

Edward Paulino. *Dividing Hispaniola: The Dominican Republic's Border Campaign against Haiti, 1930-1961.* Pitt Latin American Series. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016. 304 pp. \$27.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8229-6379-0.

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The year 2017 marks the eightieth anniversary of the 1937 massacre of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent at the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Orchestrated by the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, the “Parsley Massacre” was a covert military operation designed to ethnically cleanse the border of Haitians and exert the Dominican state’s control over the region. To cover up the systematic slaughter of an estimated fifteen thousand people (p. xv), Dominican soldiers were instructed to use machetes instead of firearms—which is why the massacre is known in Spanish as *el corte* (the cutting) and in Kreyòl as the *kout kouto-a* (the stabbing)—and Dominican civilians were forced to participate in the killings. In the aftermath, the Dominican state refused responsibility for the massacre and simultaneously effused anti-Haitian rhetoric and instituted policies to *dominicanize* the border. As Edward Paulino explores in *Dividing Hispaniola*, the 1937 massacre and Trujillo-era anti-Haitian ideology have shaped Dominicans’ understanding of the Dominican nation and its relation to Haiti for generations.

Dividing Hispaniola is a history of the Dominican state’s border-making project and the institutionalization of *antihaitianismo* (anti-Haitian ideology) within Dominican society. Paulino re-

jects the idea that the Dominican Republic has forever faced the threat of Haitian invasion. He explores the top-down process by which this myth came to dominate common understandings of Haitian-Dominican relations among Dominicans. In the first part of the book, Paulino demonstrates that various factors, such as colonialism, slavery and marronage, trade, and anti-colonial resistance defined the border region and Haitian-Dominican relations prior to 1930. He argues that *antihaitianismo*, while always present within Dominican society, was not an official policy of the Dominican state until the Trujillo dictatorship (1930-61). In later chapters, Paulino shows that Trujillo, the Dominican government, and various sectors of Dominican society enacted *antihaitianismo* as a policy in order to consolidate state power; regulate the border; and whiten the Dominican nation through genocide, forced removals, and relocation of Dominicans to the border.

Paulino argues that the 1937 massacre and its aftermath are both an example of state-orchestrated genocide and a morbid reminder that the Dominican state could never fully control the border nor its hybrid culture. In characterizing the border as a semi-autonomous contact zone, Paulino joins a host of other activists, scholars, and artists who have written about the rich culture of

the Haitian-Dominican borderland and have contested Trujillo-era historiography steeped in *anti-haitianismo*.^[1] Paulino's contributions build especially on Lauren Derby's and Richard Lee Turits's work on the border and the 1937 massacre. ^[2] Throughout the book, Paulino demonstrates that the border region's fluidity generated social, cultural, lingual, and economic ties between Haitians and Dominicans. He describes the familial and friendship bonds between people living in border towns, and explains that all borderland dwellers were affected by the genocide and subsequent *dominicanization* process despite their ethnic backgrounds. Paulino concludes that the Dominican government's intentions were not to destroy economic trade between the two nations but to disrupt the rich hybridization of people and cultures in a region that eluded complete state control.

Dividing Hispaniola is organized in six chronological chapters. The first chapter introduces the border region through a historical lens that spans from the pre-Colombian era to the early twentieth century. In the second chapter, Paulino examines the US occupation of the Dominican Republic (1916-24), white Americans' racist attitudes toward Dominicans and Haitians, and Trujillo's rise to power through the US-backed Dominican National Guard. The third chapter provides detailed information on the 1937 massacre and the Dominican government's response to international pressure. The fourth chapter focuses on the state's *dominicanization* of the border, while the fifth chapter centers on the proliferation of state-sponsored *antihaitianismo* within Dominican society. The book culminates with a short sixth chapter on Dominican census data and the erasure of Dominican blackness in official records from the late nineteenth century to the present.

Paulino makes his greatest contribution to Dominican historiography in chapter 3, in which he presents original ethnographic work and new

archival sources on the 1937 massacre. In the first part of the chapter, Paulino analyzes interviews that he conducted with border residents in 1998. The interviews provide rich descriptions of the massacre from the perspectives of the people who were most affected: Haitians who fled the genocide and Dominicans who witnessed or participated in the killings. Paulino's Haitian informants recount how they survived by hiding in fields and fleeing across the border. Some tell of the aid they received from Dominican friends. The most revealing stories come from Dominican interlocutors who explain their role via compliance or active participation in the massacre. They describe how they accounted for the number of people they killed and what was done with the bodies afterward. While horrific, these testimonies demonstrate that traditional accounts of the massacre are incomplete. For example, the claim that only machetes were used to murder Haitians is not completely accurate; shotguns were distributed to Dominican farmers and used as well. This fact provides further evidence that the massacre was a calculated genocide. In the second half of the chapter, Paulino examines the international response to the genocide and the Dominican government's negotiations over monetary compensation with Haiti. His use of the Vatican's secret archive reveals the important role that Papal Nuncio Maurilio Silvani played in negotiating a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Paulino concludes that all parties involved were more concerned about stabilizing relations between the two countries than providing an indemnity to the victims' families.

In subsequent chapters, Paulino continues his analysis of the Dominican government's border campaign. The main arguments about the *dominicanization* of the border (chapter 4), the proliferation of *antihaitianismo* (chapter 5), and the official erasure of blackness in census data (chapter 6) are not new. However, in each of these chapters Paulino offers original analyses of the multiple state-sponsored activities and institutions that en-

acted these processes. For example, in the fourth chapter, Paulino examines how the Trujillo government created new border provinces, renamed border towns with Kreyòl names, established agrarian colonies (made up of prisoners transported to the border), replaced traditional *bohios* (huts) with wooden and cement homes, and cracked down on contraband in order to *dominicanize* and control the border region. The Catholic Church also participated in the *dominicanization* process by sending priests and nuns to the border region and instructing parishioners in religion, patriotism, and personal hygiene. Despite these activities, Paulino demonstrates that Dominicans continued to cross the border to visit Haiti after 1937. In the fifth chapter, Paulino further examines mechanisms of *dominicanization* on the border, such as the education of border children; the emphasis on literacy, Spanish-language instruction, and hygiene in border schools; and the government-sponsored meetings where bands played European and Dominican music as a form of propaganda. The insight Paulino provides on these state-driven mechanisms balances the already well-established critique of Trujillo-era ideologues, such as Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, in the beginning of the chapter. In the sixth chapter, Paulino's analysis of census data provides a historical perspective on Dominican racial categories and the government's efforts to whiten the population through official nomenclature. Paulino concludes that the *indio* racial category—which replaced “mulatto” during the Trujillo dictatorship—has ironically made Dominican society less black *and* less white, as *indio* has “replaced them both as meaning Dominican in everyday conversation” (p. 158).

Paulino's innovative contributions in chapters 3 through 6 outshine the first two chapters of the book, which present historical summaries of the Haitian-Dominican border and the US occupation. The first chapter lays out the geography of the border and border relations from the precolonial era to 1907. The multi-century periodization

results in a superficial analysis of the dynamics between the post-1844 Dominican state and the border region, particularly in the period after the War of Restoration (1863-65). Only a few pages are dedicated to the Liberal Dominican intellectuals who shaped understandings of the Dominican national character during and after the dictatorship of Ulises Heureaux.[3] More analysis of the Heureaux period would have strengthened Paulino's argument. Like Trujillo, Heureaux was a military general and Dominican dictator of Haitian descent. Given these parallels and the fact that Heureaux also used fear of Haitian invasion to garner support for his regime, more work could have been done to bolster Paulino's claim that the Trujillo era was distinct from the late nineteenth century. Similarly, in the second chapter, the triangular relationship between Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the United States could have been explored further.[4] While Paulino states that white Americans viewed Dominicans as slightly better (i.e., whiter) than Haitians, this understanding was tempered by the fact that white Americans still categorized most Dominicans as nonwhite racial *others*, as evidenced by Americans' racist attitudes toward Dominicans during the US occupation and the practice of sending African American US consuls to the island in the 1880s and 1890s.[5] A greater emphasis on Dominican elites' campaign to “whiten” the country in the purview of the United States and other Western powers would have further demonstrated the endurance of anti-black sentiment and *anti-haitianismo* among Dominican elites and revealed the continuity between the nineteenth century and the Trujillo era. Far from undermining Paulino's argument, highlighting the continuity between the two periods would have enabled Paulino to expose what was indeed unique about the Trujillo period: ethnic genocide and a border campaign against Haiti.

The significance of Paulino's work is that it evidences the many ways that the Dominican state attempted to *dominicanize* the border dur-

ing and after the Trujillo dictatorship. In the process, Paulino reveals the multiple sides of the border region—the geographic, political, racial, economic, and cultural factors—that at times divide but more often unite Haitian and Dominican border residents. During the 1937 massacre, thousands of lives were lost, familial and friendship bonds were broken, and generations of Haitians and Dominicans were forever scarred by the Dominican state’s anti-Haitian policies. Yet, as Paulino and others have demonstrated, despite persistent *antihaitianismo* in Dominican society, the Haitian-Dominican border region remains a fluid, multicultural space, where continued exchange between Haitians and Dominicans undermine the Dominican government’s violent nation-building tactics.

Notes

[1]. Examples include: Lauren Derby, “Haitians, Magic, and Money: Raza and Society in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands, 1900 to 1937,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (1994): 488–526; Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones: A Novel* (New York: Soho Press, 1998); Richard Lee Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (2002): 589–635; and Samuel Martínez, “Not a Cockfight: Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations,” *Latin American Perspectives* 30, no. 3 (May 1, 2003): 80–101.

[2]. Derby, “Haitians, Magic, and Money”; and Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed.”

[3]. Teresita Martínez-Vergne, *Nation & Citizen in the Dominican Republic, 1880-1916* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1-24; and April Mayes, *The Mulatto Republic: Class, Race, and Dominican National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 1-35. Both Martínez-Vegne and Mayes offer in-depth analysis of Liberal Dominican intellectuals’ thoughts about *dominicanidad*.

[4]. Lorgia García-Peña, *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 3. García-Peña argues that the Dominican Republic holds a geographic and symbolic space between the United States and Haiti.

[5]. Silvio Torres-Saillant and Ramona Hernández, *The Dominican Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 22. The authors claim that the African American consuls were sent to the Dominican Republic because Americans considered Dominicans to be a people of color.

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