

TRUJILLO REGIME CRUEL, RUTHLESS

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Dominican Dictator Ruled
30 Years—Barred Free
Press and Free Speech

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For three decades beginning in 1930, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina ruled the Dominican Republic with a regime that was cruel, efficient and ruthless.

An adventurer who was trained as a soldier by the United States Marines during their occupation of the country, which ended in 1924, he forced his way to the top and became dictator.

His regime tolerated no effective opposition, no free press, no free speech. Opponents were repressed by terroristic methods.

Shortly before 10 P.M. May 30, 1961, a chauffeur-driven limousine sped down a lonely coast road toward San Cristobal. Its only passenger was Generalissimo Trujillo. A 1958 Chevrolet moved out of the shadows and followed the limousine for two miles. In the Chevrolet were four men armed with automatics, carbines and a shotgun.

Suddenly, the Chevrolet drew abreast of the limousine, and the four armed men started shooting. As the chauffeur braked the limousine, the other car jolted forward, turned and stopped within 20 feet of the dictator's car.

Assassination Described

The driver of the Chevrolet was Antonio Imbert Barrtras, then 40 years old, who was known as a liberal and a fervent Dominican patriot. He was later to give the following account of the assassination:

"We four advanced, half crawling, half lying down. Trujillo by now was standing in front of the car. He screamed something, terror, I suppose. He had been wounded in the left shoulder by a shotgun charge.

"I was lying 10 feet from him. I aimed my .45 and shot twice. One bullet hit him in the chin. It knocked him sprawling on his back, and he must have died instantly. He never moved again."

Mr. James V. Stanton, Democrat of Ohio, who is chairman of a House subcommittee that is investigating the Central Intelligence Agency, spoke yesterday of "successful assassination attempts" that the agency had been involved in.

Sources familiar with the inquiry said that the slaying of Mr. Trujillo was one of those assassinations.

For his role on that bloody night, Mr. Imbert became a popular hero, and several months later, when General Trujillo's heirs were ousted from power, he was raised to the honorary rank of brigadier general. One of two survivors of a seven-man plot that ended the dictator's life, General Imbert served for a while as President of a five-man Dominican junta in 1965.

Among the reputed plotters of the assassination who did not survive were Brig. Gen. Juan Tomas Diaz and Antonio de la Maza, both of whom were shot in an exchange of gunfire with policemen on June 4, 1961. Three others were reported to have committed suicide. Another version was that they were captured and tortured to death.

Prime Example

General Trujillo was regarded by many during his long rule as the prime example of the Latin American military dictator. His regime presented a startling contrast between good and bad and material progress and political backwardness.

He was frequently embroiled in difficulties with other Caribbean countries. He charged that they helped Dominican exiles to plot against his regime. In 1937, his troops crossed the border and massacred 10,000 to 15,000 Haitians to stop Haitian infiltration of his country.

A revolution against his Government, instigated by exiles based in Cuba, was crushed in 1949 by the Dominican Army. A number of Dominicans were assassinated in New York after taking part in anti-Trujillo activities.

Two years after he took part in the assassination of Trujillo, General Imbert, in an interview, said of that action:

"It had to be done. It was the only way to get rid of him. Revolution was out of the question. He had all the arms."

Turnover of Regimes

After Generalissimo Trujillo's assassination, Joaquin Balaguer, named by the dictator as President in 1960, continued in that office until he resigned under pressure on Jan. 17, 1962.

Pending general elections, the country was governed by a seven-man council headed by Rafael F. Bonnelly, who was named President. He was succeeded by Juan Bosch in December, 1962. President Bosch was overthrown in September, 1963, and his regime was replaced by a civilian triumvirate backed by the Army.

In April, 1965, a revolt was begun by followers of former President Bosch and others, including Communists, but the new rebel regime was ousted a few days later by a three-man counterrevolutionary junta, which the following month, was succeeded by General Imbert's five-man regime.

As fighting flared in Santo

Domingo, 400 United States marines landed by helicopter on April 28, 1965, primarily, according to President Johnson, to save American and other lives. The United States forces were expanded to 24,000. At the urging of the United States, the Organization of American States sent in an Inter-American peace force, headed by a Brazilian commander. Former President Balaguer defeated Mr. Bosch in an election in June, 1966, and the foreign troops began their withdrawal. Less than a year later, in May, 1967, President Balaguer alerted his armed forces and the police to fight Communist terrorist activities.