refugee colony. Roosevelt's Advisory Committee responded favorably to the prospects and entrusted negotiations with Trujillo to James Rosenberg, formerly head of Agro-Joint, a refugee organization that settled Russian Jews in Crimea after World War I. Rosenberg formed the Dominican Republic Settlement Association (DORSA) to coordinate the effort and deal directly with Trujillo, who had begun to appear apprehensive that "Jews would overrun the country." Foremost on Trujillo's mind at his first meeting with Rosenberg (held in Washington during October 1939) was his hope that Roosevelt would make a statement extolling Dominican generosity. At Rosenberg's urging to "pay proper tribute" to Trujillo, Roosevelt agreed to deliver a statement praising Trujillo two days later. The Intergovernmental Committee also commended Trujillo, though it persisted in its error of calling the Dominican Republic "Dominica." A week later, Rosenberg gave a luncheon honoring Trujillo, which was attended by Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle and several officials of the refugee committees, and publicized it with a press release.[28]

The subsequent establishment of the Sosua refugee settlement was a public relations coup for Rafael Trujillo. After DORSA concluded its agree-

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27. Memorandum on Jewish colonization by Welles, 28 November 1938, Nixon, *Roosevelt and Foreign Relations* 8:204; Hinkle report on Jewish immigration offer, 3 December 1938, RG 59, 840.48 REFUGEES/1046; "Outline of the Eighth Year," 7 November 1938, RG 59, 839.00/4209. Welles to Roosevelt, 12 and 5 January 1939, OF 3186.

28. Welles to Roosevelt, 27 February and 29 April 1939, OF 3186; "Minutes of Meeting of the Officers of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees," 18 October 1939, 107–8, OF 3186; Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle to James Rosenberg, 29 September 1939, Myron C. Taylor Papers, FDR Library; Legation report, 1 July 1939, RG 59, 839.55/108; Rosenberg to General Myron C. Taylor, 17 October 1939, Taylor Papers; "Minutes of Meeting of the Officers of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees," 26 October 1939, 144–45, OF 3186; Jewish Telegraphic Agency news dispatch, 27 October 1939, Taylor Papers.

ment with the Dominican government, the *New York Herald-Tribune* printed Rosenberg's cable of "praise to Trujillo" almost verbatim. Rosenberg also coordinated press releases and worked with Paramount News to produce a newsreel and short film about the "amazingly human story" of Sosua. Even *The Nation*, which usually took the lead in criticizing Trujillo, praised the advent of Sosua, possibly because its new editor, Freda Kirchway, was a friend of Rosenberg. Roosevelt himself declared that the establishment of Sosua "marks concrete progress in the realization of the Evian [conference refugee] program." Only the Yiddish press in New York was apprehensive about the project.[29]

But the refugees came in dribbles, not waves. The Sosua colony never reached a population of more than several hundred Jewish inhabitants at any point, and they experienced privations that belied the glowing language of the DORSA publicity. Few people outside the U.S. legation noticed when Trujillo suspended visas to all refugees except those committed to Sosua. In fact, James Rosenberg was instrumental in limiting immigration to those "under the DORSA contract . . . no matter how much money they are able to provide, and no matter what excellent people they are." Ironically, the settlement's rigorous selectivity in some ways resembled the discrimination that Jews faced in Europe; in refusing entry to an applicant in Berlin, Rosenberg regretted that "the Settlement is for young and strong people." The settlement of 235 Jewish refugees in Sosua by 1941 received nearly as much press as the murder of 12,000 Haitians that had motivated it.[30]

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29. Trujillo himself donated the "magnificent" twenty-six-thousand-acre tract of land at Sosua on the north coast, once a banana plantation owned by United Fruit. Accounts of the settlement never failed to mention the donation. Rosenberg to Taylor, 13 February 1940, Taylor Papers. See also Gardiner, *Inmigración* [Immigration], 93–140, 228–37; clipping from *New York Herald-Tribune*, 31 January 1940, Taylor Papers; Rosenberg to Trujillo, 17 February 1940, W. P. Montague (assignment editor of Paramount News) to Rosenberg, 30 December 1940, *tomo* 279, AGN. The films made about Sosua downplayed the Jewish ethnicity of its population, calling it a "non-sectarian venture" with "settlers drawn from Europe's heterogeneous stocks." Paramount News, 20 February 1941, v. 41, no. 51, *Sosua: Haven in the Caribbean*, DORSA 1941, Paramount Pictures, both in the Motion Pictures Division, RG 59; Pastoriza to Roberto Despradel, 4 March 1940, *tomo* 279, AGN. Trujillo's cooperation with the refugee settlement was deemed an "act of mercy [and] . . . of statesmanship," though somewhat "ironical" in light of his past record. *The Nation*, 25 November 1939, 569; Roosevelt to Rosenberg, 6 March 1940, President's Personal File (hereafter PPF) 6364, FDR Library; Elkin, *Jews in Latin America*, 146.

30. Interview with Felix Koch, Sosua, Dominican Republic, 12 May 1989. Roseate views of the settlement are found in Joseph Rosen, "New Neighbors in Sosua," *Survey Graphic* (September 1941); and Julius Moritzen, "Santo Domingo: A Haven for European Refugees," *Dominican Republic* (March–April 1941): 10–13 (this magazine was published by the Dominican Chamber of Commerce in New York). The Dominican daily newspaper *Listín Diario* extolled Sosua for the domestic audience, 24 December 1940. A full-page article and photo spread included the caption, "Note the expression of well-being on all the faces" of the refugees. Legation report, 15 June 1940, RG 59, 839.55/119. Rosenberg to Pastoriza, 26 June 1940, Rosenberg to Pastoriza, 24 April 1940, DORSA to Siegfried Weil, 2 May 1940, *tomo* 279, AGN. Clipping from *New York Herald-Tribune*, 16 February 1941, Taylor Papers.

The conjunction between the Haitian massacre and the Sosua refugee settlement demonstrates how Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy could reconfigure the violence and cynicism of Caribbean dictatorships to fit into the rubric of Pan-American solidarity. In this scenario, selective use of publicity portrayed Trujillo as a cooperative member of the inter-American community and a savior of Jewish refugees, images that implied success for both Good Neighbor diplomacy and Roosevelt's international refugee initiatives. By downplaying – and to some extent concealing – the genocidal offensive against Haitians and the failure of the Sosua settlement, the Roosevelt administration not only avoided a diplomatic rupture with the Dominican Republic; it furthered the cause of regional solidarity just when the impending war in Europe underlined its importance. This remarkably dextrous manipulation of the events masked two unattractive truths about U.S. foreign relations.[31] First, the reliance on "useful" dictators to attain the traditional U.S. goals of stability and cooperation in Latin American meant having to ignore those instances when the strongmen themselves incited unrest and conflict. Their inclination to pursue agendas disruptive of regional harmony or threatening to U.S. hegemony tested the flexibility of the Good Neighbor policy. The extent to which the policy was altered to meet and absorb the Haitian massacre highlights the paradoxical nature of the Roosevelt administration's relations with intolerant military regimes. In this case, Trujillo violently achieved his "ruthless demographic policy," inviting war with Haiti and disdaining the Good Neighbor policy, and in turn was praised by Roosevelt for his neighborly spirit and loaned a team of immigration experts. He then reaped a bumper crop of good will for the empty gesture to Jewish refugees known as the Sosua settlement. Converting these actions to something "useful" for U.S. interests required Roosevelt's talent for public relations alchemy.

Second, Roosevelt's ability to transform the Haitian massacre and the Sosua settlement into diplomatic victories was partly due to the racial and ethnic parameters of the issue. Dominican Minister Andrés Pastoriza correctly discerned that general apathy toward the murdered Haitians was the likely reaction of State Department officials and the "white press." Outrage was expressed in cables by a few diplomats on both sides of the border in Hispaniola, in articles by a few journalists like Quentin Reynolds, and in speeches by a few northern congressmen like Hamilton Fish, but otherwise interest in the massacre was fleeting. The official Dominican version of

31. Roosevelt's silence on the Haitian massacre and the realities of Jewish settlement in the Dominican Republic is especially significant in the context of his keen understanding of the power of rhetoric in foreign relations, as he characterized it in April 1937: "I believe in the effectiveness of preaching and preaching again. That is the method I have used in our Latin American relationships and it seems to have succeeded." To Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University and occasional lobbyist for Trujillo, he contended that "much can be accomplished by the iteration of moralities." Frederick W. Marks, *Wind Over Sand: The Diplomacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (Athens, GA, 1988), 234.

events, which hinged on racial fears and claimed self-defense, seems to have found considerable acceptance in the United States, though for a country unable to pass an anti-lynching law this might not be too surprising. This version was restated in an article on the Sosua settlement published in the *New York Times* in February 1940, which implicitly linked the issues of Haitian and Jewish residence in the Dominican Republic. The account noted that "the olive-skinned Dominicans are outnumbered, three million to one and a half million, by the black and mulatto Haitians. [The Dominicans] are mostly of Spanish blood, with slight Indian and Negro strains." The "old enmity" between the two cultures was said to have "flared up in 1937, when thousands of Haitian squatters were killed and driven out of the Dominican Republic."[32] The "black and mulatto" Haitians living on the eastern side of the border were thus defined as outsiders threatening to demographically inundate the "outnumbered" Dominicans. But the Dominican Republic, home to an "olive-skinned" population, was depicted as a congenial place of refuge for the Jews. As in other accounts of Sosua, the small number of settlers and the criteria for their admission were not emphasized. With the United States having declined to increase its own admission of Jewish refugees, the guilt-assuaging symbolism of the settlement made better copy than its unimpressive reality – both for the newspaper and for the president. It was this construction of events that the Roosevelt administration seems to have accepted, if not vocalized – the Haitian massacre was regrettable but forgivable, and the Sosua settlement was a gift from an unlikely benefactor where the issue of Jewish refugees, if not the refugees themselves, could conveniently be placed.

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32. In fact, Hamilton Fish visited Ciudad Trujillo in 1939 as part of a "Good Will Committee" and subsequently became a vocal, and apparently well-remunerated, booster of Trujillo. *Listín Diario*, 13–22 March 1939. For evidence of payoffs to Fish see Welles to Roosevelt, 1 July 1942, PPF 6012; memorandum to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau from Mr. Gaston, 15 April 1942, *Morgenthau Diaries* 516:386, FDR Library. *New York Times*, 11 February 1940.