



SANGRE, FUEGO, Y TRUJILLO

DOMINICAN STATE-FORMATION AND THE DESTRUCTION AND REBIRTH OF THE HAITIAN DOMINICAN BORDER AND SAMANÁ

Rafael Trujillo assumed power in 1930 over a Dominican Republic that had been free of U.S. control for only six years. As he bolstered his government and himself, Trujillo worked to forge a new, clearer sense of Dominican character and identity, or Dominicanidad. Yoselyn Paulino, University of Miami '16, exposes Trujillo's nationalist ambitions by juxtaposing two regions which challenged the homogeneity of the leader's vision of Dominicanidad. In tracing the state's intervention in each of these locations, Paulino raises important questions about the subsequent reconstruction of Dominican national identity.

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INTRODUCTION

“National consciousness [has been] lethargic under the weight of a government without ideals...and it is in the shadow of this, backed by the people, where the prodigious work of national reconstruction will now be realized.”¹ In his inaugural address of 1930, Dominican President Rafael Leonidas Trujillo alluded to the concept of “the nation” over twenty times. He established his vision of a nation as a territory with clear cultural, historical, and geographic demarcation as well as the role of the government in upholding a nation’s defining institutions and ideals.² Inheriting a Dominican Republic whose nationhood had been undermined by the United States’ occupation (1916-1924) and, in his view, by decades of regionalism, rurality, and foreign encroachments, Trujillo took unprecedented measures to implement the national identity he considered absent prior to his thirty-one-year dictatorship. Despotic and populist, the Trujillo government was also nationalist, concerned with the construction of a powerful Dominican state.

Dominicanidad, Trujillo’s conception of nationhood, was guided by the goal of “aggrandizing [the] country in all spheres: economic, social, cultural, [and] moral.”³ The regime’s economic and political decisions centered on a near obsession with modernity, specifically with “applying the principles of economic liberalism...for regions [to be] highly industrialized and highly populated.”⁴ Trujillo’s regime implemented land reform, massive public works projects, and taxes to accomplish economic modernization and to increase state control over the country, particularly in historically disjointed regions. His government similarly increased national sovereignty by paying off foreign debts and delineating borders. This vision of modernity also encapsulated Trujillo’s racial ideals. A historical *antihaitianismo* held by the Dominican elite was institutionalized and converted into popular rhetoric under Trujillo (who, ironically, was of Haitian descent). According to Trujillo, Dominican culture was exclusively Hispanic, Catholic, mono-ethnic and non-Black. Trujillo believed that physical and cultural unification would not only be a testament to the country’s success but also to his personal strength – concepts that became notoriously interchangeable during his regime. Thus, those who did not embody or assimilate into *Dominicanidad* threatened not only the nation but also Trujillo.

At one end of the country and of this vision of *Dominicanidad* was the border with Haiti. The border, extremely porous after being legally undefined for over one hundred years, was known to be a “transnational frontier world” where differences between Dominicans and Haitians were more imposed by the state than inherent to the people, “constituting notions of difference but not...otherness or marginality.”⁵ The high degree of interconnectedness between Haitians and Dominicans along the border defied *Dominicanidad* as both groups lived in the same communities, intermarried and reproduced frequently, travelled across the border incessantly, and synergized their cultural

identities. Unlike the sugar plantations on which Haitians were frequently recruited to labor, society near the border was not hierarchical and did not automatically place Haitians in inferior social or economic positions prior to Trujillo's era, and there was very little antagonism between the groups.

At the other end of the country was Santa Barbara de Samaná: the peninsula, bay, and town known simply as Samaná. Samaná had been home to Ciguayo Indians, Spanish, Dutch, and French colonizers, Canary Islanders, and Haitians throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶ Beginning in 1824, Samaná also became home to a group of African-Americans who migrated to the island of Hispaniola as part of the colonization scheme of President Jean-Pierre Boyer, who unified and ruled over Hispaniola from 1822 to 1844. Working with abolitionist groups in the United States, Boyer extended free passage and land access to all African-Americans willing to migrate to Hispaniola. Migration served as a mutually beneficial opportunity for African-Americans to escape the racism of the United States and for Boyer to increase the island's population and productivity; as many as 6,000 African-Americans migrated, and about 200 were sent to Samaná.⁷ Deeply connected to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African-Americans in Samaná became the only one of Hispaniola's African-American "colonies" to endure as a culturally distinctive community. An account of the community dating from 1871 described it as a "real American mass meeting in the midst of a tropical island."⁸

Both of these regions, though at geographic opposite sides of the country, represented powerful threats to Dominicanidad. As transnational spaces that symbolized the resilience, fluidity, and undeniable presence of Black culture in the country, these regions blatantly disproved the myth that the Trujillo regime purported: that the Dominican Republic was a non-Black, Hispanic nation. As an added motivation for Trujillo to control these regions, both were historically outside the geographic and political reach of Dominican governments. Isolated, independent, and culturally heterogeneous, both the Haitian-Dominican border and Samaná became important showcases for state-formation and power under the Trujillo regime. Through the forced interaction of state violence and state mechanisms at these two sites, Trujillo sought to define and impose his vision of Dominicanidad over the entire country. Never juxtaposed in existing literature of Dominican history, the parallels and connections between these two sites illuminate understanding of Trujillo's legacy in Dominican culture and geopolitics.

HAITIAN-DOMINICAN BORDER COMMUNITY

Up until 1937, the public could not detect a particular intensification of antihaitianismo on the parts of key officials of the Trujillo government. Along the border, all

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citizens were initially extended equal opportunities to become legitimate participants in the regime, particularly with regard to land ownership and civic participation. All had access to land if they agreed to meet state stipulations of productivity, and all could participate in the numerous civic ceremonies that served as symbols of political loyalty.⁹ These local opportunities were reinforced by the positive diplomatic relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The symbolism of actions such as Trujillo's kissing the Haitian flag and renaming streets after Haitian President Sténio Vincent signaled a degree of respect and admiration for Haiti, and Trujillo was even known to indulge Haitian elite with special visits and funding for projects.¹⁰ These positive relations ultimately culminated with the border treaty signed between Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1936, a treaty that had been contested for nearly three centuries. In celebration of the 1936 border settlement, a Dominican headline read, "The new generation does not remember...the old misunderstandings [between Haiti and the Dominican Republic]."¹¹ Dominicans would soon be reminded by the unprecedented measures Trujillo would take against the Haitian diaspora along the border from 1937 onwards.

Despite Trujillo's public displays of affection towards Haiti and border agreements, the border presented an increasing challenge to Trujillo's personal authority. The borderlands had resisted government subjugation for generations, partly because of geographic isolation and partly because of their "economic and social reciprocity with Haiti."¹² The hub of border society was, in fact, Port-au-Prince, due to its greater proximity than the Dominican capital. Residents were inclined to utilize Haiti's markets and schools, and many continued to cross the border for these needs after the 1936 border delineation. This porosity was a worry for Trujillo. The trade between Haiti and border residents was considered to be "illicit" because it evaded state taxation meant to profit from all economic activities in the country.¹³ Uncontrolled movement could also challenge state sovereignty, as it would be easy for political opposition groups to gather in Haiti and enter the country through the border. What's more, the border region also defied Trujillo's vision of modernity. Largely inaccessible due to the lack of infrastructure and deemed unproductive because of its low population density and less technologically advanced agricultural practices, the area represented to Trujillo an uncivilized, backwards, and criminal region.

The most significant threat from the border, however, was to the Trujillo's regime's mono-ethnic Dominicanidad. The border was "bicultural, bilingual and transnational" in every aspect, particularly in the North.¹⁴ Haitian descendants had always represented the majority of the population along the region, and their way of life defied anti-Haitian discourse that emitted from the urban elite. Because of a high degree of intermarriage and cohabitation, the majority of border residents were *rayanos*, mixed residents who identified with both national groups and that were legally Dominican.¹⁵ Spanish and Creole were spoken almost interchangeably by many residents and Vodou was more influential

in the region than the Catholic Church, whose power was notably weak in the region until the 1940s.¹⁶ Furthermore, the architecture of many homes along the border followed the Haitian construction style of wattle more closely than the typical Dominican style.¹⁷ Showcased by the Dominican elite as proof of the “pacific invasion” of Haitians into the Dominican Republic, the border offered physical, material, and cultural contradictions to a Dominicanidad that still needed to be constructed and internalized by the masses.¹⁸ By 1937, it became apparent that the “shifting, complex, ambiguous national identity” that refused to conform to Trujillo’s vision could be brought in line only through conscious efforts.¹⁹

The first public action that the Trujillo regime took against the border population came on October 2nd, 1937 in an event remembered as *el corte* in Spanish, *kout kouto-a* in Creole, and the Haitian Massacre in English. At the conclusion of a tour through the west of the country, Trujillo ordered the Dominican army to kill all Haitians living in the northwest region of the country. The order would not be halted until October 8th, and between ten and twenty thousand were slain.²⁰ Widespread displacement and deportations of people along the border whom officials identified as Haitian followed the state-sanctioned genocide for months. Infamous for the subjective and often futile criteria used to distinguish between Haitians and Dominicans and for the sheer amount of blood sacrificed in the name of Dominicanidad, the Haitian Massacre undoubtedly represents the most violent and ruthless turn of the Trujillo regime.

As the first step in a long agenda of hardening the border, the Haitian Massacre provided the public with clear messages about antihaitianismo, an ideology that was in many ways on the “backburner” of the regime prior to the genocide. Not only would Haitian-descendants no longer be considered Dominican citizens, their lives would be criminalized as sacrifices in the “ideological and institutional war against Haitians and their influence in the border region.”²¹ This position was reinforced by the justifications that the government issued for the Haitian Massacre. According to state-produced testimonies, Haitian descendants along the border were uneducated criminals who poisoned the economic, religious, and racial character of the Dominican Republic.²² On the evening of the first day of the Massacre, though federal culpability was always later denied, Trujillo delivered a speech in El Cibao, in the north of the country, comforting “the Dominicans who were complaining of the...[Haitians’] thefts of cattle, provisions, fruits, etc., and [who] were thus prevented from enjoying in peace products of their labor” to assure them that “we have already begun to remedy the situation.”²³ The United States memorandum on the Haitian Massacre additionally reads “Troubles [in the Dominican Republic] have been generally due to...activities of Haitian bandits...bandits [of] cattle, pigs, or chickens...whose...operations [have become] bolder and on a greater scale.”²⁴ Criminalization, public emphasis of Haitians’ supposed cultural deficits, and the thousands of murders endorsed by the Trujillo regime

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permanently excluded Haitians and Haitian-descended Dominicans from the national narrative.

Beyond the thousands of innocent lives lost, the Haitian Massacre's larger casualty was the community that existed on the border of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Historian Richard Turits depicts the Haitian Massacre as "a world destroyed, a nation imposed." Despite the strong sense of cohesiveness along the border before 1937, some Dominicans participated in the slaughter by providing soldiers with information about specific families and, to a lesser extent, by killing themselves. Beyond the influence of border denizens, however, was the narrative that the Trujillo government constructed for the nation and the world about the origins of the massacre. The regime maintained that the massacre was a battle waged by Dominican farmers against Haitian thieves, evidenced by the use of machetes in the majority of the murders.²⁵ Despite the unlikelihood of this claim, oral histories indicate how hegemonic it became. Decades later, some border-residing Dominicans agreed that "*el corte* was necessary...because by then [Haitians] were invading us and we had to do something about it."²⁶ In contrast, one Haitian-descended Dominican remembers that "there were no problems that I remember between Haitians and Dominicans—for example, [there was] no jealousy for Haitian land."²⁷ The Haitian Massacre completely shattered the "prevailing norms of nation and ethnicity in the pre-massacre frontier" through both state violence and state response, and in this shattering made physical and cultural headway for the ensuing Dominicanization project.²⁸

The goal of the Dominicanization project, also referred to as border colonization and the nationalization project, was to reinforce the physical border with an "absolutely impassible social, ethnic, economic, and religious fence."²⁹ As an extension of the Haitian Massacre, the post-1937 border became a national crusade, government showcase, and obsession of the Trujillo regime. One of the most practical ways for the Trujillo government to establish the impermeability of the border was spatial: specifically, by making changes to the physical landscape of the border. The broadest change came with the creation of provinces. Whereas before 1937 the border was divided into just three provinces, Trujillo divided it into over ten, all with Spanish names, such as Benefactor—a common nickname for the dictator—and San Rafael, creating public signifiers of his authority.³⁰ Clearer delineations would theoretically increase surveillance over the population and migration flows. The renaming of provinces was meant to clearly indicate the national and linguistic ties of border residents.

Continuing prior agrarian policies, the Trujillo regime created colonies along the border where residents were forced to meet production quotas. While most residents of these border colonies were prisoners made to work as forced laborers, some residents were citizens who willingly relocated for the promise of free land and state resources.³¹ Between 1937 and 1960, forty colonies were created with approximately 10,000 colo-

nists, supervised by the state to enforce their productivity.³² The structure of these colonies advanced the Trujillo regime's goals of strengthening control over the region while using soldiers as the encargados who assumed administrative and security responsibility for the area.³³ In some colonies, residents had to go so far as requesting permission to leave the premises. Conversely, colonists were subject to a state-produced morality, as there are cases of colonists facing eviction and even arrest for behaviors such as prostitution and vagrancy—reflecting the newfound moral implications of being a Dominican citizen.³⁴

With the increased militarization of the border, the Trujillo regime produced a broad range of legislation that would be enforced by encargados. Many aspects of Haitian popular culture were criminalized. Law 391 (1943) punished the practice of Vodou with confiscation of all religious objects and deportation.³⁵ Regulation of movement was a top priority of the regime in order to suppress unauthorized migration and trade. A national mandate for all citizens to carry state-issued identification known as *cedulas* was stringently enforced along the border. Law 66 (1938) mandated that citizens who crossed the border into Haiti had to leave *cedulas* with encargados and upon coming back had to pass an inspection before their *cedulas* would be returned.³⁶ Additionally, border crossing could only occur between the hours of six in the morning and six in the evening.³⁷ The use of the military was paramount in institutionalizing and enforcing new political and cultural norms.

The Catholic Church—with which Trujillo enjoyed an intimate relationship for most of his regime—served as an important cultural tool in the Dominicanization project. Given how indispensable Catholicism was considered to be to Dominican identity under Trujillo, increasing the Church's presence and its following in border towns dominated by Vodou was a crucial part of bringing the towns into the national fold. The Church was granted state permission and resources to carry out “border missions.”³⁸ In these missions, priests traveled throughout the border to hold Spanish-language masses, conduct Catholic rites such as baptism, and construct churches and schools wherever possible. During masses, priests infused their sermons with nationalist and propagandist undertones, “preaching of prudent advice in the patriotic, in the political, in the health, and even in the agricultural.”³⁹ The content of such sermons also stressed the “Hispanic and Catholic character of the Dominican people.”⁴⁰ In clear political alliance with the Trujillo regime, the Church understood that in converting Catholics, it was converting border residents into new Dominicans by erasing previous connections to Haitian culture.

Schools also represented a major vehicle for Dominicanization and modernization. Those along the border were especially instrumental and thus, received specialized curricula and resources. Whereas before 1937 only ten schools existed in the border region, there were 185 by 1941 and 251 by 1955.⁴¹ All of the schools were named after state-approved figures in Dominican history. In accordance with Law 2909, “the content

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of education provided by Dominican schools...[was] based on the principles of Christian civilization and Hispanic tradition.”⁴² The curriculum of border schools included reading, writing, agriculture, arithmetic, and hygiene. Schools worked not only to transform the border into a monolingual region by teaching children to read and write in only Spanish, but also to socially assimilate a region that was stigmatized as dirty for its poverty and association with Haiti. Schools indoctrinated students into becoming model Dominican citizens with content “full of distortions, exaggerations, and outright falsifications...that inflamed national resentment against Haiti...and served to justify the 1937 massacre, the maintenance of a large army, and the exploitation of the black masses.”⁴³ Schools, their curricula, and their social services such as vaccination campaigns were carefully designed to create citizens who would be incorporated socially and intellectually into the nation despite their proximity to Haiti.

It is clear that antihaitianismo officially began its process of institutionalization under the Trujillo regime in 1937 with the Haitian massacre. Though the racist ideology had formed over centuries, it had not been consumed by the general population, especially among people on the border who experienced consistent interactions with the Haitian diaspora. After the 1936 border treaty failed to create formal separation between Haitian-descended Dominicans and non-Haitian Dominicans, however, the state took actions to compensate for its ineffectiveness. These actions caused thousands of Haitian and Haitian-Dominican deaths from the Haitian massacre and increased the region’s public works projects, military presence, churches, schools, and ties to the central government.

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MIGRANT COMMUNITY OF SAMANÁ

As Trujillo came to power in 1930, the African-American enclave at Samaná celebrated its one hundredth and sixth year in the Dominican Republic. After one hundred and six years, the African-American enclave managed to be the only surviving colony of Haitian President Jean-Paul Boyer’s nineteenth century colonization schemes. Whereas the majority of the other African-American emigrés either returned to the United States upon being unable to acclimate to Haitian ways of life or fully assimilated to the respective local culture, the community in Samaná possessed both longevity and cultural distinctiveness.⁴⁴ Known to local Dominicans as *los Americanos de Samaná*, these migrants retained pride in their American identity and cultural forms as they made their home in the Dominican Republic over the course of several generations. This cultural continuity was enabled by several communal and national factors that were all undermined by state-formation efforts under the Trujillo regime.

The strongest institution in the enclave, which the migrants brought with them when they arrived in Samaná, was the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Presi-

dent Boyer's representative in the United States, Jonathon Granville, worked closely with the Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia to encourage congregation members to migrate to Hispaniola. Of the 200 migrants who settled in Samaná, the majority were Philadelphian members of Mother Bethel AME who brought longstanding religious and racial beliefs with them; the AME church was the first to allow African-Americans to become preachers in order to negate "the negative theological interpretations which rendered persons of African descent second class citizens."⁴⁵

The Samaná migrants immediately opened an AME-affiliated church, and by the 1930s there were two churches that served the population: St. Peter's Wesleyan Church and the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Both churches were responsible for establishing and implementing the norms of the community. As a group, los Americanos de Samaná took great pride in distinguishing themselves from the "natives" of the Samaná community as "honest working people."⁴⁶ A major element of this morality was religiosity. Weekly sermons at the churches drew crowds of up to four hundred from across the island.⁴⁷ As a tool of connection, the churches provided consistent opportunities for colonists to interact and forge permanent bonds. As a source of identity, the churches helped colonists retain ancestral religious and world views by providing instruction in a morality that rejected racism.

The church also played an instrumental role in the colonists' retention of a strong American identity. For most of the church's history, all content from sermons to hymns was delivered in English.⁴⁸ Public celebrations with origins in the United States were common, including, most notably, harvest festivals. During harvest festivals, church members would prepare and sell traditional African-American foods such as "grits, cornbread, Johnny cakes, collard greens, and ginger beer," foods in stark contrast to traditional Dominican cuisine.⁴⁹ They would also perform Negro Spirituals from the days of North American slavery.⁵⁰ This commemoration of African-American culture and history is significant. In a country whose Blackness had been vilified by the elite for decades, the colonists' celebration of a specifically Black identity blatantly contradicted the national narrative and made the African-Americans of Samaná an especially distinctive group.

Another important factor in the enclave's cultural continuity was the strong family structure present among los Americanos de Samaná. In the first few decades of settlement, research suggests a strong degree of intermarriage within the community. According to studies, "endogamy, with a homogenous religious base, has been and continues to be encouraged" in the community.⁵¹ The surname was of particular importance to migrants, and a degree of honor was and arguably still is associated with having an identifiably "American" last name. Partly because of this, and partly because of the negative cultural traits that migrants ascribed to locals, marriage and mating within the migrant community were highly encouraged by family and church leaders. Though intermarriage with local Domini-

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cans was significantly more common among later generations of the community, the efforts made to sustain surnames and heritage are noteworthy.

The second most important institution for Samaná migrants after the church was the school. Like religiosity, formal education was a key component of the “honest, hard-working morality” that migrants constructed as their distinguishing facet of American identity. Until the Trujillo era, formal education was neither mandated nor provided by the Dominican government, and thus many local people in Samaná were illiterate and uneducated. In reference to education on the island, a leading bishop said in 1871, “We are not willing to have our children grow up in ignorance and we have little schools to teach them what we can. As for the natives, the government does not do anything for them, and they don’t do much for themselves.”⁵² Despite the lack of government support, the migrants created and operated schools out of their churches. As early as 1871, there were two formal schools serving the Samaná community in addition to various informal classrooms in private homes.⁵³ Schools taught future generations to read and write in English and to transmit culturally specific content about the group’s African-American history. Education played a crucial role in the intergenerational maintenance of English as a primary language as well as in “the establishment of a separate communal identity...with an emphasis on formal education.”⁵⁴

By Trujillo’s era, los Americanos de Samaná still identified as an African-American community. The group spoke English, took pride in their African ancestry, practiced a sect of Christianity marginal to the majority of the Dominican Republic, and did not consider themselves Dominicans despite having lived on the island for generations. Additionally, this group of cultural separatists occupied a significant portion of land. As a peninsula and bay, Samaná was economically and strategically important to the Dominican state. Even the United States had made various claims to Samaná over the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century, first through a failed attempt to purchase Samaná as a naval base in 1870 and then through the establishment of a customs receivership in Samaná to manage foreign debts in 1903.⁵⁵ Despite its importance, Samaná was isolated from the rest of the country. A lack of infrastructure coupled with physical obstacles, including mountains and canals, gave Dominican governments, including Trujillo’s, difficulties in exploiting the strategic importance of Samaná and in assimilating its distinct cultural groups. The threat that Samaná posed to Trujillo’s visions of modernity, state control, and monoethnicity helps to explain the state violence and political efforts in the area during the second half of the Trujillo regime.

On October 13, 1946, a destructive fire engulfed the town of Samaná. The fire burned ninety-four homes, many of the businesses in the town’s commercial zone, and government buildings containing “most of the documents related to land tenure, debt, mercantile exchanges, and records pertaining to the history of the community and its

unique ethnic and cultural population.”⁵⁶ While a singular or conclusive explanation for the fire remains elusive, many oral historical accounts place the blame on “The Benefactor” himself. Several oral history accounts point to how government officials did nothing to quell the fire and actively prevented residents from extinguishing it. According to one witness, “The police prevented people from putting the fire out...[and] the governor refused to participate...He said that Trujillo set the fire because he was envious of the prosperous affairs in Samaná.”⁵⁷ This explanation of Trujillo’s ordering of the burning out of jealousy appears in multiple accounts of the event.⁵⁸ These personal accounts may find support in an article about the fire published in the national newspaper *Vanguardia del Pueblo* the next day, a surprisingly succinct piece that merely stated that a fire occurred in Samaná and that many of its wooden and zinc homes had been destroyed.⁵⁹ The lack of concern for finding the cause of the fire may suggest the government’s hand in producing it.

This fire had significant repercussions for both the Samaná community and the Dominican state. Though the limited records available on the event indicate no fatalities, the physical damage was extensive, effectively making Samaná a sort of ground zero with almost nothing except (perhaps miraculously) the St. Peters Church left standing.⁶⁰ The destruction, catastrophic for a community that had forged an identity from its history, proved to be a remarkable opportunity for the Trujillo regime to finally succeed in coercing “the Afro Caribbean community to...succumb and consent to the nation-building pressures of the Dominican state.”⁶¹ After the fire, *los Americanos de Samaná* would never be the same, with some historical analysts arguing that this was “the beginning of the end” for the Samaná community.⁶² Largely because of the unprecedented policies pursued by the Trujillo regime regarding the fire, *los Americanos de Samaná* would officially become Dominicans thereafter.

The obvious first target of the Trujillo regime in Samaná was the AME Church. Known to be the “beacon of resistance, place of expression and collaboration and a place to maintain the language and identity of the community,” the AME Church was dangerous because of its indispensability to the communal identity of *los Americanos* and because of the violation it posed to the national narrative of Catholicism.⁶³ Perhaps because its building managed to survive the fire, Trujillo knew he could not totally destroy this institution. He instead coerced it to aid in the Dominicanization of Samaná residents through a series of laws. Though the AME Church had begun to incorporate the Spanish language in 1930 to expand its reach to “natives,” Trujillo’s anti-English legislation officially prohibited the use of English to deliver sermons or to conduct any other religious activity.⁶⁴ Additionally, after the 1947 fire, local records indicate a spike in the number of Dominican pastors serving the AME church.⁶⁵ While few of these local records attribute this solely to Trujillo, it is probable that the Church was encouraged if not forced by government policy to incorpo-

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rate them. The banning of English in the Church erased a link between the Church and the community's linguistic and historical past.

If the first target of the Trujillo regime was the AME Church, the second was surely the Samaná education system. Following the 1947 fire, the government quickly appropriated ownership and control of the schools that the migrants had created for their children.⁶⁶ Despite the obvious injustice of the action, los Americanos knew the dangerous consequences of contesting Trujillo's decisions. The English ban had even greater repercussions in schools than in the Church. Whereas Samaná schools had enjoyed relative independence throughout their existence and were able to teach students to read and write in English, they were now forced to conduct instruction in Spanish and to teach literacy in Spanish only. In a 1980 interview, a resident explained the ruling as stemming from Trujillo's conclusion that Samaná's residents did not speak proper Spanish, which he reached after several visits to Samaná.⁶⁷ For the first time, Samaná schools were provided a national curriculum that they were obligated to follow. This national curriculum, the same one followed in border schools, was a formalization of the propaganda and state control that infiltrated every aspect of life under Trujillo. It "highlighted the benefactors of the nation, rewrote stories of conflict...emphasized the Spanish and Indian backgrounds of the population, excluded Afro-diasporic peoples and demonized Haitian neighbors."⁶⁸ The curriculum the Samaná schools were forced to follow not only eliminated the possibility of teaching about any of the group's history but also actively instructed students in anti-Blackness and antihaitianismo. Because of the new-found instruction in Spanish and the curricula's, younger generations of Samaná residents became more assimilated into the rest of the "Dominican" nation.

Specific national legislation also challenged the identity of the Samaná enclave. Like all Dominican citizens, Samaná residents were required to carry cédulas with them as proof of citizenship. These cédulas required citizens to indicate their racial category, and 'Black' was simply not an option. All non-white Dominicans, the majority of the population, automatically defaulted into the indio category.⁶⁹ This institutionalized act of erasure may not have been developed with the Samaná residents specifically in mind, but it certainly began to drill anti-Blackness into the psyche of the enclave from then on. These cédulas were strictly enforced in the region and proved to be essential tools in the process of criminalizing "foreign." Anyone who did not have physical proof of citizenship and "appeared" to be something other than Dominican was subject to government harassment and punishment. In the 1980s, a Samaná resident recounted an experience from his adolescence under Trujillo, when a group of soldiers approached his dark-skinned group of friends and, not having their cédulas with them, had to convince the soldiers that they were Dominican citizens in order to avoid arrest.⁷⁰ Since the English language was criminalized, speaking English was grounds for questioning the citizenship of those who spoke it and even arresting

them.⁷¹ Dominican nationality, with its constructed anti-Blackness and pro-Hispanicness, was thus reinforced in the daily lives of Samaná residents who learned how to identify as Dominican and denounce elements of their communal identity, at least publicly.

In addition to permeating the communal institutions and identity of Samaná, Trujillo also permanently altered its physical landscape. Samaná's geographic isolation from the rest of the country had allowed the enclave to maintain its identity. Presenting himself as a modernizer, Trujillo invested heavily in infrastructure and public works to connect Samaná to the rest of the country.⁷² Whereas for decades the easiest way to get to Samaná was by boat, the government built roads to and within the town. An essential component of industrial modernization, this construction also made Samaná more accessible both to Dominicans wishing to visit or migrate to the region and to the military.

The intergenerational communal identity of los Americanos de Samaná threatened the Dominicanidad that the Trujillo regime had begun to impose in the Haitian-Dominican border in the 1930s. By 1946, Trujillo had turned his focus to the east of the Dominican Republic and the biracial community of Samaná. Ultimately, the resilience and resistance of the community did not protect it from the Dominicanization program forced on the region. The great fire of Samaná was followed by state intervention in the community's schools, churches, infrastructure, and language, all of which aimed to transforming los Americanos de Samaná into los Dominicanos de Samaná.

CONCLUSIONS

On May 30th, 1961, Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo was assassinated by a group that included some of his closest advisors—late retribution for the casualties he inflicted during his thirty-one-year dictatorship. Notorious for the sadistic murders of any individual or group suspected of opposing his government, Trujillo's two largest casualties were the transnational worlds that thrived at the Haitian-Dominican border and in the town of Samaná prior to his dictatorship. The communities that flourished at these two sites transcended boundaries that Trujillo's government attempted to draw and reinforce as it oversaw the construction of Dominican nationhood and identity. The interactions between the language, culture, and communal identity of Dominicans and outside groups created transnational spaces that contributed to one of the regime's biggest fears: Blackness. Trujillo's Dominicanization campaigns targeted Blackness and the geographic, political, and social independence of Black communities.

The process of Dominicanization at both locations modeled the same process of state-induced destruction followed by state-controlled rebirth. Through acts of state violence, the Trujillo government first destroyed the foundations of both communities in order to permeate them. At the border, this step assumed the most horrific dimensions, with

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the murder of thousands of individuals identified as Haitian by the Dominican army. In Samaná, this first step manifested itself as a fire that did not result in death but that did destroy the majority of the town's physical structures and historical records. With blood along the border and with ashes in Samaná, the regime forced the same question in both regions: How does a community rebuild itself after it has been destroyed? It then granted itself the authority to answer this question for the previously semi-autonomous communities.

At both sites, answers to this question came with extensive state interventions. Education, religion, language, infrastructure, public works, military, and national measures played integral roles in materializing the visions that Trujillo had for both regions. Education and religion taught individuals that being Dominican involved practicing Catholicism, speaking Spanish, projecting patriotism, and above all repudiating Blackness. Public works projects and increased state presence replaced the autonomy of these regions with cultural and political unification in the name of Dominicanidad.

The processes sponsored at both sites instructed the institutionalization of racism in twentieth-century Dominican Republic and beyond. The antihaitianismo that was consecrated at the border was merely a specific manifestation of feelings of anti-Blackness that later motivated actions taken against los Americanos de Samaná. Though the two sites involved two different subgroups of the Dominican Republic's Black population, they served to advance turning racist discourse from "elite constructions" into "a popular attitude."⁷³ It is difficult to imagine the almost total assimilation of los Americanos without the threat of the actions taken against Haitian-Dominicans looming in their communal imagination. By the same token, it is also difficult to conceptualize the Haitian massacre and all other actions taken against Haitian-Dominicans without the existence of a larger ideology of anti-Blackness. Contextualizing the events at these two sites in the broader process of anti-Black antagonism in the Dominican Republic yields insight into their national and global importance.

Locally, these measures had mixed success. Ironically, although the Dominicanization campaign was much more extreme along the border, it proved much more successful in Samaná. Haitian presence persists at the border as contact, trade, and migration have continued to flourish throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century. Antihaitianismo along the border has, however, flourished as well. Border Dominicans are much more likely to express antagonistic and racist attitudes towards Haitians and their Dominican descendants today than prior to the Trujillo era. In Samaná, although the cultural signifiers of the African-American community are still present, they have dwindled. Anthropological research has shown that descendants of the African-American migrants are substantially more likely to be monolingual in Spanish and to identify their nationality as Dominican despite their distinctive surnames.⁷⁴ Though the Church still stands, descendants of the

migrants are hardly the only group who attend it, making it more of a general community landmark. This outcome certainly seems to suggest that policies of assimilation proved more powerful than those of elimination in the case of the Dominican Republic.

Nationally, these processes were integral to the formation of Trujillo's Dominican Republic. Prior to 1937, the country's border and one of its most important ports were transnational spaces. As such, in Trujillo's eyes, they weakened Dominican national identity and strength. For Trujillo, strong nationhood came from homogeneity, a belief stemming partly from racism but also from his personal hunger for power, for a homogenous population would be easier to define and control. Incorporating the borderlands and Samaná into the nation—through violent force as well as state investment—was necessary to satisfy his will to exert absolute national control as well as to satisfy the agendas of the racist intellectuals that advised him. Thus, the processes of state violence and state incorporation seen in the border region and Samaná must be understood not only as extensions of antihaitianismo but also as extensions of personal ambition, state control, and ultimately Dominican nationalism.

The similar process observed at the border and at Samaná ultimately brings into question the place of Blackness in Dominican national identity. Can Blackness be part of a national discourse that vilifies and aims to eliminate it on both an individual and institutional level? What lessons do the border and Samaná offer in terms of the value of both assimilation and resistance in the formation of a national identity? Can a national identity be imposed from the top-down? The Trujillo era is frequently and rightfully condemned for its antihaitianismo and extreme exhibitions of racism and xenophobia, yet the historical implications and legacies of these ideologies must now be considered from multiple angles. The cases of the border and Samaná certainly provide valuable insight into the fire and blood, and the destruction and rebirth, that are part of Dominican transnationality, history, and identity.

NOTES

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3. Rafael Trujillo, *The Basic Policies of a Regime* (Ciudad Trujillo, DR: Editora del Caribe), 10.
4. *Ibid.*, 6.
5. Richard Lee Turits, "A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82 (2002): 5.
6. E. Valeria Smith, "A Merging of Two Cultures: The Afro-Hispanic Immigrants of Samaná, Dominican Republic," *Afro-Hispanic Review* 8 (1989): 9.
7. Kristen R. Fellows, "African-Americans from back yonder: The historical archeology of the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of the American enclave in Samaná, Dominican Republic" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2013), 23.
8. David Gleeson and Simon Lewis, *The Civil War as Global Conflict*, (Charleston, SC: University of South Carolina Press), 211.
9. Richard Lee Turits, *Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican Republic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 158.
10. *Ibid.*, 163.
11. *Ibid.*, 160.
12. John P. Augelli, "Nationalization of Dominican Borderlands," *Geographical Review* 70 (1980): 1.
13. *Ibid.*, 4.
14. Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 144.
15. Augelli, "Dominican Borderlands," 24.
16. *Ibid.*, 27.
17. *Ibid.*, 25.
18. Amelia Hintzen, "A Veil of Legality: The Contested History of Anti-Haitian Ideology under the Trujillo Dictatorship," *New West Indian Guide* 90 (2016): 18.
19. Turits, "A World Destroyed," 3.
20. Hintzen, "A Veil of Legality," 21.
21. Edward R. Paulino, "Birth of a boundary: Blood, cement, and prejudice and the making of the Dominican-Haitian border, 1937-1961" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2001), 7.
22. *Ibid.*, 9.
23. Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 162.
24. Sagas and Inoa, *The Dominican People*, 158.
25. Paulino, "Birth of a Border," 119.
26. Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 172.
27. Lauren Derby and Richard Turits, "Eyewitnesses to the Genocide," in *Revolutionary Freedoms: A History of Survival, Strength, and Imagination in Haiti*, ed. by Cecile Accilien et al. (Coconut Creek: Caribbean Studies Press, 2006), 142.
28. Paulino, "Birth of a Border," 12.
29. Trujillo, *Policies of a Regime*, 8.
30. Paulino, "Birth of a Border," 132.
31. *Ibid.*, 160.
32. *Ibid.*, 141.
33. *Ibid.*, 164.
34. *Ibid.*, 167.
35. Ernesto Sagas, "Antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2000), 216.

36. Paulino, "Birth of a Border." 137.
37. Ibid., 138.
38. Sagas, "Antihaitianismo," 230.
39. Paulino, "Birth of a Border," 193.
40. Ernesto Sagas, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press), 62.
41. Paulino, "Birth of a Border," 168.
42. Ibid., 62.
43. Sagas, *Race and Politics*, 62.
44. Ryan Mann-Hamilton, "What Rises from the Ashes: Nation and Race in the African American Enclave of Samaná" in *Migrant Marginality: A Transnational Perspective*, ed. Phillip Kretsedemas et al. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 225.
45. Ibid., 225.
46. Ibid., 227.
47. Ibid., 226.
48. Ibid., 232.
49. Fellows, "African-American from back yonder," 167.
50. Ibid., 170.
51. E. Valeria Smith, "Mate selection as indicator of ethnic identity and maintenance: A case analysis of the immigrants in Samaná, Dominican Republic" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1986), 133.
52. Fellows, "African Americans from back yonder," 111.
53. Ibid., 113.
54. Ibid., 95.
55. Ibid., 67.
56. Mann-Hamilton, "What Rises from the Ashes," 222.
57. Ibid., 226.
58. Ibid., 227.
59. Hector Tineo, "Incendio destruye la ciudad de Samaná," *Vanguardia del Pueblo*, October 14th, 1946, 1. Accessed April 23rd, 2016. <http://vanguardiadelpueblo.do/1946/10/14/incendio-destruye-la-ciudad-de-Samaná/>.
60. Mann-Hamilton, "What Rises from the Ashes," 222.
61. Ibid., 223.
62. Fellows, "African-Americans from back yonder," 177.
63. Mann-Hamilton, "What Rises from the Ashes," 231.
64. Fellows, "African-Americans from back yonder," 47.
65. Ibid., 48.
66. Ibid., 177.
67. Fellows, "African Americans from back yonder," 179.
68. Ibid., 232.
69. Mann-Hamilton, "What rises from the ashes," 230.
70. Fellows, "African Americans from back yonder," 179.
71. Ibid., 180.
72. Ibid., 177.
73. Amelia Hintzen, "The Origins of Anti-Haitian Sentiment in the Dominican Republic," *North American Congress on Latin America* (2015): 1-5, doi: <https://nacla.org/news/2015/07/14/origins-anti-haitian-sentiment-dominican-republic>.
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