

Gift Book Still Riles Dominicans

By Lewis H. Diuguid

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SANTO DOMINGO—When Juan Bosch chose exile from the Dominican Republic in late 1966, he carried aboard the plane a copy of the then newly published book "Overtaken by Events." It was handed to him by U.S. Ambassador John H. Crimmins.

The careers of both men have been affected by that book. Its author is John Bartlow Martin, who described in astonishing detail his involvement in Dominican affairs as U.S. Ambassador before and during the seven-month presidency of Bosch in 1963.

Bosch was deposed in a coup despite Martin's efforts. He had a chance to return to power in a countercoup in 1965, until the Marines landed. He lost the subsequent election and decided to go to Spain.

When Bosch read the book there, he was enraged. He soon commenced to write violently anti-American articles that culminated in his book "Pentagonismo," now available in translation.

When other Dominicans read Martin's book, they also were scandalized, especially those whose most confiden-

tial conversations were quoted. Many declared then that they would never again speak to the Ambassador for fear of showing up in a sequel. To this day, Crimmins is said to encounter frosty reactions to his predecessor's recollections.

Most Dominicans and Embassy officers questioned about the book describe it as a blatant breach of faith and an indictment of noncareer ambassadorships generally. Martin was a writer before he was called by President Kennedy. (A similar ruckus arose in Kenya when William Attwood, a former Ambassador there, wrote a post-tour book.)

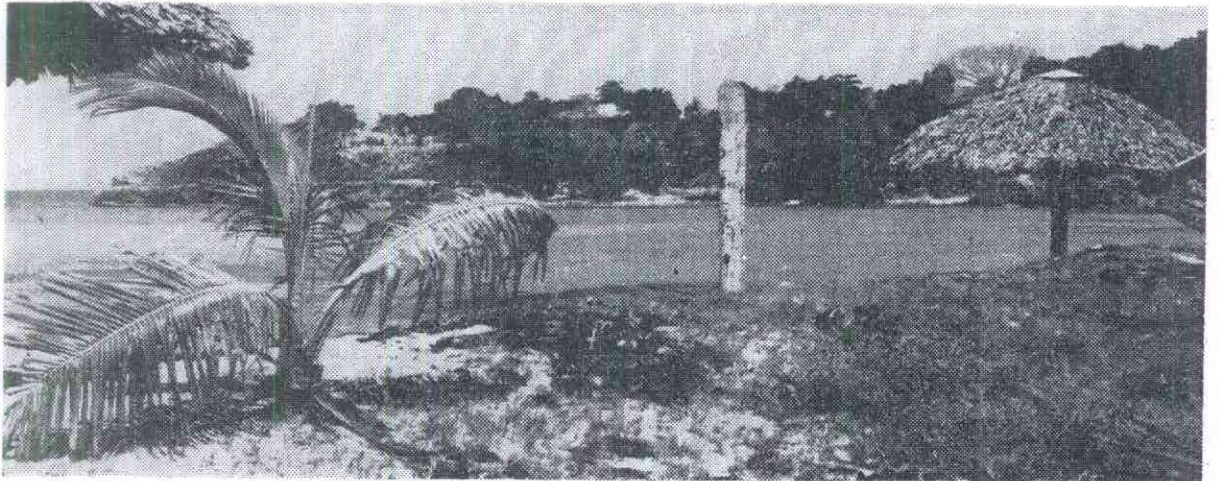
Actually, few Dominicans seem to have read Martin completely, though most politicians have looked up the indexed references to their names. Many of them, while outraged, add in awe that Martin must have carried a tape recorder. Martin said in his preface that he took detailed notes each day, and it is clear that from the outset he foresaw a book.

The few readers both familiar with the Dominican Republic and without a bias feel that the book describes with remarkable accuracy the politics of chaos here.

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Letter From Santo Domingo

A Gift Book Riles an Island



By Lewis H. Dluguid

The beach at Sosua is one of Santo Domingo's finest, though few tourists ever see it. John Bartlow Martin, one of whose books stepped on some Dominican toes, lives in one of the houses across the cove.

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Ironically, Crimmins is said to have given Bosch the book because the mercurial former president—himself a professional author—seemed to come off relatively well in it.

Bosch clearly didn't think so, and some observers even credit the incident with ending any possibility of an American-Bosch rapprochement. The Marines doubtless had something to do with that, too.

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A Jewish Refuge

THOUGH BOSCH has yet to return, Martin is here now—at his vacation cottage on the north coast at Sosua. The little town with a lovely beach is a story in itself, and just as Martin described it in "Overtaken . . ."

Sosua was founded by Jews who accepted dictator Rafael Trujillo's offer of land to refugees from the Europe of Hitler. The town's wooden houses and neat stores are laid out along curving streets in a most un-Latin pattern.

But assimilation and emigration and, some say, governmental neglect are taking their toll. The original town of Sosua may well end as have so many Dominican institutions: abandoned ruins rather than living contributions to society.

Any hope for Sosua surely lies in its beach and the green water splashing over the reef. Dominican dreams of tourist income usually include it, and Long Beach just to the west.

Hotels are being built there, and the entrepreneurs talk of an airport to accommodate international travelers. But for now, the beaches are five hours overland from Santo Domingo, which itself has failed pretty thoroughly to attract tourists.

The Hotel Embajador has a small, steady trade of foreign businessmen. The rare free-spending American tourist is likely to bed down on the top floor, which also contains the residence of the country's Vice President.

Even on a weekend, there are nearly as many attendants as players in the hotel casino. The croupiers tend to look nervous rather than bored, however, and their cuffs are frayed.

If the Mafia really had notions of attracting tourists by building casinos on Anguilla, it missed a better bet in Santo Domingo. In fact, the papers here often rumble of Mafia incursions from New York or Puerto Rico, and perhaps they occur. But one Dominican at the table said, "We can't even attract tourists. How could we attract the Mafia?"

A more popular peccadillo than high-stake card games is smuggling. The government places prohibitive duties on luxury imports to prevent dissipation of foreign exchange, but the citizenry takes this as a challenge. The lust for tourist dollars sometimes abets the cause.

One recent racket runs this way: Puerto Rican "tourists" arrive with piles of luggage filled with high-style wardrobes. The tourists leave the next day; the luggage shows up on the market a bit later.

Martin's book describes Dominican smuggling in its most insistent form, when it is taken up by the military. The occasion was the American call for solidarity during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis:

"Two Dominican ships became the first to join the U.S. on the quarantine line, cheered wildly on departure. They soon developed trouble and limped into Puerto Rico, where we spent about \$100,000 repairing them and paying the crews—Dominican officers had pocketed the subsistence money sent by the Dominican government. We installed some 300 light bulbs in the ships; the crew promptly stole them. And, returning to Santo Domingo, the quarantiners smuggled in 82 refrigerators duty free."