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NATIONALIZATION OF DOMINICAN BORDERLANDS*

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THE borderlands between two emerging states tend historically to be zones of cultural overlap and political instability where the national identity and loyalties of the people often become blurred. In the absence of a sharply defined international boundary and an effective political control by the central governments, the frontier provides an excellent opportunity for interpenetration and sway.[1] Border populations are little concerned with jurisdictional limits; residents work out intimate economic and social reciprocity with their neighbors in the adjoining country; and the ties that bind them to compatriots in their national core areas are often tenuous.

These conditions are tolerated only when a state is immature and the power of the central authority is weak. Ultimately governments tend to pursue strong nationalization policies along their territorial borders. The vague frontier zone is replaced by a sharp boundary line; border people are infused with a marked sense of national purpose or are supplemented by settlers from the core area of the country. Efforts are made to integrate the borderlands with the rest of the national territory.[2] Such policies and their geopolitical consequences are no longer significant in Europe and Anglo America where mature states are separated by sharply defined boundaries, but they are, or may become, important in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

In Latin America, for example, a number of conditions tends to stimulate government efforts to nationalize frontiers. With few exceptions, international boundaries in the region run through sparsely populated lands well removed from the nuclei of concentrated settlements that form the national ecumenes or core areas. There are only four instances where international boundaries pass through heavily settled areas in Latin America: Venezuela–Colombia between Cúcuta and San Cristóbal; Colombia–Ecuador in the Basin of Tulcán; Peru–Bolivia in the Lake Titicaca Basin; and Argentina–Brazil along the Uruguay River.[3] Also with few exceptions, the boundaries seldom separate people of widely contrasting folk or national cultures. In addi-

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[1] For the purpose of this essay, "international boundary" refers to a specific line of demarcation; "frontier" is a zone of uncertain width lying astride an international boundary; and "borderlands" is considered to be virtually synonymous with "frontier." A more detailed definition of these and related terms and concepts is available in a variety of works, including Ladis Kristof, The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 49, 1959, pp. 269–282; Stephen B. Jones, Boundary Concepts in the Setting of Place and Time, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 49, 1959, pp. 241–255; and Julian V. Minghi, Boundary Studies in Political Geography, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 53, 1963, pp. 407–428.

[2] Derwent Whittlesey, The Impress of Effective Central Authority Upon the Landscape, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 25, 1935, pp. 85–97.

[3] Preston E. James, Latin America: State Patterns and Boundary Problems, *in* The Changing World (edited by W. Gordon East and A. E. Moodie; London: George G. Harrap and Co., 1956), p. 893.

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tion to Hispaniola, the only other international boundaries that separate national groups of noteworthy cultural difference run along the borders of Mexico and the United States, of the Guianas with Brazil and Venezuela, and of Guatemala with Belize.

Many Latin American countries continue to be plagued by boundary disputes with one or more of their neighbors. Virtually no country has been free of border problems during this century, and several are still hotly involved in boundary controversies. Among these, for example, are El Salvador and Honduras, Venezuela and Guyana, Guatemala and Belize, and Ecuador and Peru. There is danger, as illustrated by the loss of Ecuadorian territory to Peru, that a country which neglects a frontier area too long may lose its *de jure* claim over the disputed territory to an aggressive neighbor.[4] Finally adding impetus to the nationalization of frontiers of Latin America are the emerging sense of nation and nationalism and the tendency of ruling groups to encourage ferment over border disputes—often in an effort to divert attention from explosive internal problems.

Perhaps the most obvious example of Latin American frontier nationalization was the policy implemented by Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican borderlands with Haiti. Beginning in the mid-1930s and continuing until the dictator's assassination in 1960, the policy proposed to stabilize the boundary and presumably to lessen the tensions of what had been the most volatile frontier in the Americas, to block further occupation of Dominican territory by Haitians, and to foster a strong sense of national identity among the people of the Dominican border provinces. The nature of Trujillo's policy and the extent to which it succeeded in achieving these goals are the primary concerns of this study. Accordingly an effort will be made to analyze briefly the background causes of frontier conflict on Hispaniola, to examine the instruments and the processes employed to achieve nationalization of the Dominican borderland, to assess the geographical and political impact of the nationalization policy, and, incidentally, to relate the Dominican experience to frontier problems elsewhere in Latin America.

Backdrop of Frontier Conflict and Instability

The oldest and still the most important cause of frontier instability in Hispaniola stems from the sharp contrasts between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The vast economic and cultural differences that began between the French and Spanish colonies of Saint Domingue and Santo Domingo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries continue between Haiti and the Dominican Republic to this day. Currently the Dominican Republic with a population of approximately five million inhabitants occupies roughly two-thirds of Hispaniola. The overall population densities of more than 260 persons per square mile are high compared with countries of continental Latin America, but comparatively low for the West Indies. Land hunger due to saturation has been less acute historically than in most other Antillean territories such as Barbados or Haiti. Despite a high degree of *latifundismo* (large landholdings), until recently only a small percentage of the Dominican peasantry found it necessary to farm agriculturally marginal lands in areas remote from the two large population

[4] Raymond Crist, Politics and Geography, Some Aspects of Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces Operative in Andean America, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 25, 1966, pp. 349–358.

clusters in the country—the Cibao east of Santiago and the southern coastal plains.[5] In contrast, more than five million Haitians occupy a territory notably smaller than the Dominican Republic. Much of Haiti is too mountainous, too eroded, or too dry for rewarding farm production. The country has been characterized as an environmental disaster. Destruction of forests for charcoal and for other uses has resulted in widespread soil erosion. With overall population densities already more than 500 persons per square mile and with a ratio of four persons per cultivated acre, relatively heavy settlement has been pushed into the most marginal agricultural areas. The Haitians have had little choice but to "spread over mountains and plains, wet areas and dry ones, regardless of conditions."[6]

Cultural and economic contrasts are equally marked between the two countries. Most Dominicans are of mixed European and African stock. Percentage breakdown of the Dominican population by race varies with the criteria used for classification. Except along sections of the border with Haiti and in some of the sugar lands of the southern coastal plains, there are very few "pure" blacks. Similarly, except in a limited number of upper class families and in a few remote zones of the Cordillera Central or among recently arrived immigrants, the number of persons of undiluted European stock is small. In round figures, Dominican sources suggest that approximately 25 percent of the total population is white, 12 percent is black, and the remainder falls into a wide range of mixture between the two. Despite a strong black presence, the long struggle against the Haitians to preserve national identity has made Dominicans fiercely Hispanic and non-African in cultural identification. The Dominican may be a mulatto or a black racially, but he speaks Spanish, is baptized Roman Catholic and "thinks white." Like other Latin American peoples, the Dominicans have felt the need, if not the full impact, of change and modernization. The vast majority of the Haitians, on the other hand, is racially black and culturally more African than European. In cities such as Port-au-Prince and Cap Haitien where most of the mulatto elite live, there is evidence of European influence and of the contemporary world, but there is little in the rural landscape of Haiti or in the way of life of most Haitians that suggests European colonization or twentieth-century modernization.

The Dominican economy rests primarily on agriculture but includes a significant commercial dimension with cattle and the production of sugar, cacao, and coffee on large estates. Despite a sharp drop in the rate of economic growth after 1960, the Dominican per capita income is roughly three times greater than that of the Haitians.[7] With an economy based largely on subsistence farming of small peasant plots and with a resource base that is limited, poorly endowed, or exhausted, Haiti is the most poverty-stricken country in the Americas. In the period between 1955 and 1970, for example, it is estimated that, because of the wide discrepancy between economic development and population growth, annual per capita income of Haiti dropped from US$77 to US$74.[8]

Memories of bitter conflicts reinforce the national contrasts between Haiti and

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[5] Robert West and John Augelli, Middle America: Its Lands, and Peoples (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2nd ed., 1976), pp. 163–166.

[6] West and Augelli, footnote 5 above, p. 166.

[7] Socio-Economic Progress in Latin America, Tenth Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, 1970), p. 191.

[8] **Socio-Economic Progress**, footnote 7 above, p. 238.

the Dominican Republic. Beginning with the first Haitian invasion of Santo Domingo in 1801, the relations between the two countries became stained with racial and cultural hatreds that gave rise to repeated, savage bloodletting. Any Dominican, no matter how illiterate, knows of the Haitian occupation of his country (1822–1844) and of the countless battles fought *a machetazo* (with machetes or long knives) without quarter between his people and their western neighbors. Time has done little to soften the feelings of fear and hatred that the Dominicans harbor toward Haiti. For many Haitians the feelings are mutual.

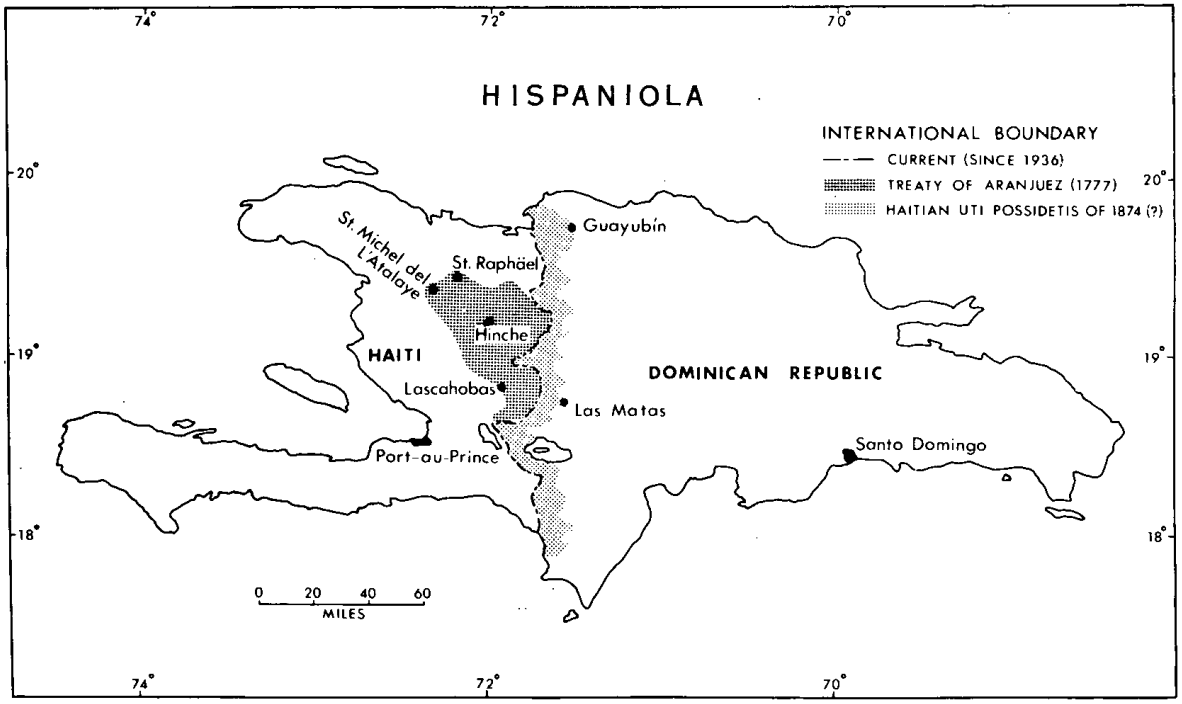

FIG. 1—Hispaniola: international boundary changes, 1777–1936.

Inevitably much of this history of conflict swirled around the international boundary line, periodically unmooring it and casting it further eastward into territory claimed by the Dominicans. For almost 150 years preceding the 1936 Trujillo-Vincent agreement that fixed the present line, there was no mutually recognized political divide between the Dominican Republic and Haiti (Fig. 1). The border between the two countries was a vaguely defined zone of conflicting territorial claims, well removed from effective political control by central government authority. Such conditions tended to favor the more numerous, land-hungry Haitians rather than the Dominicans. As a result, in the past the Haitians occupied not only their own undisputed borderlands but also spilled into territory claimed by the Dominicans. During much of the nineteenth century, the eastward spread of Haitian settlement was aided by formal military invasion and occupation. Even when such invasions ceased after the 1850s, peaceful penetration of Dominican territory by uncounted thousands of Haitian settlers continued. An ill-defined boundary, the enormous difference in pop-

ulation pressure between the two countries, the instability and weakness of the Dominican government that rendered it helpless to control the border regions and to integrate them with the rest of the country—all these factors contributed to the eastward march of Haitian people and culture and to the creation of a political "shatter belt" on Hispaniola.

The first direct cause of frontier dispute in Hispaniola goes back to historical disagreements stemming from the Peace of Ryswick (1697) when the western part of the island became French and the rest remained Spanish. The boundary between the two sections was vague, and quarrels between the French and Spanish colonists were frequent.[9] The Treaty of Aranjuez (1777) supposedly fixed a permanent boundary well to the west of the present line, recognizing the communes of Las Caobas, Hinche, San Rafael, and San Miguel de la Atalaya as undisputed Spanish territory (Fig. 1). The Aranjuez boundary was soon obliterated, however, when in the Treaty of Basel (1795) Spain ceded the entire island to France.

To the Haitians who fell heir to the former French colony of St. Domingue through revolution and independence, the Treaty of Basel provided a claim to the political indivisibility of Hispaniola. The principle of political indivisibility was stated by Toussaint L'Ouverture in his 1801 invasion, and it was reaffirmed later by Desalines and during the Haitian occupation of the former Spanish colony from 1822 to 1844. Even after Haiti abandoned the indivisibility claim after her defeat in the 1850s, no solution could be found for the establishment of an acceptable boundary line until the 1930s. Through most of the period between 1859 and 1936, the Dominicans continued to insist on the Aranjuez line of 1777, while the Haitians based their claim on *uti possidetis* and called for a boundary running east of all territory actually settled by Haitians. The Haitian uti possidetis line was never clearly defined, but in 1874, for example, it ran to the east of Pedernales River in the south, of Las Matas de Farfán in the center, and of Guayubín in the north.[10] In an effort to find a solution to the festering frontier question, the Dominican government finally abandoned most of its historical claims, accepted the present boundary in the 1936 Trujillo-Vincent agreement, and prepared to insure the future stability of the new frontier.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE BORDERLANDS IN 1936

On prima facie evidence, there seems to be little reason why the boundary established by the 1936 treaty should give rise to further dispute. From north to south the line winds for 171 miles through some of the least hospitable terrain on the island. For much of its length the boundary cuts virtually at right angles through the rugged Cordillera Central and other east-west trending uplands. Where the line passes through riverine lowlands, such as those of the Dajabón or Massacre, the Pedernales, and the Artibonite, the climate is arid, making agriculture difficult without irrigation. Nor are minerals or other resources abundant along the boundary.

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[9] The Geographer, U.S. Department of State, Dominican Republic-Haiti Boundary, *International Boundary Study No. 5*, Washington, D.C., 1961, p. 1.

[10] I have relied heavily for historical and some contemporary data on M. A. Machado Baez, La dominicanización fronteriza, Vol. 3 of the series, La era de Trujillo (Ciudad Trujillo, 1955). Like other authors in this series, however, Machado Baez seems more concerned with singing Trujillo's praises than with objectivity.

Under these conditions, the Dominican border provinces delimited by the 1936 boundary were a poverty-stricken area of limited population. More important, that population was often of dubious nationality. Long exposure to Haitian influence and settlement had gradually eroded the traditional Hispanic character and the Dominican national identity from both people and landscape. Part of the population was of undiluted Haitian stock and culture, while much of the rest were *Rayanos*, frontier people representing a blend of both cultural streams who felt as much at home in one national jurisdiction as in the other. Intermarriage and cohabitation between Haitians and Dominicans had been common, with the result that negritude in the racial composition of the frontier population had been constantly increasing. The French patois (creole) of Haiti was as common as Spanish, and Roman Catholicism, always a badge of Hispanic cultural identity, had been undermined by the importation of African voodoo rites from the west.[11] Economic patterns had been similarly affected. Communication with Dominican markets was so limited that the small commercial surplus of the frontier moved largely toward Haiti; Haitian middlemen were more common than Dominicans. The Haitian *gourde* was widely used and accepted as currency almost as far east as Santiago, and even overseas trade tended to favor Haitian ports. To complicate matters, lack of political control had reduced the border provinces to centers of lawlessness where contraband moved unmolested and bandit raids were frequent. Along most of the frontier, the international boundary had never been delimited, and where it had been marked, nobody paid any attention to it.

The stamp of cultural heterogeneity was equally apparent on the land. The distinctive Haitian house type constructed of wattle and mud occupied as prominent a position as the Dominican palm-board structure (Figs. 2 and 3). Dispersed settlement so typical of Haitian peasantry was more common than the village groupings favored by Dominicans, and the road net, such as it was, was oriented more to the west than to the east.

In the face of those conditions and in the fear of further Haitian encroachment, Trujillo determined on a strong policy of nationalization or "Dominicanization" along the frontier after the 1936 agreement. As already noted, the basic aims of the nationalization program were to stamp the Dominican national identity on both people and land of the frontier provinces, to integrate them politically, economically, and socially with the rest of the country, to halt further encroachment by the Haitians, and to achieve political stability along the frontier.

Development and Impact of Trujillo's Nationalization Policy

The Dominican government under Trujillo employed a variety of methods to achieve nationalization of the borderlands. Among the first was the wholesale expulsion, often by force, of thousands of Haitians in 1937 and later. Precisely how many Haitians were expelled or killed at that time is difficult to determine because of the charges and countercharges of both governments. (Significantly, in 1960 I encountered scores of Spanish-speaking refugees in Haiti at places such as d'Osmond, Grand Bassin, Billiguy, and Saltadere who still longed to return to the Dominican Republic.) All immigration from Haiti, except for seasonal laborers, was prevented

[11] The pre-1937 Haitian influence in the Dominican border provinces was not uniform. Thus the town of Elias Piña was mainly Haitian, and creole was the most common language. In contrast, Bánica, located less than twenty miles north of Elias Piña, remained basically Dominican with Spanish as the chief language.

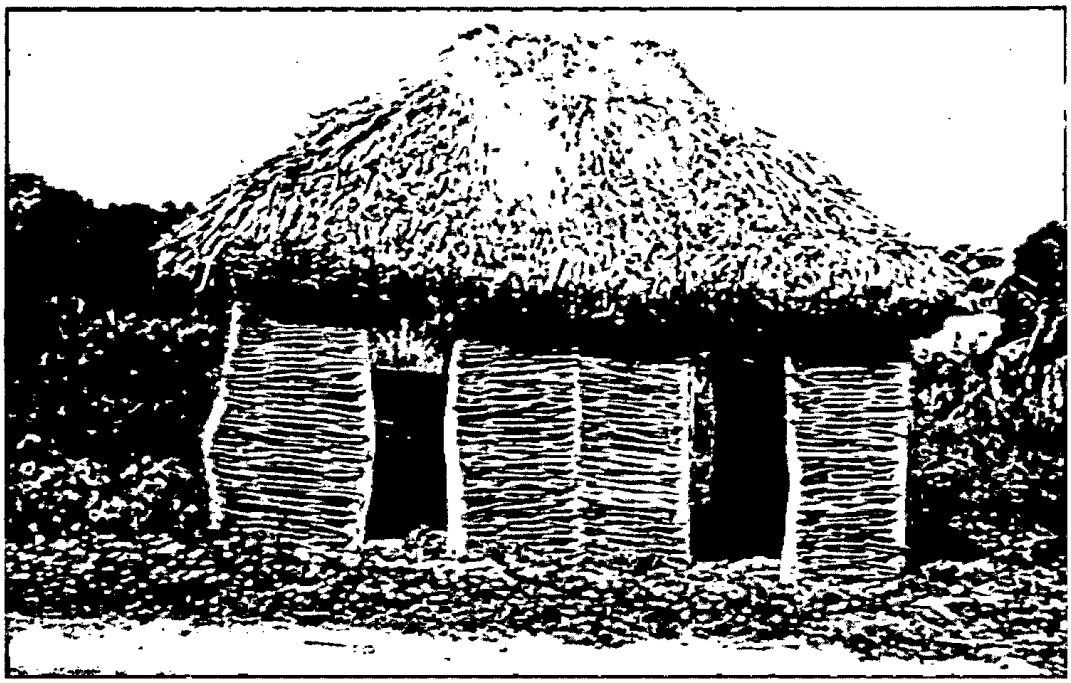

FIG. 2—Haitian rural house. Note contrast with Dominican house shown in Fig. 3.

FIG. 3—Dominican rural house.

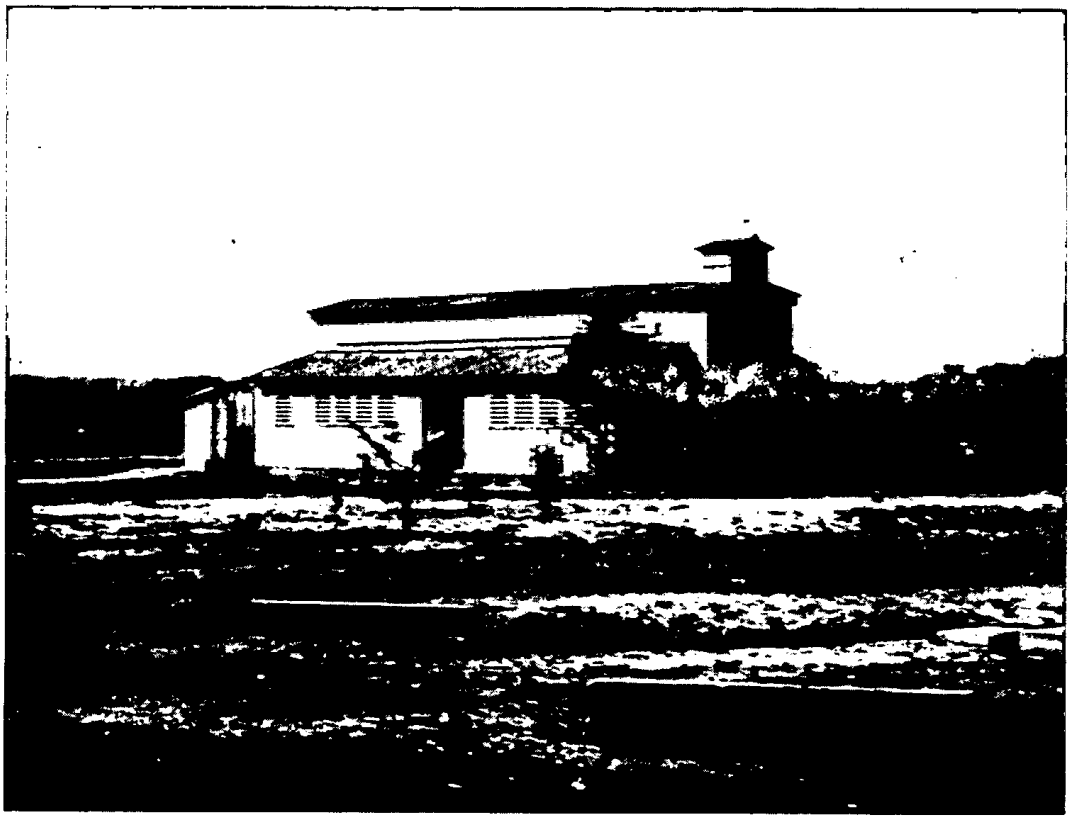

FIG. 4—Dominican frontier church. Roman Catholicism, always a badge of Dominican cultural identity, was a major instrument of nationalization.

both by strict policing of the border and by discriminatory immigration policies that discouraged legal entry.

Following the expulsion of the Haitians, the remaining population in the border provinces was subjected to an intense religious and educational campaign. Because Dominicans viewed Roman Catholicism as a symbol of their cultural identity, they recruited the Church to combat the feared effects of Haitian voodoo. The government contracted with the Papal Nuncio in Santo Domingo for a special corps of missionaries to spearhead the eradication of African rites and to reestablish Catholicism on the frontier. Dozens of new churches and chapels were constructed and maintained by the government in every town and at strategic sites in rural areas along the border (Fig. 4). These functioned as religious frontier posts, roughly comparable to the Indian missions of the Spanish colonial period. The churches served not only as centers of Catholic indoctrination but also as propaganda bases for Dominican nationalism.

The classroom became an even more important instrument of Dominicanization than the church. Between 1936 and 1960, the number of schools in the border provinces increased from fewer than seventy to more than 250, giving the frontier zone almost the highest ratio of schools to area and population in the entire country. Equally significant, the compulsory education law was more stringently enforced in the borderlands than elsewhere; teacher recruitment was more carefully supervised; and special financial incentives were created to attract qualified personnel. The government also provided free books, lunch, and, in needy cases, free clothing for students.

These measures went hand-in-hand with the absolute uniformity of content and rigid government control of the curriculum. Major emphasis was given to the study of the Spanish language; many schools were equipped with radios to receive propaganda broadcasts from the capital; and every aspect of education, from the flag-raising ceremony in the morning, through pictures of Dominican heroes in the classroom, to sports and music, emphasized patriotic themes.

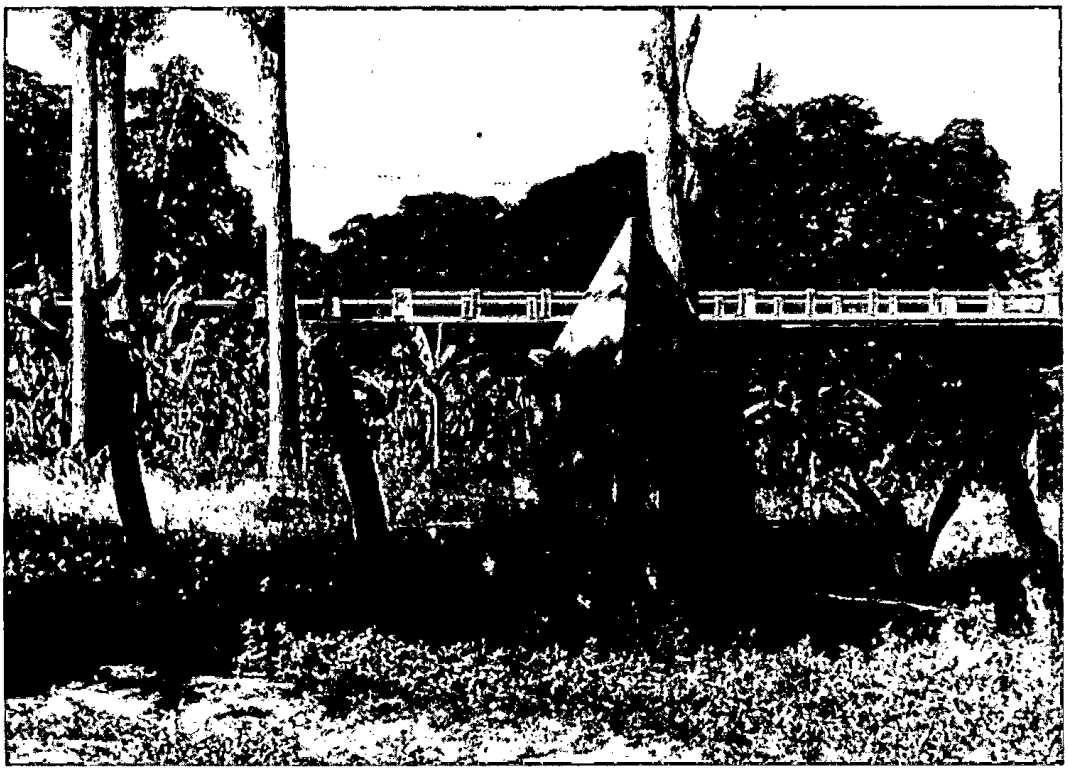

FIG. 5—Hispaniola: international boundary marker near Dajabón.

A roughly parallel program was developed for adult education. In theory the aim was to eliminate the widespread illiteracy among the *campesinos* (peasants), but in practice its chief goals were to wipe away any stains of Haitian influence and to foster a strong sense of Dominican nationalism in the population. To these ends, Trujillo's government established a select corps of "Frontier Cultural Agents;" it arranged for the free circulation of Dominican newspapers and for recitals by companies from the University of Santo Domingo, the National School of Fine Arts, and other cultural organizations; and it used frequent radio broadcasts and mass political rallies to keep the frontier populations abreast of "every palpitation in the national life."

Another instrument of nationalization used by Trujillo was the landscape itself. The international boundary was accurately delimited and marked (Fig. 5). Every effort was made to sharpen the visible contrast on either side of it. Frontier towns received special attention (Figs. 6 and 7). The government lavished millions of dollars on public construction such as hospitals, schools, political headquarters, military barracks, housing projects, and other structures. Whenever possible, concrete was used as

FIG. 6—Municipal building at Elias Piña. Trujillo lavished large sums of money on public buildings and parks in Dominican frontier towns.

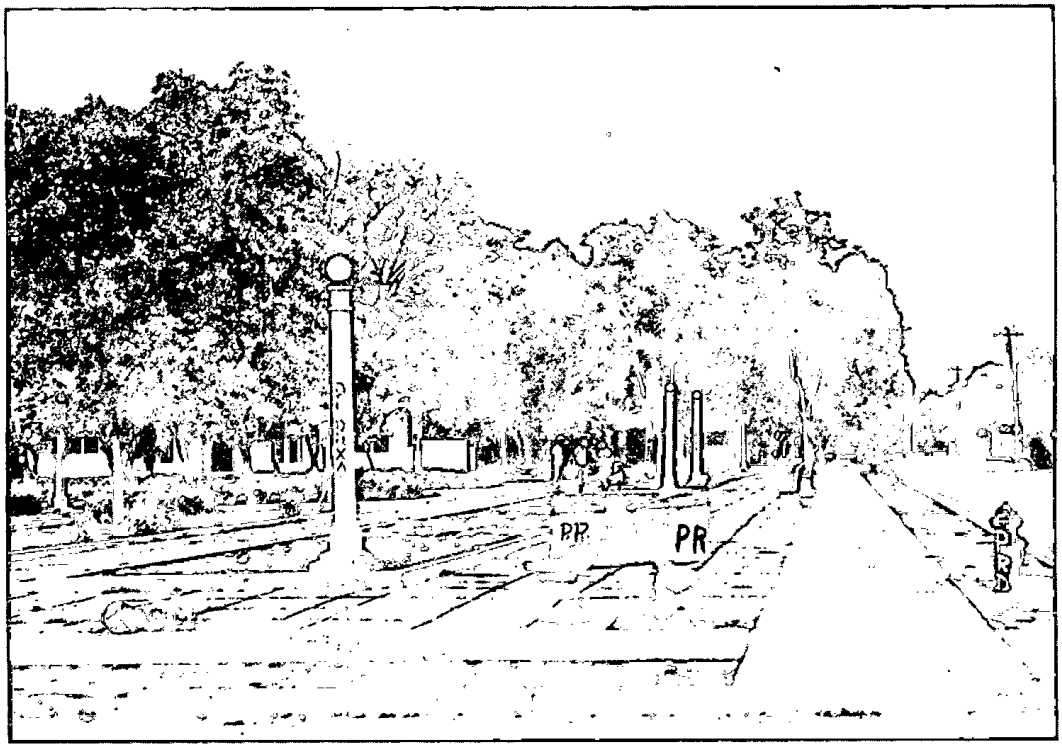

FIG. 7—Dominican border town of Dajabón, 1960.

building material, and the architectural style was always typically Hispanic. Hundreds of houses built of wattle and mud in the Haitian manner were ordered destroyed in towns and rural areas and replaced by houses typically Dominican in appearance. Dispersed settlement so characteristic of the Haitian countryside across the border was also discouraged in favor of agglomerated settlements that often developed ribbon-like along the highways.

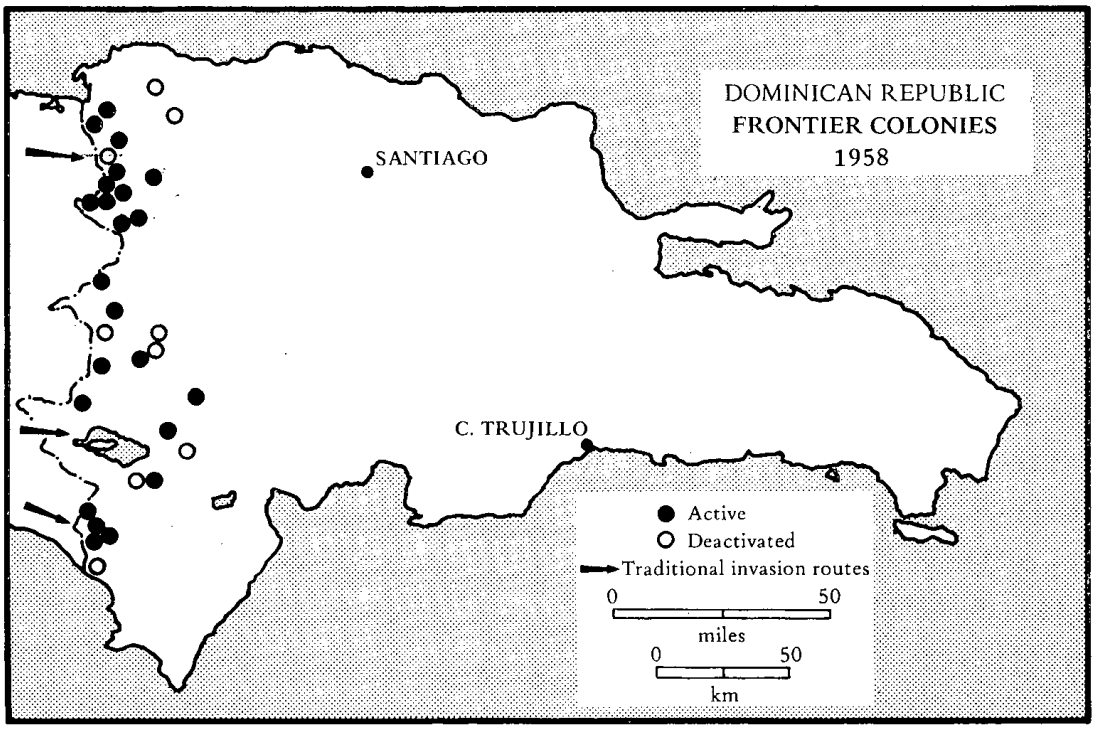

FIG. 8—Dominican frontier colonies in 1958. Note concentration astride traditional invasion routes from Haiti.

Isolation, an important factor in orienting the frontier to Haiti, was overcome by the construction of an excellent network of highways that connected the border region with the Dominican core areas in the Cibao and the southern coastal plain. As a result, no settlement was more than a few hours by motor vehicle from the capital. The new transportation facilities were not only instrumental in the transformation of the landscape and in the economic and political integration of the border, but also, one suspects, they were planned to facilitate military reinforcements to the region, if necessary.

Efforts were made to increase the total population of the border region and to hasten the economic development of the frontier. Various means were employed to achieve these goals, but chief among them was the agricultural colony (Fig. 8). At first colonization made use of military and penal personnel and their dependents, but these measures proved insufficient, and a much broader program of colonization was undertaken. A strip of land ten kilometers wide parallel to the international boundary was set aside for settlement, and as of 1960, numerous settlements had been established. Significantly most of these were concentrated astride the traditional invasion routes from Haiti. The importance that was attached to the colonization

scheme may be judged from the liberal inducements of the government-aid program. Settlers were given land, houses, tools, work animals, and cash subsidies, as well as liberal tax exemption. In addition, because much of the frontier is subhumid to semiarid, the government constructed numerous irrigation works that began to change the economy of much of the region from grazing and marginal farming to more intensive agriculture.[12]

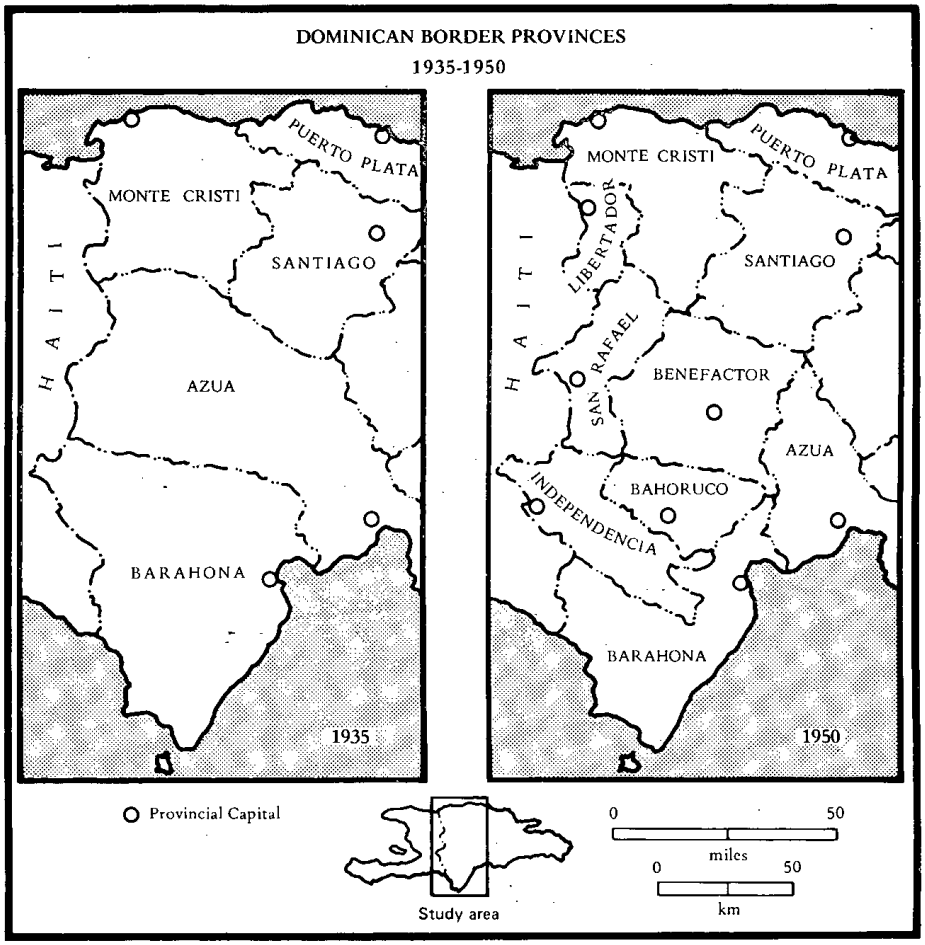

FIG. 9—Changes in size, nomenclature, and capitals of Dominican border provinces between 1935 and 1950.

Still another step taken in the nationalization drive was to reduce the size and to increase the administrative efficiency of the Dominican provinces bordering on Haiti. In 1935 the Dominican frontier zone was included in three large provinces (Azua, Barahona, and Monte Cristi) whose capitals were removed from the border both by distance and by economic interests (Fig. 9). The administrative center of Azua was more than seventy miles from the international boundary, and that of Barahona was only slightly less. The provincial capital of Monte Cristi was closer to the border, but its northern coastal location and orientation made it little concerned with the western frontier. By 1950 three new, substantially smaller and more manageable border

[12] Thirty-seven of the 111 irrigation projects completed between 1937 and 1960 were located within twenty miles of the Haitian border. These frontier projects irrigated more than 100,000 acres of land.

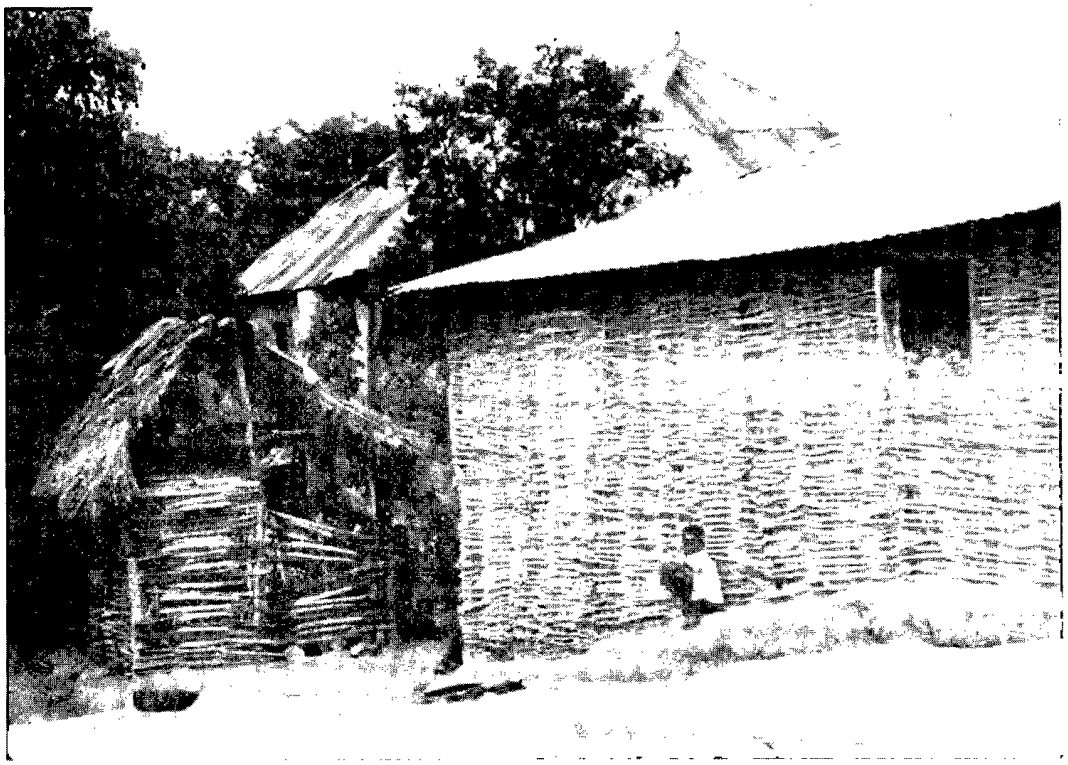

FIG. 10—Haitian frontier village, 1960. Note contrast with Dominican border settlement shown in Fig. 11.

FIG. 11—Dominican border settlement, 1960.

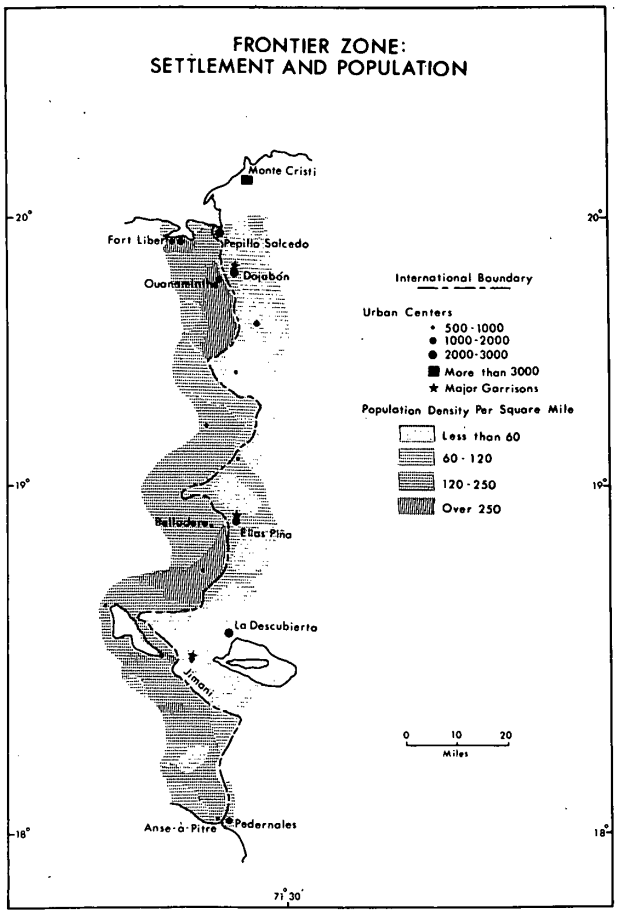

FIG. 12

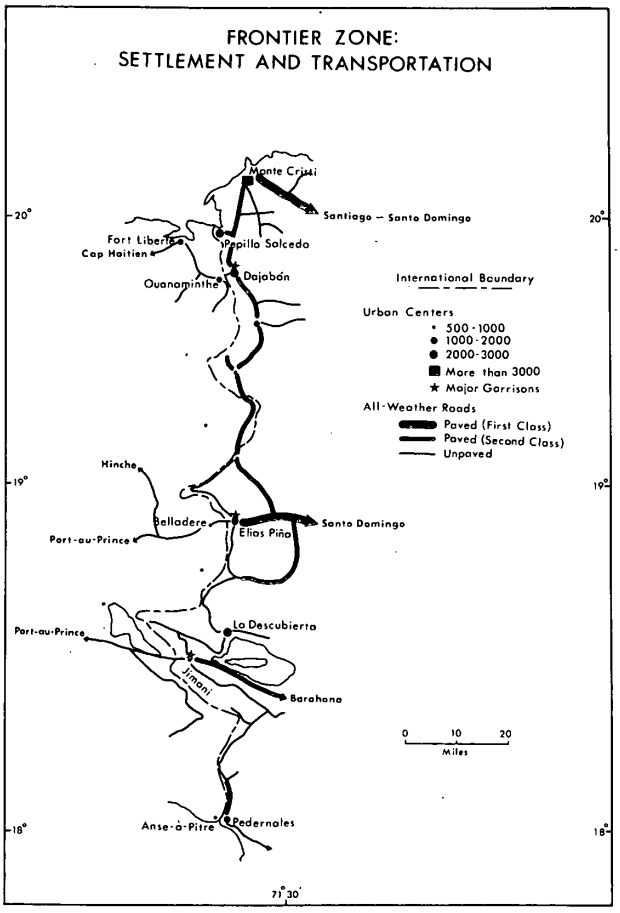

FIG. 13

provinces had been established, and in each case the town designated as provincial capital was at or near the international boundary. In addition the place names were changed to conform to the spirit of nationalism. The new frontier units and adjacent provinces were christened with names such as "Independencia," "Libertador," and "Benefactor." Hundreds of public buildings and dozens of settlements were given the names of Dominican patriots, famous battles, and other symbols of national suggestion.

Finally capping and insuring the "national look" of the frontier was a strong military and police establishment. Virtually every settlement in the region had its garrison, and every approach from Haiti was closely guarded. At first the border provinces were under the direct administration of military governors. Civilian governors later became the rule, but they continued to work in close coordination with the military commanders of the zone.

My reconnaissance in 1960 revealed that Trujillo's policy had transformed the frontier into a showcase of Dominican progress and national identity that none could mistake for the Haitian patterns across the border. The international boundary between the two countries was consciously honed into one of the sharpest political and cultural divides in the world. This was abundantly apparent to the geographer attuned to landscape changes (Figs. 10 and 11). To elaborate on a few of the more important contrasts, the Dominican sector of the frontier zone was far more urbanized than the Haitian, both as to settlement and function (Fig. 12). In addition to garrison and administrative roles, the Dominican border towns functioned as service centers for rural areas that produced rice, peanuts, vegetables, and other cash crops. Contrast was apparent in the density and the quality of the all-weather road network (Fig. 13). On the Haitian side, there was not a single, paved highway. In fact, the only stretch of paved road was a small section of the international highway that edged into Haiti, and even that was built by the Dominicans. Although the Dominican border population increased fairly rapidly in the period between 1935 and 1960, it was still well below that of the Haitian frontier zone. In 1950 Donald Dyer placed the total population of the border communes at 75,000 on the Dominican side of the boundary and 250,000 on the Haitian side.[13] By 1960 the Dominican total stood at 125,000, while estimates for the Haitian communes indicated approximately 390,000 people.

These and other visible contrasts that placed the Dominican Republic in a more favorable light vis-à-vis Haiti served nationalization well. By constantly emphasizing the superiority of Hispanic cultural tradition and Dominican symbolism and by sharpening landscape contrasts along the border, Trujillo's policy of nationalization helped to destroy Haitian influence on the frontier. The Dominican peasants, even those who were obviously black, came to feel ashamed of any association that smacked of Haitian origin. Patois was no longer spoken, at least not in public; the practice of voodoo became a crime; and public denunciation of the Haitian connection became a duty.

To all intents and purposes the nationalization policy created a closed frontier between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Trade across the international boundary, which under any circumstances would be small, was all but nonexistent. Al-

[13] Donald R. Dyer, Distribution of Population on Hispaniola, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 30, 1954, pp. 337–346.

though the seasonal importation of Haitian labor, which was cheaper than Dominican workers, continued, the movement was subject to stringent regulations. There was virtually no other legal movement of people across the boundary.

Dominican Postmortems and Implications for Latin America

By making use of his absolute political power, by spending large sums of money, and by playing on the traditional fear and hatred that Dominicans habored for Haitians, Trujillo was able to achieve at least a few of his nationalization goals. There is little doubt that his policy successfully intensified the Dominican national identity and effectively integrated the borderlands with the Dominican core areas. But Trujillo's policies did not erase the conditions that had helped to make the Dominican-Haitian frontier a historical zone of violent confrontation. On the eve of the dictator's death, the emphasis of the contrast between the two border zones, the closing of the border to the movement of people and commerce, and the intensification of Dominican national consciousness under his nationalization policy may have actually exacerbated the political tension and the potential instability of the borderland on Hispaniola.

Developments since 1960 raise still further doubt concerning the effectiveness of the nationalization effort. The political turmoil touched off by Trujillo's death downgraded the importance of the frontier. The power struggle in Santo Domingo and Santiago siphoned some of the military strength guarding the frontier. In the late 1970s the Dominican military presence along the frontier was still conspicuous, but less so than at the height of Trujillo's regime. Although there was no wholesale exodus from the border provinces, the rate of Dominican population growth was sharply reduced. With reduced government subsidies and supervision, some of the settlers in the agricultural colonies left for the cities or elsewhere. Among the departing were Japanese immigrants who had established themselves at the town of Pedernales and near Monte Cristi. The special cadres of teachers, missionaries, and other resource personnel were disbanded; the frontier schools are now considered the "Siberia" of the Dominican school system. Only the least competent or the problematic teachers are assigned to the schools of the area. Showcase border towns, such as Elias Piña and Dajabón, lost much of their luster as governmental concern for the frontier waned. In a letter to me dated June 16, 1976, Dr. Charles Palmer said of Elias Piña, "it now has the appearance of having seen much better days. The sewer and water systems malfunction, sidewalks are in poor repair, public buildings are run down. In short, it is not at all the model border town of the Trujillo era."

Even more important in the context of the aims of Trujillo's nationalization policy, the population pressure from the west is again being felt in the Dominican border provinces. There is evidence that Haitian "wetbacks," taking advantage of decreased surveillance, are again moving into Dominican territory. Some of this movement is seasonal and legal, coinciding with the *zafra*, or cane-harvesting season, in the Dominican Republic. In addition to the thousands of legally contracted Haitian laborers who are brought in to work for the sugar mills, there are many more illegal migrant workers who simply across the border in search of work. Many Dominican farmers along the border rely on Haitian workers who are paid approximately 50 cents a day. Even the gardens of Dominican military officers stationed along the frontier are often tilled by Haitian workers.

As a result of this renewed penetration from Haiti, the Haitian house that Trujillo declared illegal is again seen in the Dominican landscape. In at least some part of the Dominican border provinces, such as the mountains south of Elias Piña, an increasing number of people speak Spanish with a Haitian accent, and the Dominican frontier provinces are again becoming a zone of cultural overlap.

Significantly, despite the renewed Haitian penetrations, there was an actual easing of tension along the Dominican border after Trujillo. Normal trade and tourism between the Dominican Republic and Haiti were resumed in 1972.[14] Although the Dominican government is not expending large sums on public buildings, garrison towns, the frontier schools and churches, it is pushing ahead with economic development of the frontier, especially by the construction of irrigation works and hydroelectric production-plants. Equally significant were the efforts of the Haitian and Dominican governments to cooperate in frontier irrigation projects.

Although the Dominican experience is unique in many respects, it suggests at least three lessons that may have potential application in other Latin American frontier situations. First, the precise delimitation of international boundaries may be desirable, but intense nationalization policies of frontiers is not the answer to ease friction in border regions. On the contrary, by intensifying national consciousness such policies contribute to the intensification of political tension and to possible instability along frontiers.

Second, when there is a substantial difference in population pressure and living standards between two adjoining countries, it is all but impossible to block the flow of legal and illegal migrants from the higher population pressure to the lower. If the Dominican model is valid, no frontier can be made completely impermeable to the penetration of people driven by poverty and hunger. Nor is large-scale explusion of illegal aliens the answer. Third, perhaps the most effective approach to ease frontier tensions is through cooperative rather than adverse relationships between national governments. Cooperative ventures such as road construction, irrigation works, electrification schemes, and other joint programs that will benefit people on both sides of the border may ultimately cost less and achieve more than nationalization.

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[14] Pedro M. Casals Victoria, El comercio entre Haiti y la República Dominicana, *Eme Eme,* Vol. 1, 1973, pp. 57–66.