Editors
Senior Editors
Mary Kay Vaughan and Barbara Weinstein
Associate Editor
Daryle Williams
Book Review Editor
Erick D. Langer
Managing Editor
Kathryn Litherland
Editorial Assistant
Sarah Sarzynski

Board of Editors
Kenneth J. Andrien, Ohio State University, Representative of CLAH (2002)
Romana Falcón, El Colegio de México (2003)
Stephen Haber, Stanford University (2003)
Catherine LeGrand, McGill University (2003)
Cheryl L. Martin, University of Texas, El Paso (2002)
Robert E. McCar, University of Minnesota (2002)
Laura de Mello e Souza, Universidade de São Paulo (2003)
Valerie Milholland, Duke University, Representative of Duke University Press
Cynthia Radding, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2006)
Ricardo D. Salvatore, Universidad Torcuato di Tella (2003)
Francisco A. Serrano, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2003)
Susan Seelow, Emory University (2005)
Enrique Tandeter, Universidad de Buenos Aires (2003)
Hermes Tovar Pincón, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá (2003)

Advisory Editors
Inga Claudinnen
Asunción Lavina (2002)
John J. Johnson
Herbert S. Klein (2006)
James Lockhart (2006)
Benjamin Keen
Stanley J. Stein
John TePaske (2006)
Emilio Vioni da Costa

Cover Illustration: Detail of “Brazilian Landscape with Anteater,” by Frans Post (c. 1612–65), reproduced in Brasilianische Reise 1817–1820: Carl Friedrich von Martius zum 200 (Munich: Hirmer, 1994), color plate 5.

HAHR

85:2

May 2003

Published in cooperation with the Conference on Latin American History of the American Historical Association

Articles
Still-Root Subsistence: Colonial Mangroves and Brazil’s Landless Poor
SHAWN W. MILLER 223

The Legal Revolution in Town Politics: Oaxaca and Yucatán, 1812–1825
KAREN D. CAPLAN 255

In the Shadow of the State: The Politics of Denunciation and Penury during the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1940–1958
LAUREN DERBY 295

Archival Report

Archival Research and the Program for Latin American Libraries and Archives DAN HAZEN 345

Obituary

Benjamin Keen (1913–2002) KEITH HAYNES 357

Book Reviews

General

Art and Anger: Essays on Politics and the Imagination and Imagining Columbus: The Literary Voyage, by Ilan Stavans, reviewed by Raphael Folsom 361

El espacio interrior de América del Sur: Geografía, historia, política, cultura, edited by Barbara Potthast, Karl Kohut, and Gerd Kohlhepp, reviewed by Jerry W. Cooney 363

España y América en una perspectiva humanista: Homenaje a Marcel Bataillon, edited by Joseph Pérez, reviewed by Louis Segal 365
In the Shadow of the State:
The Politics of Denunciation and
Panegyric during the Trujillo Regime in the
Dominican Republic, 1940–1958

Lauren Derby

Mr. Lucho Nuñez Soriano, the principal member of the tributary services of this city, has disappeared with about $1,300.00 which he received from numerous people for the renewal of identity cards licenses, taxes, etc., without a stop. . . . The people ask: What kind of office is this, that of errands or gangsters?

—Justo Franco, "Foro Público," 1958

The case of Central I.D. Office and the situation reigning among the employees must be resolved in a radical way. . . . [It] must be subject to removals, transfers, or dismissals of certain employees that have created a deep cancer in a department that in previous times had a great reputation. . . . Of the women, Mrs. Morató is called Her Majesty the Queen of Gossip because all day long she is antisocial and aspires to be director. . . . They accept anything in bribes, from money to nail polish. And on top of it all, they are loose mouthed and gossips.

—José Lorenzo Castro A., "Foro Público," 1952

Versions of this essay were presented at the American Historical Association meetings and the history departments of the University of California at Los Angeles, Yale University, and the University of Chicago, and benefited from the queries and comments of these audiences, especially those of Eric Roorda, Dain Borges, Friedrich Katz, and Gil Joseph. I am also very grateful for the extraordinarily rigorous and challenging commentary provided by the anonymous reviewers for HAHR, as well as Kathryn Litherland’s penetrating and adroit editorial hand. Julio César Santana and Andrew Apter inspired key aspects of the analysis; as my research assistant in Santo Domingo, Julio also helped collect much of the material on
I have been, and will be, not a silent admirer, but rather a proclaimer of
the wise ideas produced by your pinnacle of genius that extends like the
evangelical doctrines of the redeemer of humanity. From whence comes
my fidelity and loyalty to your person and your politics, which forms in
me a true religion.

—Elpidio Eladio M.

The power of rhetoric is demonic in greatness.

—Plato, Gorgias

This essay examines the politics and practice of official discourse during the
Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic, one of the longest dictatorships in
modern Latin America (1930–61). I focus here on two official oratorial genres:
denunciation, and a highly stylized form of “panegyric,” or praise speech, to
Trujillo that became pro forma in all public arenas by citizens and state officials
alike. These speech forms were most important in the capital of Trujillo City,
the central theater of government and Trujillo’s dominion, and most relevant to
the emergent public sector of state employees that resided there. This group
expanded more than fourfold under the regime and formed the basis of a new
urban middle class, particularly in the capital, by the 1950s.1 Denunciation and
panegyric were institutionalized in the Public Forum (Foro Público) column of
denunciation cited here. Special thanks to José Antonio Fiallo for generously sharing his
formidable collection of denunciations with me. My research assistant in Chicago, Brendan
Kiley, quantified the data as well as elucidated certain key categories of denunciation that
had escaped me. Research and write-up support was provided by Fulbright, the Social
Science Research Council, and the Newcombe Foundation.

1. Emelio Betances, State and Society in the Dominican Republic (Boulder: Westview
Press, 1995), 101. This emergent urban middle class still constituted a minority at this
time, when most the country was still rural and illiterate, but it grew considerably during
the Trujillo regime as a result of urban development and the growth of manufacturing, in
addition to state expansion. For more on the Trujillo regime, see Eric Paul Rectora, The
Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican
Republic, 1930–1955 (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1988); Robert D. Craswell, Jr., Trujillo: The Life and
Times of a Caribbean Dictator (New York: Macmillan, 1986); Roberto Cassí, Capitalismo y
Dictadura (Santo Domingo: Editora de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 1982);
and Howard J. Warra, Dictatorship, Development, and Disintegration: Politics and Social Change
in the Dominican Republic (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1975). All translations here are my own.

the newspaper El Caribe, the main organ of the Trujillo regime in the 1950s.
Some 5 to 15 letters of denunciation were published there daily from 1948 to
1961; a single accusation might be followed up with as many as 15 letters
in defense of the denounced individual that reestablishing his or her
credentials as a devout Trujillista via an exorbitant encomium to El Jefe. Foro Público pub-
lished a grand total of 4,000 such columns, and more than 30,000 letters in all.2

The largest percentage of the letters in the Public Forum was written by citizens
accusing civil servants of corruption, inefficiency, or improper conduct. This is
a surprising discovery, given the ironclad control over even trivial forms of dis-
sent during the regime and Trujillo’s emphasis on public order and discipline.3

Lipe Collado argues that “reputation death squads” from the official party of
the dictatorship, the Dominican Party, channeled local grievances collected via
intelligence reports into these public missives, although some were authored by
Trujillo’s cronies or official Fóristas under pseudonyms. Trujillo’s son Radamés,
for example, wrote under the nom de plume of Mexican revolutionary general

2. Lipe Collado, El Foro Público en la era de Trujillo: De cómo el chizen fue elevado a la
categoría de asunto de estado (Santo Domingo: Ed. Collado, 2002), 49. The column ran from
two to seven days a week. I am greatly indebted to Collado’s pathbreaking reading of
denunciation during the Trujillo regime.

3. This was not a “Dear Abby” column with a couple of letters in it. Up to 15
letters were published daily, many of which were not individual missives, but rather clusters of
denunciations and their face-saving responses (eulogy to Trujillo, self-defense, or defense
of others), for approximately ten years in the Foro Público column of El Caribe. Since each
denunciation generated on average five letters of apology, mise culpa, and self-defense,
most letters in the Foro were actually defensive, not accusatory. Moreover; since the letters
do not stand alone, but rather are in dialogue, one must really analyze the letters not
individually, but rather in clusters, as incidents or as “remedial interchanges,” to use
Face to Face Behavior [New York: Pantheon Books, 1967], 13; and Goffman, Relations in
worth and examined intensively three months of denunciations (Jan.–Mar.), finding that
the greatest percentage were citizen to civil servant accusations (21%), the: remainder being
citizen to citizen (16%), citizen to inspector (3%), or citizen to party (1%), with 5% miscellaneous.
In terms of content, the letters were primarily citizen complaints (31%) and accusations of
corruption (19%). Yet denunciation as a feature of the Dominican political
landscape was apparent both before and after the appearance of the Foro Público: see, for
example, the Union Civilta, a paper that emerged in the wake of Trujillo’s death in 1961 and
it chock full of denunciations. But the 1950s were the apex of its social and political import.
For a comparative perspective on denunciation, see Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gallay,
"Introduction to the Practices of Denunciations in Modern European History," Journal of
Pancho Villa. At times Public Forum accusations commenced in private letters of complaint directed to the Dominican Party that resulted in the dismissal of public functionaries, as explored below.

Denunciation and panegyric were also pervasive speech genres outside the press, although denunciation was elsewhere generally secret, appearing in private letters to the government concerning third-party infractions or anonymous allegations sent by mail directly to the accused (pasquines). Praise, by contrast, was highly public and a ubiquitous feature of the hundreds of civic rites and holidays staged in Trujillo’s honor. Scholars have seen denunciation as evidence of Trujillo’s authoritarianism. I suggest it should also be seen as a sign of the regime’s populism. Even if the accusations were edited or compiled in the National Palace, most originated in local concerns articulated via private letters or intelligence reports to the Dominican Party, and state officials could be censored or even replaced as a result of such citizens’ charges. The Foro Público was populist in another sense as well. It translated into print an oral genre—gossip and backbiting—that was especially characteristic of the mulatto lower middle classes in the Dominican Republic. This group—who, like strongman Rafael Trujillo himself, had been catapulted into positions of social and political power as a result of the regime—held a tenuous grip on their social positions, since they lacked the requisite wealth or family history necessary for legitimacy. The son of a mulatto cattle rustler, Trujillo had come to power through the National Guard, the constabulary force trained during the U.S. military occupation (1916–24), by means of a coup d’état rather than an election. The Foro mimicked a form of popular speech characteristic of the intense rivalry and status competition among “small big men”—one that was normally confined to small talk behind closed doors—and placed it squarely in public view. We can dismiss as patently absurd Trujillo’s macabre claim that the Foro—as an example of the freedom of the press and the responsiveness of government to popular grievances—revealed the democracy of the régime. Nevertheless, it still could have served as a populist technique that lent credence to his claim that his government was “born from the people and maintained by the people,” since both the content and the form of the Foro Público had deep roots in Dominican popular culture.

4. Lipe Collado, El Foro Público, 37, 47. Collado claims that Luis Alvarez Pina, Paine Richardo, and Max Uribé were important writers, compilers, and editors of the Foro Público; they were also major Dominican Party chiefs and functionaries (p. 47). Since the identity of those operating behind the scenes at the Foro was a highly guarded secret, there is little way of corroborating this, however.

5. I discovered several caches of intelligence case files in the Dominican Party papers located in the Archivo General de la Nación, in Santo Domingo, a few cases of which I was able to follow up in the Foro; see the Partido Dominicano, Junta Central Directiva, Informes Confidenciales, Informes Presidentes de Juntas y Correspondencias, 1941–42, 1946, 1947, 1950, 1951, and 1952. Special thanks to Eddy Jáquez for his remarkable assistance in locating these materials. I examined more than one year’s worth of denunciations from the Foro Público and four groups of Dominican Party confidential reports from 1942 and 1951, as well as a few more that I discovered scattered elsewhere in the Dominican Party papers. I am thus analyzing in tandem arguably two very different sources, and thus forms, of denunciation; however, these two streams were actually part of an even broader phenomenon that included pasquines, private anonymous denunciatory letters that individuals would receive in the mail, and anonymous books (published by the government) denouncing individuals (for example, see Geronia Orozco: A Self Portrait [Trujillo City: Dominican Press Society, 1938]), as well as oral forms, such as Trujillo’s infamous tirades against his cronies in his inner court. A very interesting subset of denunciation and praise was written by Trujillo’s “pens for hire,” who wrote both praise and denunciation under their own names as well as pseudonyms. For panegyric, see Sandra Aiza, Trujillo: The Man and His Country (New York: Orlín Tremaine Company, 1939); and J. A. Osorio Lizarazo, Así a Trujillo (Buenos Aires: Artes Gráficas, 1936). Even U.S. senators and congressmen would be drawn into Trujillo’s whirlwind of praise and excoriation: for example, when they made favorable speeches about him and the country, such as John W. McCormack’s “The Dominican Republic: 25 Years of Peace and Prosperity” (Trujillo City: Edicció del Caribe, 1953). Americans could be denounced as well; see José Vicente Peppel, I Accuse Breiden/Ti acusa a Breiden (Trujillo City: Ed. Monalto, 1947). The use of English demonstrates that this literature was not intended for a Dominican audience. For a fascinating analysis of the behind-the-scenes career trajectory of one of Trujillo’s best-known paid sycophants, José Almoina Mateos, see Bernardo Vega, Almoina, Galilea y otros crímenes de Trujillo en el extranjero (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 2001).

6. Collado, El Foro Público, 36, is the only author I have found who contends that this may be the case, on the basis that 15% of the letters were to civil servants (41% of our data). In a classification based on accusation content, fully one-third we’re citizen complaints about government (the rest were corruption, political, class, sex, morals, and sorcery).


8. I am drawing upon Lipe Collado’s provocative and fascinating analysis, El Foro Público, for his argument about the Foro as a “monument of gossip”; see p. 65 and back
While the practice of denunciation has been seen as evidence of state domination, it was actually a more complex phenomenon. Even when the claims of a denunciation were patently false, they nonetheless “operated within a double field of belief and doubt,” defiling individuals through the selective revelation of public secrets and casting aspersions on the public honor of officials. Accusations of public malfeasance could be rebutted. More difficult to contest, however, were charges of amorality, such as those set forth in one accusation that decried “the personal and domestic disasters, the endless orgies, the habitual drunkenness, the welching of gambling debts, the bare-faced passing of bad checks, the broken homes and abandoned homes” that the accused, “a degenerate, a blackmailer, a traitor,” had left behind. Even if the accusations were unfounded, they were painful because of their conspicuousness in the national press and the fact that they left precious little space for what Erving Goffman has termed “the arts of impression management”—individual control over one’s self-image. The denunciations I examine here represent a liminal boundary where the public and private, and the state and civil society, crossed paths.

Denunciation and official praise fulfilled several important functions of state. They enabled citizens to take up certain state roles—such as policing the civil service—either by articulating their gripes or by simply observing the spectacle of shame that was the Foro. Indeed, when denunciation became institutionalized in 1948 in the Public Forum column of El Caribe, civil society was given an important role in this arm of social control or, in the words of the Dominican Party, “rectitude and morality.” Trujillo’s extension of systematic surveillance outside the police and intelligence apparatus through the creation of “inspectors,” or spies, created a “panoptical” regime in which no one escaped the purview of the state, and everyone was implicated. Once their findings were broadcast nationally in the Foro Publico, the entire nation was called upon to judge the crimes and misdemeanors of its citizenry and civil servants. It may have fostered a new consciousness of the self (to paraphrase historian John Brewer), as citizens pondered themselves or their acquaintances on the public national stage of the print media for the first time.

The effusive laudatory recitals of accolades to Trujillo, which contrasted with denunciations and are thus an important part of the picture, had several functions. These ranged from the popular use of ephemeral speech as a form of “investiture” to gain recognition and reap rewards such as contracts, jobs, or handouts, to the insinuation of negative criticisms within the very formulaic conventions of praise to the “Benefactor.” The heavily encoded language of official praise, rich in metaphor and imagery, could voice certain veiled criti-


12. While the literature on early modern Europe has problematized quite extensively the relationship between public and private domains (see John Brewer, “This, That, and the Other: Public, Social, and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Shifting the Boundaries: Transformation of the Languages of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe [Exeter: Univ. of Exeter Press, 1995], 1-21), the literature on modern authoritarianism tends to turn on a hard and fast boundary between the public and private, one which may be especially inaccurate for highly personalistic regimes such as that of Trujillo, Marcos in the Philippines, or Saddam Hussein; see, for example, the wonderful study by Mahé Bearean, *Making the Tamil Self: the Political Culture of Interwar India* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1997). The highly nuanced treatment of the culture of complicity in Syria by Lisa Wedeen, *Antiquities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), depends on a sharp divide between the state and civil society. For more on the “sultanistic” dictatorships as such as the Trujillato, see H. E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz, eds., *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998).

13. While I propose here that most denunciations wereinitiated by private citizens, Trujillo did found El Caribe newspaper and owned it from 1948 to 1954, which is why the Foro Publico has been attributed exclusively to Trujillo himself; it is said that it was designed to “bludgeon Trujillo’s friends and foes alike, with anonymous slanderous missives written at the National Palace” (Germán E. Ornea, *Trujillo: Little Caesar of the Caribbean* [New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1958], 318). See also Bernard Dieudier, *The Death of the Great* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978) and Joaquín Balaguer, *La palabra de Dios* (Santo Domingo: Ed. Taller, 1985). “Rectitude and morality” was part of the epigraph of the Dominican Party.


isms of Trujillo through allusion or even oblique parody. Thus, while both speech forms ultimately fulfilled hegemonic functions for the regime, they did so through the medium of individual agency, and at times contradictory messages simmered under the surface.

The literature on authoritarian regimes has assumed a direct correlation between actual violence and what Guillermo O’Donnell has called the “culture of fear.” It has thus neglected certain forms of symbolic domination that were important to the quotidian experience of terror during regimes such as the Trujillato. Most studies of cultures of fear have focused on genocide, ethnocide, civil war, or bureaucratic/authoritarian contexts where disappearances were a daily reality, brutal repression was a commonplace, and entire social groups were crushed. Certainly, the dramatic expansion and deprofessionalization of the military and police under Trujillo contributed to unprecedented levels of violent, if sporadic, excess—such as the use of arbitrary incarceration and torture as a preemptive strike against the formation of political opposition. Waves of general repression did occur after the 1949 and 1959 coup attempts, and toward the end of the regime as Trujillo’s health declined and his control faltered. Indeed, repressive measures were eventually successful inasmuch as they exported all effective antiregime mobilization to exile communities in Havana, New York, Port-au-Prince, and, to a lesser extent, Caracas. Moreover, everyday life during the Trujillato was characterized by pervasive insecurity and atomization as an ever-expanding apparatus of espionage developed, which by the 1950s rivaled the formal political apparatus itself in organizational strength. And in 1957, when Johnny Abbas García was placed at the helm of the newly formed Military Intelligence Service (SIM), a body that centralized and coordinated the various intelligence operations that previously had operated in an overlapping honeycomb, the regime sank to new levels of savagery.

What is striking about the Trujillato is that while the culture of terror was deep and pervasive, in comparison to other authoritarian regimes, relatively few Dominicans were actually killed by state violence until the final years. Aside from the atrocious 1937 Haitian massacre, in which some 15,000 Haitian border migrants were brutally slaughtered, political scientists Jesús Galindo noted the relatively low levels of actual Dominican deaths by official repression. Certainly, in part this was because official assassinations were always reported as mysterious unsolved “accidents” or random crimes in the press. Nonetheless, the culture of fear was strikingly asphyxiating—or all, although the middle-class residents of Santo Domingo suffered perhaps more than most due to the fact that the capital city was the central hub of police and SIM intelligence gathering, as evidenced in the ubiquitous sinister black Volkswagen beetles—the official SIM cars. Unlike Haiti under François D’Alibert, for example, the experience of terror was not relegated to a particular class fraction. And unlike Argentina during the Proceso Militar, the state enemy was never clearly defined, and thus no one felt entirely immune from potential repression. The sense of subordination and a fear of potential arbitrary punishment was generalized throughout society, although it varied in kind from the provincial interior to the urban professional class of the capital. What accounted for the acute and generalized culture of fear under the Trujillo regime? Why did denunciation emerge in the postwar period as a dominant mode of political competition and control? These are the historical questions that my analysis of denunciation explicitly addresses.


18. Crosswell’s, Trujillo, 331–33. The 1950s, of course, also saw the rise of the SIM, the secret police; yet scholars have focused on this to the exclusion of denunciation and the rise of lower-level forms of policing through the inspectors, which were more quotidian and intimate means of social control that, in policing behavior and not just politics, may have had a deeper impact. For more on formal structures of repression, see Wiarda, Methods of Control.
The Politics of Denunciation and Panegyric during the Trujillo Regime

The truth value of the charges was not the most important factor determining whether or not the allegations were actually believed. Since in most cases there was no way of determining the actual facts. Moreover, the context was characterized by what one scholar has termed a "poetics of opacity." The secrecy surrounding the true authorship of accusations probably amplified the resultant fear, as the circulation of rumors echoed and amplified the perceived circuits of power. Not only was Trujillo's inner court shielded by a veil of concealment that created a deep rift of social distance between them and the majority, but the identity of second-tier regime partisans was often masked in ways that tended to augment their perceived potency and influence. An example of this is the bizarre case of José Almoina, who while denouncing wrote a book extolling Trujillo, and a play in the name of Trujillo's wife, María Martínez. This created shock waves of gossip about him at a time when he was in exile and officially invisible. What is more, while in his exile of shame, he received $12,000.00 for the book, making him the highest paid griot of the regime. As Vicente Rafael has said, "Rumors... work by separating seeing from believing." Indeed, denunciation wreaked havoc by doing just that: forging ruinous hearsay of unknown provenance and unlikely veracity that was believable only by virtue of its everyday style. Denunciation worked by creating the illusion

---

20. In 1903 I conducted over 75 hours of interviews with individuals in the capital city of Santo Domingo concerning the Trujillo period—what it meant for the country, themselves, and their families.

21. Jesús de Galindo, The Era of Trujillo: Dominican Dictator (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1973), 137. Wiarda also privileges "thought control" in the totalitarian excesses of the regime, claiming that the Trujillato was "one of the tightest dictatorships the world had ever seen." See Howard Wiarda and Michael J. Kryzhanivsky, The Dominican Republic: A Caribbean Crucible (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1983), 36–37. As Hylton notes, labor was a focus of repression after the strikes of 1942 and 1947, when the regime sought to root out oppositional sentiment and banned the Communist Party; see Jonathan Hylton, The Struggle for Democratic Politics, ch. 2.


23. The case of Américo Lugo falls into this category, although certainly there are also stories of intellectuals who were killed after being denounced, such as Ramón Marrero Arísty, who was killed in the wave of repression following the 1950 coup attempt; see Vega, Unas desventuras, 248. For a personal account of denunciation written by a prominent forista and owner of El Caribe, see Germán Ornes, Trujillo, 194–200 (although Ornes had the personal resources to emigrate to the United States after his "fall from grace" and thus did not suffer the full force of social ignominy).


---


that there was a responsible agent behind it and that there existed a space outside of dissimulation and subjection. As Timothy Mitchell has argued in another context, the regime operated less via a system of terror than one of fear generated through insecurity. Denunciation gave gossip an official imprimatur and created the illusion that the accused were actually at fault.30

The Trujillo regime invented neither panegyric nor denunciation. Both discourse genres have deep roots in Caribbean popular oratory, as well as in nineteenth-century Dominican regional caudillo politics. Panegyric and denunciation are elaborations of a popular culture of masculinity and its resultant ritual idioms of deference and defamation, of honorifics and profanation.31 Public accusation was also a staple of nineteenth-century political discourse, and newspapers from the period are rife with pugnacious reproof of state iniquity, corruption, and irregularity, or personal attacks on individual honor often involving unpaid debts, theft, or allegations of influence peddling among politicians and state representatives. As in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, Nazi Germany in the 1940s, or even China during the Cultural Revolution (via wall graffiti), denunciation was chiefly aimed at local state authorities and their incompetente.32 However, given the stakes involved in leveling accusations against the public honor of prominent local notables in this small, face-to-face society, such allegations were primarily anonymous so as to avoid disrupting the structure of trust undergirding interpersonal relations. The use of pseudonyms in the press was extremely widespread, even when the actual names of certain prolific or popular authors were an open secret, in order to avoid direct insult or confrontation and thus conform to a culture of deference that required protecting the public “face” or honor of reputable persons. Anonymity enabled the public expression of grievance while conforming to rules of deferential avoidance, in a context where political positions were inextricably tied to specific individuals and family lineages, and their participation in historical events.33

31. Lauria, “Respeto,” Religio,” 63. On gossip and the quest for reputation in the Caribbean, see the classic accounts in Wilson, Crab Ancest; and Abrahams, Man-of-Words, esp. chap. 5.
33. The prevalence of pseudonyms is evidenced in Emilio Rodríguez Demenori’s 280-page volume listing the true authors of the multitudes of anonymous Dominican

However, the nineteenth-century Dominican newspaper did not yet hold a monopoly on the formation of public opinion. It competed with other popular forms, such as “décimas” or “coplas,” poetry that was typically recited in parks and colmados (corner groceries) and sold in single sheets in the marketplace. These public poems aired popular or factional complaints about official corruption or ineptitude and were also anonymous. Décimas were “popular” insofar as they were memorized, repeated, and adapted by the public at large; yet particular poets did achieve fame for their lyricism, trenchant political satire, or unabashed adulation of politicians, generals, or strongmen. Particular décimos could also become spokesmen for particular parties or politicians. In fact, late-nineteenth-century “order and progress” dictator Ulises Heureaux sponsored the most influential bard of the 1890s, Juan Antonio Aix, to compose verse in his favor as a form of political propaganda. Aix wrote “servile praise” for whatever would provide him recompense: governors, provisional governments, generals, “friends,” Haitian revolutionary leaders, newspapers, even esteemed Dominican gentlemen in New York City.34 Décimas were considered more effective in swaying public opinion than other printed forms, which were frequently liberal in persuasion and had a very small constituency in this highly illiterate society. Nineteenth-century Dominican newspapers were typically blatantly partisan, depending on state or party subsidies for their existence, and openly acrimonious.35 Thus, even “anonymous” published denunciations were identified with particular political persuasions.

However, the meaning of the public denunciation changed under Trujillo, since it was widely perceived as emanating from the National Palace and thus carrying official weight; from a sign of partisanship, it became an insignia of state.36 If, as Judith Irvine notes, “defamation is fundamentally an audience effect,” institutionalizing denunciation in the press brought the entire nation to hear on the purported moral improprieties of the accused and thus dramati-
cally increased the scalding impact of the accusations. As it became officialized, denunciation became a key technique of rule during the Trujillato, one that channeled popular grievances against official abuse, while keeping the civil bureaucracy in check. Yet, this form of punishment must be seen as having a “complex social function”; one in which social control was achieved through mechanisms that were intimately linked to repression but not merely reducible to it. This is why, ironically, denunciation could ultimately become an avenue for resistance as well as hegemony.

Even if Trujillo actually intervened at times in these circuits of accusations, it seems highly unlikely that most were drafted in the National Palace. Sheer numbers aside, the content of many denunciations focused on minor figures in particular hamlets and was simply too local for the state to have invented. Clearly, the invisible hand of an editor was at work at least in selecting those to be printed, or at most, as Lipe Collado contends, in actually crafting denunciations from party inspectors’ intelligence reports. If the latter scenario was the case, however, these were compiled from popular sources; most were not drafted freehand in the National Palace, as is the popular impression. Only one genre of denunciations—those accusing individuals of being communists or political enemies of the regime—appear to have been actually planted by the National Palace, but these are a minority of the total published. Even if the culture of denunciation ultimately served Trujillo’s interests by generating factional strife within the civil bureaucracy that checked the formation of rival political cliques, I argue that denunciation derived from the particular political sociology of the regime, not Trujillo himself, even if it was Trujillo who created the structure in the first place. Denunciation thus belies approaches that assume the dictator’s centrality in all areas of policy making under statist regimes of this kind. In re-creating the state bureaucracy, Trujillo forged what Weber called “a power instrument of the first order,” yet one that could not remain entirely within his ironclad control.

The Shadow State

Trujillo financed an enormous horizontal expansion of government through the creation of the official Dominican Party, a process that did more than merely redistribute political capital in the form of state jobs and enforce the regime’s structure of domination. Founded in 1931, the party quickly came to be the prime nexus of articulation between the state and the political subject, with a mass membership of approximately one-half of the country’s population. The


41. Not only the nature of the highly local grievances, but the sheer volume of material, would have been very challenging for someone to invent. The group of denunciations that I assume were least likely to have been planted by the regime were citizen to civil servant accusations regarding inefficiency or corruption, frequently from isolated rural hamlets. The group most likely to have been planted by the regime would be the political accusations—the accusations of being unfaithful to Trujillo’s cause, of being “indifferent” to the regime, or of being a communist (i.e., that a person has traveled frequently to Russia or Cuba—which was virtually impossible during the Trujillato, as travel outside the country was strictly controlled and passports were nearly impossible to obtain). Such political accusations represented only 14% of the total that we examined in depth. For more on denunciation and political crimes under the regime, see Bernardo Vega, La vida cotidiana a través del Archivo Particular del Generalismo (San José: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1986); 13: Vega, Unos desafectos; and Vega, Control y represión en la dictadura Trujillista (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1986).

42. Having scanned denunciations from 1954 onwards, my impression is that the percentage of political denunciations—accusations of communism or lack of loyalty to Trujillo—does increase towards the end of the regime, which may be why many argue in hindsight that this was the case for the entire decade of the Foro. Since I could only observe the outcome of denunciation cases in the confidential Dominican Party papers, which w is a small percentage of the total I surveyed, I cannot venture a guess as to what percentage Trujillo actually intervened in. I can say that whether or not he intervened followed no rhythm or reason I could discern, and that he clearly delighted in surprise—which may be why it was not the rich and famous but rather the poor and abject who most frequently lucked out. The Dominican Party papers indicate that the complaints were channelled up the party chain of command, from the local level to the junta presidents to the party president—who, being a close crony of Trujillo, most likely provided the dictator with his selection of cases. The best study of the fate of denunciation cases is Vega, Unos desafectos, but he focuses on individuals with name recognition—individuals who collabo rated or opposed the regime, intellectuals, and people from prominent families. Thus this sample is not representative of either Dominican society or most denunciations.


44. This estimate is from 1930; see Galindez, Trujillo, 131–52. For more on the expansion of governmental and party bureaucracy under Trujillo, see Bancel, State and Society, 100.
party provided a mass base to a regime that at the onset did not receive support from the traditional elite, who spurned Trujillo for his lowly origins. From the perspective of the populace, party membership became synonymous with citizenship itself, since the party card (called the pañoleta for the party’s palm tree symbol) was fundamental to access everything from jobs to bus service, in combination with the cédula and the voter’s registration. (These three pieces of identification together were nicknamed los tres golpes, “the three blows.”) An extension of Trujillo’s person, the party coordinated and planned civic ritual, “civic reviews” (revistas cívicas), and dispensed official charity in his name so as to, in its own words, respond to the “urgent need to create a citizen consciousness submissive to the principle of authority.”

44 Trujillo also financed a dramatic expansion of the structure of government; by the 1940s he had created 17 new ministries and other state agencies, all told resulting in a fourfold expansion of urban professionals as the state came to employ a full 15 percent of the labor force. The number of university graduates had also expanded threefold by the 1950s, thus augmenting the number of middle-sector professionals, especially in the capital city.

State expansion thus not only aided in the consolidation of Trujillo’s political control but also helped form a new status group of party functionaries who were, in economic terms, middle class, but who had the social capital of a new elite, a form of “state nobility.”

One Barahona senator described the social structure of his province as effectively divided into two parts: “professionals, businessmen/traders, and industrialists” forming an “upper class” that held a “middling economic position, some culture, and a certain morality,” and a lower-class majority that was composed of workers, day laborers, and so on.

This bifurcated vision was in part a legacy of the weak and regionally fragmented bourgeoisie that existed in the period preceding Trujillo’s rise to power, a strata that was only really consolidated through the state during the Trujillato. Note

47. Francisco Barón González, Barahona Senator, “Report on Provincial Conditions,” 23 June 1939, Partido Dominicano, Junta Central Directiva, Correspondencia (from the Archivo General de la Nación, Santo Domingo, hereafter PD, JCD), exp. 13. This lack of convergence between the economic and social boundaries of class is noted in Hoetink, The Dominican People, chap. 8.
how professionals are accorded a special status as the sole group not defined primarily by socioeconomic position, but rather by their access to "culture," as if sufficient culture translated quite directly into social capital. One indication of the social prestige ascribed to party representatives is the fact that in 1949 skilled foreigners feigned to be party members. Even a cemetery inspector had not a small measure of status. During the depression, the vogue of professionalism could be explained as a result of rural poverty and desperation, but after World War II, import substitution meant that Dominican farmers thrived as a result of strong primary commodity prices. Party membership was more than empty status signaling; it was a quest for the protection and political capital to be found under Trujillo's mantel. The creation of a new professional class of party functionaries and civil bureaucrats helped offset the influence of the traditional rural elite (typically white landowners or cattle ranchers) and offered a means of social climbing for mestizos.

With their national affiliation, constituency, and distinction, party functionaries were a novel sort of local intellectual. They represented the "nexus between domination and public discourse," as brokers whose power appeared to lay in their ability to define the nation to the region and vice versa; however, they drew their authority from their social position as state delegates, and not from the content of their ideology. As such, denunciation was a particularly appropriate medium for expressing the ambiguities of social position and identity of this interstitial group, since it represented the "intermediate space between the society 'below' and the state or the authorities 'above.'" In this way, as Colín Lucas characterized it, denunciation "lies along the fault line dividing those who find themselves in tension with the state and those who see some of their own identity in the state; it marks the division between a state that is 'externalized' and one that is 'internalized' by the citizens." 50

48. Manuel A. Goyco, Hija, to Pino Pichardo, PCJD, 5 Feb. 1949, PD, JCDC, exp. 5. Of course, this also indicates that the party was a crucial gatekeeper during the regime.
49. Steven Feierman, Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 5. They were not unlike the colonial literatos so wonderfully described in Angel Rama's The Lettered City, ed. and trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1996), with the important caveat that they were not true elites and had no property; they had nothing besides their title and social position as party delegates. For more on interstitial brokers in other contexts, see Claudio Lomnitz, "Provincial Intelectuales and the Sociology of the So-Called 'Deep Mexico,'" in Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: Interpretations of the Sentiments of the Nation (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2001), 163–86.

The Politics of Denunciation and Panegyric during the Trujillo Regime

Trujillo accorded respectability to the expanded middle class forged by this new party bureaucracy by officializing it with the trappings of professional identity—such as uniforms or responsibility for official organization and speechmaking. The basis of traditional forms of clientelism was more limited, since the exchange was based primarily on tangibles—land use for a portion of the harvest and occasional political support or other acts of loyalty, rather than the signs of status that Trujillo awarded his bureaucrats for their loyalty. The violence of the Trujillo regime was therefore largely symbolic; insomuch as its beneficiaries were rewarded primarily through recognition and the fear of its withdrawal rather than direct material reward. Unlike traditional forms of clientage, the social position of these new middle-class bureaucrats was based as much on distinction from the masses as it was on identification with a powerful patron. 52

The social category of party functionary built upon new forms of professional identity, such as the figure of the civil servant that had emerged in the 1920s with state formation and the rise of urban culture. The novel El hombre de piedra contrasts the modern state bureaucrat with the traditional caudillo, both in terms of style and in styles of political identity. 53 The character of Ricardo Cuesta is a new modern bureaucrat, employed by the Department of Public Works, who arrives in the town of San Juan de la Maguana as part of a road construction project. While much state activity during the 1916–24 U.S. military occupation was devoted to road construction, this association between the state and roads holds a deeper significance. Ricardo is the quintessential stranger, an alienated nomad who seems to hold no membership in a particular community, but rather goes wherever the state sends him: as one character observes, "He is that road"—unknown and unknowable. As the embodiment of the street, he is associated with money (his surname, Cuesta, translates as "cost"), which plays on the image of bureaucrats as corrupt and often "bought" through payoffs by whomever they work for. The street, of course, also invokes social dirt—"matter out of place" in Mary Douglas' terms—in this

53. Ramón Lacay Polanco, El hombre de piedra (Trujillo City: n.p., 1959); although this is a Trujillo-era look back at the civil servant of the 1920s and is inflected with a 1950s cynicism that would not be characteristic of the time.
case rootless individuals lacking a family lineage. This goes against traditional Dominican concepts of status, which must be grounded in a particular region: to “be somebody” you must be from somewhere. The street thus contrasts with home and patriline, and “new bureaucrats” such as Cuesta can be seen as like affines: tied to, but not of, the bloodline, with all the ambiguities of allegiance this implies.  

The enormous lateral extension of low-level state functionaries created a peculiar political sociology. I suggest that this helps explain the development of denunciation as an individual phenomenon in the 1940s and its transformation into an officially sanctioned, and even sponsored, practice by the 1950s, when the Public Forum column of El Caribe newspaper became an institution. In this case, the bureaucracy did not merely reflect, but also actively produced, a new social order. One aspect of state expansion was the creation of several parallel categories of public functionaries, from inspectors to party heads. This, in part, resulted from Trujillo’s desire to institutionalize policing mechanisms that could effectively check potential threats to his base of power. While inspectors (who drew their salaries from the party and were strongly associated with it) were entrusted with surveillance, party delegates were in charge of symbolic mobilization for the regime—choeographing the party functions, civic holidays, and Trujillista rites that proliferated during the regime. In contrast to the traditional provincial bureaucracy, these parallel networks’ vague set of jurisdictional responsibilities may have created a structural basis for competition with traditional local authorities. Since the invisible hand of the Foro was commonly a Dominican Party spokesman, one could argue that such party functionaries used the Foro and popular gripes to brandish the power of Trujillo’s shadow bureaucracy over the civil bureaucracy.  

The institutionalization of a shadow bureaucracy via the creation of the Dominican Party rearticulated the popular vision of the state. Drawing upon anthropologist Michael Herzfeld’s research on the sociology and culture of bureaucratic organizations, one could say that the traditional civil service came to be seen as the patriline, or male bloodline, of state power and the nation, while the far more amorphous, unpredictable, and dangerous party bureaucracy came to be seen as the affines of government. From below, the party was perceived with the same mistrust as in-laws or half siblings: as individuals with conflicting interests and allegiances, and whose line of access to the top made them capable of great danger. By contrast, the status and position of the traditional municipal staff was more firmly rooted in histor c ties of family, blood, and soil. Of course, this perception was reversed at the top. Because Trujillo’s control was more firmly established over the party bureaucracy (since its president was a close personal ally), the party was seen as more dependably reliable on the regime. As Herzfeld has said, “[A]rgentine kinship clearly provides the moral context for drawing the lines between concern and indifference, in-group humanity and collective inhumanity.”

In accord with Evans-Pritchard’s classic work on the subject, denunciatory accusations could be termed witchcraft in two senses: they represented apprehension created by perceived access to extrascriptual, illicit, or occult power, and they were generated by structural conditions similar to those of witchcraft. Finger pointing resulted from the ambiguous relationship between the state and the party, which was aggravated by structural tensions of dominion and inequality. Conflicts erupted into public view where institutionalized forms of social distance or other social buffers to contain a stagomnism were lacking. In Mary Douglas’s words, “If witchcraft beliefs seem to lie like static electricity activated by incidental friction in a social system permanently harbouring areas of ill-defined relationships.” In this framework, accusations served to clarify ambiguous sociopolitical boundaries, as well as to express resentment towards Dominican Party arrivistes who had salaries and political

54. Brackett E. Williams, Stains on My Name, 92–126; Mary Douglas, Parity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (New York: ARK Paperbacks, 1966); and Roberto DaMatta, Carnivals, Regimes, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma, trans. John Drury (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 63–67).  
56. Wiarda, Methods of Control, 79.  
57. It is significant in this regard that I discovered far more private denunciations of inspectors in the Dominican Party papers than I did in the Foro, where there was mediation by an editor.
clout that exceeded their perceived worth. In his study of sixteenth-century European witchcraft accusation, historian Peter Brown found that insecure court officials were chiefly responsible for sorcery charges. In the same way, Dominican Party representatives were thus prime agents, and at times targets, of admonishment. If by the 1950s the party had acquired a veneer of institutionalization, and thus legitimate authority, the vectors of accusation were a constant reminder that this was merely skin deep and that civilians were willing to put themselves at considerable risk to call the regime to task for its rhetoric of official probity. As Peter Geschiere has argued in his account of the circulation of sorcery accusations in Cameroon, the existence of a culture of symbolic infighting indicates, above all, that “power is an essential problem for these societies.” Thus, contrary to the view that denunciation demonstrates Trujillo’s ironclad control, it may well be that it also demonstrates quite the opposite: “a profound distrust and impassioned lust for power” on the part of those beneath him.

While functionalist explanations help elucidate the phenomena, they cannot explain it in its entirety, since although party-state tensions presumably existed from the 1930s on, it was not until the 1950s that denunciation became institutionalized. Certainly, the very fact that an open forum was created to air grievances across factions itself was an important causal factor. The creation of the Foro Público empowered citizens, since it appeared to include them in a new disciplinary apparatus that gave them the power to judge others, even while their participation in the Foro enabled the state to better police them as well. Thus what may have been experienced as empowering was itself a “technology of power,” or “mode of submission,” in Foucault’s terms.

However, in sketching the fault lines of status and faction that provided the context for denunciation, we need not reduce this complex, multicausal phenomenon into a mechanistic grid. Both functionalist and Foucauldian approaches give short shrift to individual agency and thus fail to account for the ways in which individual agents deployed denunciation—at times even consciously manipulated it—as a means to their own ends. In approaching denunciation as a structural response, these frameworks also neglect the expressive aspects of the phenomenon—the ways, for example, that the new political sociology was read in the racial imagination of Dominicans.

The symbolic representation of the state/party split as a division between blood kin and affines was reinforced by Dominican racial ideology. While race is an unmarked principle of social classification in the Dominican Republic, and thus is often “unseen,” it is intimately bound up with social class and serves to reinforce class difference. Indeed, one might say that race is embedded in class and serves as its primary marker. Since the civil service drew more heavily upon traditional provincial elites, who tended to be phenotypically whiter, it was seen as contrasting with the Dominican Party, which is an avenue of social mobility for the “little man” tended to be darker in hue due to the coincidence of poverty and blackness (or in this case, brownness). Thus, if the state bureaucracy came to represent an endogamous, neatly divided racial “order,” the party was the paragon of social “disorder” through race/class mixture. Hence, elites also mistrusted the party due to latent fear: regarding the figure of the mulatto, who was stereotypically perceived as a social outsider harboring resentment and potential violence: a poor man in high places who embodied in his very person the transgression of the race/class order. Indeed, this may have been in part what generated the many stories of Trujillo’s ritual humiliation of the upper classes in public. Fears of the shadowy bureaucracy were compounded by assumptions of mulatto treachery, just as the mystique of the party as an invisible source of power paralleled the mulatto’s presumed access to blackness, and thus magic. The party was seen as highly unpredictable and particularly dangerous due to its potential direct access to Trujillo (a mulatto with Haitian family links); it was a reminder of his characteristic rule breaking as opposed to what should be the rule making of state authority. To

---

63. Peter Geschiere, The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Other in Postcolonial Africa (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1997), 43. Thus denunciation could be termed part of the “infrastructures of the powerless,” even if it ultimately served to support the regime’s hegemony rather than resist it; see James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcendence (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), xiii.
64. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, esp. 22–24.
make matters worse, state-party distrust was even further accentuated by the very political structure that positioned the two groups as rivals governing the same terrain, symbiotically interconnected and contiguous, yet simultaneously at odds.68

Like illegitimate mulattos, party minions were perceived as precariously held in check by deferential rules of conduct due to their access to Trujillo. Their power was seen as laying outside of the moral economy that circumscribed individual advancement in favor of the group, since they could be promoted through intervention by Trujillo or the party president and thus circumvent the rules of bureaucratic advancement.69 Inspectors may have used public accusation as a means of self-aggrandizement, since as outsiders they were excluded from, and may have felt threatened by, traditional civil service patronage networks. Conversely, denunciation may have been the sole weapon available to most ordinary citizens who felt threatened by the extraordinary power inspectors wielded as confidential informers for the regime. Unlike the abuses of a traditional patrón, one could not bring collective networks or social pressure to bear against party inspectors, since they had potential access to El Jefe.

Yet inspectors piqued the ire of virtually everyone—not just the disenfranchised. They not only generated fear among the popular classes, they even threatened kingpins in the local governmental structure, since inspectors could use their links to the party authority structure, and thus to patrons such as Trujillo's surrogate, Party Chairman Paimo Pichardo, to challenge even high regional figures such as governors. Indeed, inspectors were denounced frequently, if primarily via private and presumably confidential letters to the party, rather than in the Foro. Civil servants may actually have had higher status in the traditional political structure, yet they had only their clients behind them. Political networks aside, the fact that party salaries were often more than three times greater than their state equivalents must have also provoked resentment against the Dominican Party on the part of local state administrators.70 As a result, state magistrates frequently treated local party authorities with deference.

70. For example, a Dominican Party secretary earned 60 pesos per month, while a secretary for the ayuntamiento made only 18 pesos.

The Politics of Denunciation and Panegyric during the Trujillo Regime

However, even though often villainized in the popular imagination, inspectors could and frequently did provide a check on the corrupt clientele redistribution of public resources to friends and family. Thus, at times they could be seen as serving the people's interests. One pharmacist, for example, was denounced by a sanitary inspector for appropriating and redistributing medical supplies to his friends and then fudging the records. He was accused of creating a virtual fiestón, drawing upon the help of his sister and a nurse to establish his own private medical practice within the hospital in true prebendalist fashion.71 Nor were such denunciations merely symbolic excoriations. This case resulted in the trial and removal of the offender, and his replacement through a direct appointment by the secretary of state. Ultimately, however, the Dominican Party did become its own autonomous avenue of patronage.

These new regional shadow authoritarians—the Dominican Party and inspectors—clashed structurally with the clientelistic underpinnings of municipal rule, since they could overrule local hiring decisions and the power to impose their own personnel on the provincial bureaucracy.72 His tension might be described as what Herzfeld calls "concealed segmentation," since the party and civil service were ostensibly supposed to work together, yet in practice were structurally competitive; this often meant that the two branches were constantly vying to "embody more perfectly the immanent qualities of the whole."72 In fact, the Dominican Party president could and did place anyone of his liking within the party bureaucracy, the civil service, and even state hospitals and did get involved with hires ranging from secretaries of state down to the most minuscule of posts, such as ministerial messengers and cleaning staff.73

This factional rivalry, of course, often put representatives of the two bureaucratic networks on a collision course, even if the party/inspector contingent usually won out in the end, since they could appeal to higher, national authorities closer to Trujillo. For example, in the pharmacy dispute discussed above, in his own defense the druggist contended that his denouncers were subordinates loyal to the secretary of state for sanitation, who may well have been in league with the network of sanitary inspectors to take advantage of their posi-

71. Señor Secretario de Estado de la Presidencia, Ciudad Trujillo, Asunto: Denuncia de irregularidades cometidas por el Encargado de la Farmacia del Hospital Padre Billini, expediente formulado, 21 June 1939, PD, JCD, exp. 13.
73. Paimo Pichardo to Secretary of State of the Presidency, Asunto: Solicitud de nombramientos, 2 Feb. 1940, PD, JCD, exp. 5.
tion to collect materials for their own benefit under the presumed protection of the shadow bureaucracy. The pharmacist also argued that—as the political Achilles heel of the hospital and without the protection of any powerful doctor in particular—he was frequently scapegoated for ineptitudes elsewhere. The druggist understood that his demise resulted from the fact that the pharmacy was a key spoil that needed to circulate among the various doctors’ sub-units. Certainly, the dramatic increase in the size of the civil service under Trujillo itself created tension between bureaucratic tiers, both by augmenting the social distance between them and by increasing competition over resources such as clients and state funds.

This type of interfunctional rivalry ultimately served Trujillo’s interests, since it checked the formation of local-level political configurations that potentially could challenge his monopoly on power. Yet the conflict itself was not of his doing, even if the regime was responsible for creating a bureaucratic structure that was predisposed to infringing rather than harmonious unity. Indeed, in the official ideology of the regime, no intrafunctional disputes were tolerated within the administration, and questionnaires that sought to root out personal antagonisms and maintain interdepartmental accord and quiescence were frequently circulated.

The tensions that resulted from “concealed segmentation” help explain denunciations from across the party–civil service divide. For example, in 1940 antagonism erupted between the governor and the party in Hato Mayor. Not surprisingly, the power struggle was expressed through the idiom of ritual. The party secretary had organized a major rally for Trujillo without inviting or even notifying the governor. Incensed at being upstaged not even by the party junta but rather a minor secretary (which he interpreted as an act of war), the governor denounced the party leader to the party president. Worse still, the rally was a disaster, and the governor feared that this poor turnout would reflect badly on him. Thus, his denunciation was partly an effort at preempting potential criticism from above. (Luckily for him, the national party president blamed the poor attendance on the alcaldes pedestres, or local magistrates, who were fired, since they were deemed to be ultimately responsible for the presence or absence of bodies at political rallies.) In the end, much to the governor’s fury, the Dominican Party president actually sided with the local party chief, who stated that there was no rule requiring party heads to seek approval from anyone other than Trujillo. This case illuminates the extraordinary power of the party bureaucracy and its capacity to surpass that of the traditional civil service. The fact that party personnel had so much power (due to their direct line to Trujillo) but had precious little concrete responsibility per se (since they had no formal jurisdiction or job guidelines) caused them at times to lord it over their colleagues in the civil service.

Similar party–civil service tensions were evidenced in a proposed project to build a bust of Trujillo; yet in this case the two wings of government worked together, rather than at loggerheads. Some 1,800 busts were built in El Jefe’s honor during the regime, often as a form of symbolic capital to attract Trujillo’s munificence in the form of public investment to a particular provincial municipality. However, in this case the party president tried to conciliate rather than antagonize party–municipal relations. A provincial party head suggested the project directly to the national party president, who sought to preempt this authoritarian usurpation of municipal jurisdiction by forestalling any further discussion until the governor had been apprised. These two cases demonstrate how within this “theatre state” political struggle was frequently expressed through symbolic idioms of rites and monuments; they also demonstrate through their opposite outcomes the lack of equilibrium between the state and party bureaucratic systems.

Combining equivalence and hierarchy, this party–civil service diarchy


75. This is clear in the questionnaire structure, which asked whether there was any “antagonism between Party members,” to which respondents were prompted to answer in the negative, perhaps because factionalism might indicate someone had “political aspirations” (see the 1940s reports, for example). It is important to stress that this factionalism was apparent only in the lower echelons of civil and party bureaucratic structure, since at the top the party, as Trujillo’s organ, was squarely under his control; as Moya Pena notes, once Trujillo’s approval was secured, the party even “elected” senators and deputies (The Dominican Republic, 375).

76. Paimo Richardo to Salvador A. Cocco, 17 Jan. 1940. The full expediente with further responses from Paimo and Cocco elucidates the event in detail.

77. Paimo Richardo to Enrique Apolito, PJCIP Sanchex, 30 Jan. 1940, PD. JCDC, exp. 5.

78. Clifford Geertz, The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980). Geertz’s “theatre state” derives power and authority from ritual and cosmology, rather than the other way around. Although somewhat reductive (reducing politics to ritual), the concept applies to historical kingdoms that have highly developed courtly ritual. Its relevance to all forms of government and political hierarchy is an issue of lively debate. See his conclusion, “Bali and Political Theory,” for the wider implications of his model. For a rich collection of essays on ritual and the state in Latin America, see Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico, ed. William H. Beetzley et al. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1994).
invited intrabureaucratic dissension. It also enabled Trujillo to both retain his above-it-all, sanctimonious air and to intervene from above in ways that reinforced his benevolent image. Amazingly, while the subaltern officials were squabbling, Trujillo (either personally or through his Dominican Party surrogates) actually did somehow respond to hundreds of party members' written solicitations for work, cash, or particular items such as artificial limbs, school books, tin roofs, or sewing machines (although key functionaries were graded with prizes such as a Chevrolet DeLuxe sports sedan). As with other forms of state patronage, Trujillo preferred to reward those who would be more likely to become reliable regime dependents. Thus, the more abject the solicitant, and the less likely to have a civic identity (such as landless tenant farmers, lumpen street dwellers, disabled or incarcerated individuals, and women), the more likely it was that a solicitude would be heard and responded to in kind. This is why a party junta leader from a tiny hamlet on the outskirts of the southwestern sugar town of Barahona had his prayer for a good hospital berth for his daughter answered; Trujillo ordered her to be interned at one of the very best hospitals in the country. Or why someone who had been thrown in jail for insulting a policeman—who in a missive to the Grand Benefactor claimed he had converted to Trujillo's cause—was actually released; as a result, he repaid his debt to Trujillo through voluntary party speeches extolling the virtues of El Jefe. Populist acts such as these recognized, by extension, even the lowliest of party junta leaders, whose status certainly did not lie in the prestige of their constituents, but rather in their relationship to the great charismatic center of power, Trujillo. Trujillo's "calculated arbitrariness" has been noted, but not how the "climate of fear and unpredictability" was paired with

an "extravagant generosity which personalizes transactons rendering them incommensurable."

Finally, denunciation as a political practice followed a logic of social leveling that must have been even more significant given the lack of alternatives for channeling popular grievances under the regime. In principle, anyone could bring charges against a high civil servant by public denunciation. Denunciation could be used to fight the sense of entitlement in which authorities, especially those from notable families, felt the license to do whatever they wanted. Thus, as with sexual harassment accusations today, it became a populist weapon for airing a whole range of subaltern grievances, from peasant dislocations to multinational company depredations, hidden injuries of caste and race, or local histories of abuses by powerful local agents of the state. In one case, a peasant had sold a plot of land to a Haitian, whose payments fell into arrears when he fled during the 1937 Haitian massacre. Yet when the seller approached the mayor for help, rather than assisting him, the mayor proceeded to steal the land. The mayor then challenged him to sue, which the peasant obviously could not afford. So he denounced the mayor instead. In another case, a young party messenger with a meagre salary of ten pesos per month was paid only very occasionally by his supervisor, until finally he became infuriated and lashed out at his supervisor; as a result, he was beat up and thrown in jail. As he put it, "Ah! So many things are seen by us, the miserable ones, in the interior towns... In the capital, Ciudad Trujillo, there you are, doing what you ought to be doing, but around here all you see are caciquillos [exploitive bosses]!" If honor represented the moral basis of hierarchy, denunciation on challenged a person's social position through claims of inadequate attention to the needs of subordinates. Such abuses on the part of local authorities against the disenfranchised were legion; for many, denunciation at least provided the possibility of a means of redress. Some charges were highly risky, since they called authorities' attention to misdemeanors or felonies that could bring the wrath of enraged authorities accused of malfeasance—such as accusations against the

80. The gift of the Chevy sedan was authorized by Trujillo himself to Isabel Mayer, senator from Monte Cristi, and was paid for with a party check in 1940 (PD, JCDC, exp. 5).
81. Paimo Pichardo to Dr. M. Guerrero Hijo, Director del Hospital Padre Billini, 23 June 1939, PD, JCDC, exp. 13.
82. Elpidio Eladio Mercedes to Trujillo. Of course, Trujillo's divine intervention didn't solve all of one's problems, as witnessed by one man who had been framed by local authorities and later released by Trujillo. He still had to face the wrath of the local politicians who had it out for him upon his release; see José A. Lara Ricardo to Trujillo, 12 Jan. 1940, PD, JCDC.
83. As Paul Sant Cassia has argued in another context; see his "Banditry, Myth, and Terror in Cyprus and Other Mediterranean Societies," Comparative Studies in Society and History 35, no. 4 (1993): 773-95. esp. 786.
84. José Ramírez, Neyba, to Trujillo, Feb. 1940. There are a surprising number of denunciations against the Grenada Company and complaints of peasant evictions in the Foro Público, grievances that must have taken not a small amount of courage to articulate to the press; see for example, El Caribe, Apr. 1938.
85. Julio A. Fela to Paimo Pichardo, Seybo, 3 Feb. 1940.
appearance of shantytown communities that violated immigration, sanitary, building, and housing ordinances.  

The terror of denunciation was that, ultimately, purported abuses would be subject to a highly arbitrary, closed system of inquiry that could result in dismissal, whether or not the charges were true. All this occurred in a context in which Trujillo's firms controlled 80 percent of industrial production and employed 45 percent of the labor force; thus more than one-half of the population was dependent upon him directly or indirectly. A falling-out with Trujillo could leave someone with nowhere else to go. And even if denunciation didn't result in the loss of one's job, it could result in the loss of one's "face" or public repute. Of course, at times charges were exaggerated or wholly invented, and denunciation resulted in a nightmarish witch trial for the accused. However, fabricated denunciations were also at times perceived as such and dismissed. In one such case, a cabal ceased their denunciatory letter-writing campaign, perhaps fearing retribution, after hearing through the grapevine that an official inquiry of their charges had begun.

Even if both bureaucratic networks were privileged in status, they paid a high price for their salaries and prestige. In exchange for status, they were subject to an intense regime of social scrutiny and control. Civil servants were constantly in the public gaze, potentially subject to denunciations emanating either laterally from the shadow inspectors or party bureaucrats who stood to gain by exposing the faults of others, or from below, from a disgruntled population. They were subjected to an incessant scrutiny of their whereabouts, leisure pastimes, and decorum. One functionary was denounced, for example, for getting drunk and having his wallet stolen, since such behavior was "unbecoming" to his position as representative of party and state. A deputy was attacked in the Foro for wearing a guayabera, a traditionally respectable dress attire for the tropics, but considered less formal than a suit and tie. Reports might circulate up the party chain if one was observed imbibing excessively or too frequently at a notorious tavern or gambling locale. And private disagreements or quarrels between public administrators received official notice from higher-ups. Even minor deviations from respectable comportment could result in denunciation. Yet if improper forms of leisure were sanctioned, other forms were enforced. Attendance at official parties was mandatory, and anti-Trujillistas had to come up with good excuses to avoid them. Under the regime, both civil and party bureaucracies were considered representative of the executive's person and could be subjected to disciplinary action for violations of decent demeanor.

Yet social control regulations were frequently out of sync with local realities and required a standard of respectability far exceeding that which Trujillo himself maintained. One example of this occurred in 1952, when legislation was enacted requiring public employees to reside with their legal families. Requiring a single domicile enabled more effective surveillance of civil servants, while at the same time it allowed them to control their constituencies more thoroughly. However, this did not square with the everyday life of these relatively affluent Dominican men, who were frequently either separated from their legal spouses, or married but actually residing with one or more "queridas": common-law mistresses that are widespread in the Dominican serial family system. The complexity of the Dominican family confounded higher authorities, as lower-level officials sought to explain and exculpate: their wide ranging familial obligations to rural wives, town girlfriends, and the children of both. Of course, restricting the mobility of public officials also expedited the mobilization of local civic rituals, since they were in charge of drumming up bodies for these events. Indeed, public officials were branded with a range of labels, such as "indiferente," for contravening official opprobrium by failing to participate actively or "enthusiastically" in public functions. Such accusations could then be passed along to the national party chief and result in further pressure from above. And those who were unable to muster up the requisite crowds could be in trouble (worse to those whose events suffered a downpour!), since quarterly reports containing attendance sheets were submitted regularly to the

91. See notes from Luis Alemar and R. Emilio Jiménez escusin; themselves from Trujillo's banquet at the Hotel Francés, 30 Jan. 1940, PD, JCDC, exp. 5.
93. For more on the official categories of opprobrium, see Bernardo Vega, La vida cotidiana a través del Archivo Particular del Generalísimo (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1986), 15; and Vega, Unos desafíos.
national party chief. During the Trujillato, citizenship required active and public participation by all; there was no place for spectators.

However, this is not to say that the all-too-frequent state rites did not encounter popular resistance. As historian Detlev Peukert has argued for Nazi Germany, the surface picture of mass popular consent dissolves under more careful scrutiny. Attendance at multiple public festivities was used as an excuse to shirk work responsibilities so frequently that some denunciations pleaded that only those public functionaries directly recognized by a particular holiday (such as Police Day, Sheriff's Day, or Teacher's Day) take the day off. However, in the interior—where attending such events took time away from farming or commerce—peasants and traders tended to have poor state ritual attendance, at least at everyday functions. Reports indicated that “morose and apathetic” behavior was commonplace. For example, one revista cívica in San Juan de la Maguana, to which some one thousand were “invited” (read: obliged to attend), attracted a “ridiculous” mere two hundred attendees. By 1940, even aldermen, police, and bailiffs were skipping town on days of official acts, much to the chagrin of the local alcaldes, who were accountable for these meager showings. And resistance to the “voluntary” financial contributions required to fund major festivals was such that even this became a topic of denunciation in the press.

Moreover, the moral economy of public mobilization was not always interpreted as intended by higher-level choreographers. If the regime saw frequent rallies and rites of allegiance to Trujillo as occasions for mobilizing symbolic capital, and also as tools for collecting information on dissent in the interior, popular motives were otherwise. Assistants viewed participation as an investment in the state that would later yield concrete rewards—be it a position, a raise, or alms to the needy. This was made quite clear in a letter from an aspiring young party member from San José de los Llanos, who complained: "My motive in writing for a position as Assistant Mayor [Alcalde Pedáneo] is because I joined the statistical team and I got no assistance. I joined the land-and-cattle census and I still don't; I am staffing the electoral tables, and I would suppose that in the Alcaldía I could at least get a certificate."

The Dominican Party needed far more than its local jefes to plan and staff these civic mobilizations. It required dozens of volunteers in many different capacities to create and channel symbolic capital for the regime. Indeed, the volunteers and rank-and-file state workers provided an important mobilizational base for the party. The party requested many kind of unpaid voluntarism from its regular staff—for manning electoral tables and showing educational films, to organizing poetry recitals or taking care of the orchestra visiting town for the 16th of August Restoration (Independence) Day celebrations. Speechmaking was a key component of all official acts, and the party recruited locals to participate. While the content was highly formulaic—the texts variations on official themes, the topics preapproved by party heads—participation in these rituals was hardly empty. Local intellectuals were not only recruited but also created by these events, and local social hierarchies were established by the ordering of speakers. In the interior, party functionaries were placed alongside primary school teachers as the most prestigious local figures (while teachers were frequently young women, party functionaries were most often men). The choreography of a party event in 1942 displays nicely the new status hierarchy of the regime: the local party head was accorded primary by opening the event, but the local primary school teacher was master of ceremonies.

By being appointed as authorized spokesmen for the regime, even volun-
teers were granted a special kind of community recognition at these ritual events, where they stood next to the regional governor, the mayor, the local chief of police, the local party junta leader, and the sanitation inspector. They were accorded a kind of parallel status, even if only for the day. Public speaking was also a channel for advancement through the party hierarchy. For example, small-town primary school teacher Leonicio Pieter went on to become a national figure first as a speech maker, and later as a propaganda writer for the regime.103

Even if their parents were peasants, in the moment of public appearance these party bureaucrats became instant, if temporary, professionals: “hombres decentes” distinguished by their neatly pressed, crisp white shirt and tie or guayabera.104 Thus party participation provided a mirage, but one that was desperately appealing in this predominantly rural society that greatly valued white-collar work as a status marker. To be a professional was to be cosmopolitan, to be associated with the world outside: for example, to shop at German immigrant Ernesto Weinschhitz’s “Palm Beach Store” on the smart downtown thoroughfare “El Conde,” instead of having one’s clothes sewn by a relative or local seamstress. Certainly, the traditional military dressed up as well on these civic occasions, wearing a white twill suit and a Panama hat, but the professional had the added cachet of being “letrado” (lettered), which connote urbanity and civilization itself.105 But clothes were even more important for the middle classes, being de rigueur for notaries and representing “capacity and dignity” for professionals.106 This is not to say, however, that it did not take a considerable amount of sacrifice for professionals to dress as “decendly” for their “mission” as they should. In 1940, one official wrote, “I have to go through the horrible ordeal of not being able to dress well—something of indispensable necessity having as I do to be present at official acts as a representative and sometimes to go to the capital.”107 Being a loyal Trujillista implied being a paragon of propriety and respectability, of having “miny buenos costum-bres,” as well as dressing as an impeccable civil servant, especially in the frequent official meetings, parades, and celebrations hosted by the party in the provincial townships and the capital. Indeed, denunciation, as a practice that exposed the private to the public gaze, may well have helped fashion the “exceptional consciousness” of being observed that made appropriate attire not just desirable, but even obligatory for the public sector during the Trujillato.108

Panegyric: Official Self-Fashioning and the Gift of Words

On January 20, 1940, Governor Cocco of San Juan de la Maguana wrote to the president of the Dominican Party to defend his own honor against the shame of a failed public rally: “[T]he gratitude for having given personality, honor, and benefits cannot be described with mere words, no more impulsive and grotesque gesticulations that, as insincere and disloyal, are worthy of scoffing and execration by those who due to their patriotism and conviction have entered with all their body and soul into the sublime work of perfecting and pondering the Grandioso and August cause of the Renowned Creator of our nationality. . . . Mr. President, I am a loyal, sincere, and unremitting friend of Generalísimo Trujillo . . . enamored with his glory and . . . a decided and fervent admirer of his cooperation.”109

If denunciation shamed by creating social distance from the dictator, this was corrected through idioms of praise that situated the subject as closely allied with Trujillo—as once again a loyal and fervent subaltern. Effusive praise oratory to Trujillo was a stock component of official protocol. Most observers have disregarded the sycophancy required of subordinates as merely a product of Trujillo’s megalomania, as a kind of political theater that individuals performed in ways that masked their “true” feelings and intentions.110 Yet while denunciation and panegyric are formally opposed speech genres, a skilled ora-

---

103. See, for example, Leonicio Pieter, Ciudad Trujillo: Transformación urbanística, social y política de la capital de la República Dominicana durante la gloriosa Era de Trujillo (Trujillo City: Impresora Arte y Cine, 1938).
104. Maricio Veloz Maggiolo underscores the importance of this uniform to the “hombres decentes” (decent men) in Ritos de Cabaret (vota la rítmica) (Santo Domingo: Ed. Taller, 1991), 13.
105. On the significance of clothing for the military, see Eric Roorda, The Dictator Next Door. For a description of a mulatto general dressed to the nines, see Miguel Alberto Roman, Gente de Portal (Trujillo City: Impresora Dominicana, 1953), 8. For the colonial significance of being letrado, see Ramos, The Lettered City.
106. F. E. Moscoso Puello, Cartas a Bencina (Trujillo City: Ed. Montalvo, 1941), 204.
108. I am drawing here upon Brewer’s “This, That, and the Other,” 15.
110. Robert D. Cranwell, Trujillo, 5. Novelist and cultural critic Maricio Veloz Maggiolo has also scoffed at these rites of subordination during the Trujillato as “formas de la ridiculez”; see his “Trujillo, la garra del Tigre,” Listín Diario, 3 Aug. 1997.
tor could make panegyric into a form of denunciation as well. This section considers the logic governing the rhetoric of praise to Trujillo. As James Scott has stated, "prestige is a relational good." It must be conferred by others. But even if prestige is the public face of domination, to lavish praise upon Trujillo was not to necessarily partake in his hegemonic project. Praise oratory provided an avenue for pursuing individual agendas as well. An example might be making reference to the "Dominican" Party in quotations, since it remained unclear whether the quotes were added by a someone who had learned to write in one of the regime's mediocre literacy schools and thus did so out of punctuation ignorance, or whether they actually wished to call silently into question whether indeed this party was of and for the nation, or Trujillo himself. Innocent interpretations, however, were not accepted when the caption of a photo of schoolchildren placing bouquets at the unveiling of a bust of Trujillo mistakenly substituted "tomb" for "bust"—an event that cost the editor his job.

Even if declarations of appreciation and obedience to Trujillo were obligatory, excessive praise to Trujillo could be seen as an insult: as cloying, self-serving, and insincere. The line between appropriate and inappropriate praise was frequently murky, dependent more upon the individual and circumstances than the language itself. One party president who said "he owed everything to the illustrious Father of the New Fatherland" was called "stupid and a braggart" (even though another writer said he served "God and Trujillo" without incurring a backlash in the press). The denouncer of Germán Ornes accused this former editor-in-chief of El Caribe of "being incapable of merely writing about Trujillo. He gushed, slavered, postured." Public criticism need not be direct. Some panegyric appears almost tongue-in-cheek in its effusiveness, such as Osorio Lizarazo's comments that "I have known and felt over me the effluvium of [Trujillo's] personality, that extends like an essential atmosphere over the entire country," a comment that could as easily describe Trujillo's claustrophobic domination as his personal aura.

"Silver-tongued orator" Joaquín Balaguer, one of the regime's most eloquent writers, used substitutionas a strategy for indirectly criticizing and satirizing the regime. In a form of ventrilocomilism, he could voice criticisms of the regime's ruthlessness through foreign commentators; he was safe as long as he did not utter the charges himself. Or Balaguer could say the unmentionable about Trujillo, as long as it was later negated. One of his most imaginative
desperate efforts at defending the honor of his wife, anti-Trujillista ma tyr and heroine Minerva Mirabal de Tavárez; albeit to no effect since both were later assassinated (Dr. Manuel Aurelio Tavárez, "Foro Público: Desmiente acusaciones," El Caribe, 29 Apr. 1958). For more on the Mirabal case, see Julia Alvarez, In the Time of the Butterflies (New York: Penguin, 1995).

117. Balaguer's rhetorical skills are described under the cover of the thinly camouflaged character of Dr. Mario Ramos in Vriisto Sencion, They Forged the Signature of God, trans. Asa Zatz (Willimantic, Conn.: Carbondale, 1990), 61. I wish to thank René Fortunato, who inserts in his film El poder del Jefe III a telling excerpt from Balaguer's speech to Angelita at the 1955 Free World Fair, which demonstrates Balaguer's use of heteroglossia. I also owe thanks to Julio César Santos, who brought to my attention this and other speeches by Balaguer that included critical commentary about the regime. Interestingly, neither the 1955 press, nor the dozens of volumes of Balaguer's speeches that were published during his over ten years as president, includes this one: speech.
118. A bold example is when Balaguer described the "black legion" of Trujillo in the Puerto Rican press: "[T]hey painted him as a devil with hands red with crime and black with exiles. They called his government a regime of force, an oppressor of the most basic rights, and they accused his methods of imposing decency and keeping suspicions of public fraud and temptation of embezzlement out of the state treasury, dictatorial" (Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo y su obra: Apuntes sobre la vida y la obra política de un jefe de estado [Madrid: Imp. Síeza Hermanos, 1934], 36). He could get away with this because he later described how he was once the journalist in question, after a visit to the Dominican Republic, recanted her views in a cable stating that "Trujillo was a gentleman, a prince, and a nobleman." He also went on to say that he was being used to voice denunciations, and neither were they exempt from them. The U.S. ambassador in Havana was accused of fomenting communism in the hemisphere, contrary to the interests of Juan Perón (Trujillo's ally) (José Vicente Peppel, I Acreve Braden).

113. Ornes, Trujillo, 197.
114. Dr. Apolinario A. Montás G., "Foro Público: Presidente JPD rectifica," El Caribe; and Francisco Montero, "Foro Público: Una respuesta infortunada," El Caribe, 23 Apr. 1958. As Montero continued, he invoked "the name of the Father of the New Fatherland merely to shield himself against judgment of his own work as a public functionary, not as how those affiliated with the Dominican Party must justify their actions and clarify their conduct." Tragically, "Serving God and Trujillo" was written by Manuel Tavárez in a
efforts occurred at the coronation of Queen Angelita, Trujillo's sixteen-year-old daughter, at the 1955 World's Fair of Peace and Confraternity—a state pageant that claimed roughly one-third of the year's national budget. Of course, this moment invoked the turn-of-the-century tradition of "juegos florales" for May Day, when female beauty contests were coupled with poetry competitions for men in which the poets would typically compose love sonnets commending the women for their virtues. Working within this idiom of the fabulous, Balaguer, who was then serving the regime as vice-president, applauded the wonders of Angelita's beauty, her charm, and her magnificent court, and then proceeded to speak in the subjunctive about the "tyranny of her dictatorship," using synecdoche to allude obliquely to Trujillo's authoritarianism. While it would have been inconceivable to describe the regime as tyrannical, making reference to Angelita's despotism squarely placed the comment in the realm of the marvelous, since her court was transitory, feminine, and entirely imaginary. It was sarcastic because no one, especially no woman, shared power with Trujillo. Thus his use of the term "tyranny" is striking, but it remained within the official code as a paean of praise to Angelita as beauty queen. Yet it had quite another meaning if Angelita stood in for Trujillo, which some observers understood to be his intention.

Similarly, Balaguer used substitution in other speeches to express his reservations about Trujillo's strongman style of rulership and exculpate himself from the barbaric excesses of the regime. An example from a 1952 speech describes nineteenth-century caudillo Pedro Santana as a "Judas of the Patria" because he sought to annex the country to the United States for a price, an act demonstrating his "abjection and servitude." He continued that "in the life of these contradictory men, virtue often alternates with crime, patriotism with ambition, honor with perfidy, and abnegation with sin." He then went on to describe Trujillo as having established an exception to this rule; nonetheless, the allusion through juxtaposition remains. Balaguer's characterization of the nineteenth-century Dominican caudillo casts a shadow on Trujillo, since Trujillo was often praised as a great "caudillo." Although Balaguer expressly negates the unfavorable comparison, Trujillo remains linked through a historical genealogy of Dominican leadership with "these contradictory men."

Balaguer's carefully calculated rhetorical strategy involved buying credit by lionizing Trujillo to the highest. He achieved this through a litany of the most patently exorbitant claims about Trujillo's honors—for example, that he belonged among those certain immortal men, who like saints, have "inundated the land with the aroma of their virtues." Sandwiched in between exceptionally exalted tributes, then, Balaguer slipped in a double entendre which made his laudatory aggrandizement look like a bad joke. Balaguer's singularly central position within the regime, combined with his phenomenal rhetorical skills, endowed him with a certain very circumscribed license to play with the official discursive codes in a fashion that was both dramatic and unique.

Balaguer also used the technique of establishing Trujillo them as emblem of the ideal office as distinct from a more critical evaluation of his actual performance. In this framework, Trujillo is first praised as having made history, as did Sparta or Athens, through his multiple contributions to national development (such as making the country financially independent or building its national infrastructure): in sum, for "rehabilitating the nation."

Within this long list of accomplishments as exemplary statesman Balaguer manages to do the unthinkable: that is, mention the deficiencies of his actual performance. In one such example he made perhaps the most critical comment about Trujillo ever recorded in an official speech:

"Trujillo, who has stains, as does the sun, who has his successes and his errors; who is not infallible because infallibility is a gift of gods and gods belong to mythology and not to politics, which is in its essence the domain of the contingent and the possible. Trujillo has created in the Dominican Republic a regime that is in its essence authoritarian. This is a reality that we cannot negate if we wish to be sincere; but also it is true that the police state created by Trujillo has constituted a powerful instrument of economic prosperity, social reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence, which surpasses all of those which exist or have existed in the Antilles for the guidance of our countries towards the highest goals.

120. René Fortunato, El poder del Jefe III (Santo Domingo: Videocine Palma, 1996).
123. Balaguer, "Al cabo de un cuarto de siglo," La palabra encadenada, 185.
of civilized life... We have done much in the last quarter of a century; but that which remains to be done is even more.\textsuperscript{124}

After blaming the failures of the Dominican “civic spirit” on the citizenry, not the state (a convention with roots in nineteenth-century republicanism), he then returns to the motif of the ideal office, as symbolized by the founding father of the nation, Juan Pablo Duarte.\textsuperscript{125} According to Balaguer, Duarte should serve always as an “outstanding eminence, as the uppermost solitary lodestar [piñacho], and as an irreplaceable guide to all Dominicans.” In the conclusion, Balaguer unifies these two codes—the ideal and the real, the office and the officeholder—by substituting them with another contrast, between the desire of citizens to imitate Duarte as civic model and the impossibility of them ever attaining such a lofty objective. Thus he shifts the burden of fallibility from leaders to people and uses substitution to say the impossible about Trujillo.\textsuperscript{126} Balaguer was arguably the most influential functionary of Trujillo’s inner circle, with tremendous longevity, and yet even he suffered a period of desgracia.\textsuperscript{127}

Señor Presidente

However, structural explanations for the rise of a particular culture of oratory cannot account for the personal motivations impelling individual writers. Use of the Foro as a personal platform followed a range of rationales—both expressive and instrumentalist—that cannot be reduced to tensions within the state bureaucracy. First, there were social types that blossomed as a result of the publicity provided by the Foro. For example, Justo Franco was a meddler who wrote six to seven letters a week to the Foro Público—sometimes even two a day. Attacking government officials and private citizens alike, his highly legalistic complaints cited specific infractions of the legal code and provided evidence such as license plate and cédula numbers to make his case. With the voice of a policeman and a name saturated with irony, “Just Frank” could well have been a government shill, a mask for official accusations written by someone in the National Palace. Or he could have been a perverse by-product of the Foro itself, a busboy who thrived on the excessive publicity generated by the direct line to the national public and Trujillo. If, as Nancy Munn has argued in another context, fame results from the travels of a person’s name, certainly both infamy and fame resulted from frequent appearances in the Foro.\textsuperscript{128}

In a more instrumentalist vein, ordinary citizens also developed strategies of manipulating official codes in order to achieve personal objectives unintended by the regime. In letters to Trujillo seeking favors of various kinds, individuals often used effusive praise to buy credit with Trujillo, especially by employing images of Trujillo as beneficent and magnanimous in order to legitimate their claims to assistance. In one example, a man referred to Trujillo as a “magnificent and honorable man” who cared for his wife and children and honorably guards the family bloodline as symbolized by the nontransferable, inalienable, and carefully protected apellido.

Another tactic involved flaunting one’s entitlement to Trujillo’s attention by displaying a range of status criteria, seeking to invoke as many claims to noteworthiness as possible. For example, one man appeals to Trujillo first as a cripple with a mutilated hand, since Trujillo typically privileged the needy in his public charity. However, to underscore his suitability for a white-collar position, despite this disability, he says: “I am from the best social centers and belong to a distinguished family, and they say I look completely foreign, I am not the Dominican type.”\textsuperscript{129} Here both race and physical disability provide status markers signifying entitlement under the regime, albeit according to contradictory principles. Nor was there only an instrumentalist logic at work. In response to an injurious accusation hidden behind a pseudonym, one response was to brandish as many public markers of identity as possible, striving for the moral high ground through a presentation of absolute transparency. Here one would find reference to family and personal reputation, hometown, cédula num-

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 187.
\textsuperscript{125} Goffman would term this “derisive collusion,” since it involves a “secret derogation of the audience” (Goffman, Presentation of Self, 187). For more on republicanism, see Luis Castro Leiva and Anthony Pagden, “Civil Society and the Fate of the Modern Republics of Latin America,” in Civil Society: History and Possibilities, ed. Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 179–203; and Anthony Pagden, Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory, 1513–1830 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), chaps. 5 and 6.
\textsuperscript{126} Balaguer, Palabra encadenada, 188. Of course, this split is quite reminiscent of Ernst H. Kantorowicz’s argument in The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Mythology (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957).
\textsuperscript{127} Collado, Foro Público, 169–71.
\textsuperscript{128} I am indebted to Brendan Kiley for bringing this individual, as well as this reading of his behavior, to my attention. See Munn, The Fame of Genia, 105.
\textsuperscript{129} Celia Baez Castillo to Richardo, La Romana, 29 Jan. 1940 PD, IJDC, exp. 5.
ber, professional credentials, adhesion to the Trujillista cause, and an appeal to higher authorities to punish such injustice.  

Official codes of masculinity called for expressions of both deference and manliness. One must be a man like Trujillo, but never quite as much a man. Thus, one tension clearly expressed in men’s letters is how to represent themselves as active, willful, autonomous men who commanded respect, while another: the same time expressing adequate deference to Trujillo. This was particularly sensitive, since masculinity was intrinsically conflictive and required a posture of “courage amidst adversity.” One party representative found a solution to this discrepancy by coining a slogan that played off of Trujillo’s official saying “I will follow on horseback”: “A good leader is one who knows how to follow.” In losing a post, for example, a man was expected to accept gracefully his fate as defined from above, while at the same demonstrating that he was not so decimated as to be undeserving of another position. In one such case, a party president who was replaced by the town council secretary wrote, “I am a good collaborator of your government and your cause; neither am I a crushed man, rather I am a man of nerves and only take your orders with my mouth shut like an avocado, because I am not one that leaves the highway for a footpath.”

Fatherhood was an important archetype for Trujillo’s national authority that was frequently invoked by men seeking his assistance. Some drew upon the regime propaganda of Trujillo as Father of the Nation to situate themselves as emulators of his fine example of male honor, and as men who jealously guard and fight for their patrimony, including wife and children, name, home, and property. In one example, a man used this rhetorical device in arguing for a small handout to cover legal fees for his divorce, since his wife had taken up with another man and was procreating under his family name. His note contains the veiled threat that, without assistance, he may have to “do something stupid” (perhaps kill the interloper), which he doesn’t want to do but might have to in order to regain his respectable standing. He articulates this potential danger by invoking the horizontal bonds of masculine valor when he defers to Trujillo’s exemplary patriarchy as a standard of honorable manhood.

With the electoral campaign of 1940, women were officially brought into the party, mobilized by the women’s wing of the Partido Trujillista, a branch of the Dominican Party. Women, however, were never subjected to the same weight of official morality as their male counterparts, since their public identity was based on shame rather than honor. Nor were they subjected to the same constraints and pressures that men faced surrounding the definition of their public identity. So, for example, whereas women could resign from the party, men could not, since such an act could imply betrayal and engender political problems. And much to party officials’ chagrin, women were very reluctant to become party members or take out cédulas, perhaps because they were less likely to seek public sector employment and thus had less to gain by doing so.

Women thus deployed a very different repertoire of “face-work” strategies in appealing to Trujillo. They tended to be more unequivocally deferent, since they did not have to maintain public honor in ways that could be interpreted as a challenge to Trujillo’s authority. Excessive kowtowing was not dishonorable for women in the same way that it was for men. One tactic was framing oneself as dependent upon Trujillo’s charity, just as their children were dependent upon them, asking first and foremost for houses to maintain their children properly and only secondarily for cash loans or gifts (jobs came in a distant third). Fashioning themselves as women of honor, they requested gifts that reinforced their respectable social identity as domestic and enclosed, and thus protected from the public sphere. They also frequently cast themselves as mothers, invoking their appropriate role as lineage founders and reproducers of good Trujillista citizens, most especially of young men who were doing their national duty in the Guardia Nacional (military service).


132. Ulises Montas, Presidente, 1940, PD, JCDC, exp. 5.

133. Manifiesto de la expulsión del Partido por derrota ald, no. 97, 31 Jan. 1940, PD, JCDC, exp. 5.


135. For an example of a woman’s renunciation, see Alida Cary Espinosa to Pres. Trujillo, Cabral, 1 Apr. 1946, PD, JCDC. They even rescinded the tax to encourage women to take out cédulas (making it absolutely free) but they still refused. See Asunto: Cooperación de los organismos del Partido en favor de la renuacíión de la cédula para mujeres, 18 Aug. 1947, PD, Informes Confidenciales 1941-42, Circular no. 286.


137. I am drawing here upon Janice Boddie’s association between enclosure and
Female rhetorical strategies tended towards indirect, passive action. They either positioned themselves as worthy of attention through the actions of their citizen-sons, or as devotees of the Virgin of Altagracia. First arising as a symbol of creole identity during the colonial period, the Virgin of Altagracia became a nationalist symbol following her canonization during the U.S. military occupation in 1922; she conveyed Hispanic identity and dominicanidad in the face of Yankee Protestant aggression. Trujillo promoted devotion to this matrona so as to hitch her religious mana to his regime, a move that was particularly popular among female devotees. Women’s letters often drew upon the logic of saint devotion, positing that any gift of charity bestowed to them at the same time would flow to this favored patron saint. Several women wrote that they would ask the Virgin directly, not Trujillo himself, for a house “of little value,” and thus since they were devotees, they would receive it in her name. Here the circuit of national value is channeled in, around, and through the national numen; those writing would only receive such proceeds fortuitously, by being in the right place at the right time, rather than by any kind of agentive behavior. The use of images of religious/political interpenetration was far more common among female solicitors, who might praise Trujillo as a thaumaturge, for example, saying, “your helping hand is the balsam that heals all the wounds of all the afflicted who turn to you.” They could ask for charity since Trujillo himself was an avatar who had received a divine gift that could and should be passed on to others. 138

Conclusions

There are a number of conclusions to be drawn from this material on denunciation. In terms of concrete politics, denunciations empowered marginal officials, bureaucrats, and citizens by incriminating higher-ups as they drew attention to themselves. This promotional strategy fed into a structural framework whereby, as we have also seen, Trujillo benefited by playing factions against each other and splitting organized assaults against his authority. In discursive terms, this structural dialectic subsumed critical denunciations into the prevailing panegyric of his person.

138. This structure bears a striking family resemblance to the colonial distinction between the idealized, if distant, Spanish monarch, and his lowly 10d corrupt minions. I am reluctant, however, to propose that this was a colonial legacy, since the colonial regime of La Española (as the Spanish side of the island was known at that time) was notoriously weak. For a treatment of this type of dualism in colonial Mexico, see Eric Van Young, “The Raw and the Cooked: Elite and Popular Ideology in Mexico, 1800–1821,” in Values and Attitudes in the 17th–19th Centuries, ed. Mark D. Sausman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), 75–102. It is possible that the form of diarchy or dual government described here could have resembled the uneasy relationship between bureaucrats and the letrados, the new bureaucratic elite of lawyers and judges, particularly after offices were sold by the crown; they also frequently drew corruption complaints. Edward A. Alpers, “A Family of the State: Bureaucratic Impediments to Democratic Reform in Mozambique,” in African Democracy in the Era of Globalization, ed. Jonathan Heslop (Witwatersrand: Witwatersrand Univ. Press, 1999), 122–38, describes what he authorizes as class struggle within the bureaucratic apparatus in Mozambique. See Stuart B. Schwartz, “State and Society in Colonial Spanish America: An Opportunity for Prosopography,” in New Approaches to Latin American History, eds. Richard Graham and Peter H. Smith (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1974), 4–35, for a call for the study of the norms and values of bureaucracy.


141. Thus the popular fantasy prevalent among Dominicans that Trujillo (or one of his right-hand men) himself read, wrote, and responded to every letter in the Foro Público column is an aspect of the “social fantasy” of his godlike omnipotence (Mario Vargas Llosa, The Feast of the Goat, trans. Edith Grossman [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux], 114).
These forms of political oratory are historically interesting because they represent in middle-class memory some of the most painful aspects of everyday life during the Era of Trujillo. As novelist Mario Vargas Llosa wrote in The Feast of the Goat, a novel about the daughter of a Trujillista official who was denounced in the Foro Público: "Trujillo ... killed with a method that was slower and more perverse than when he had his prey shot, beaten to death, or fed to the sharks. He had killed him in stages, taking away his decency, his honor, his self-respect, his joy in loving, his hopes and desires, his honor, turning him into a sack of bones tormented by the guilty conscience that had been destroying him gradually for so many years." 142

The threat of denunciation was terrifying, since it could imply not only the loss of one's job but also the stain of public dishonor and stigma. Enforced saccharine panegyric, on the other hand, was humiliating in that by constructing Trujillo as superhuman it reduced the speaking subject to groveling mendicant. And indeed, this was its logic and intent. Unlike other forms of exchange under the regime, the gift of praise to Trujillo was uniquely one-sided, since no one else could be the object of commendation, and certainly Trujillo paid tribute to no one. One gave praise to Trujillo, but in the official ideology this was nothing compared to what Trujillo had already given his citizenry—a peso of value, progress, and national sovereignty. As sociologist Peter Blau has suggested, "[O]verwhelming others with benefactions serves to achieve superiority over them." 143 During the regime, official prestation was a powerful technique of domination. Under the guise of generosity, it coerced through creating indebtedness and degraded through provisioning excessive gifts that could not be returned. As Frederick Bailey has noted, "[T]he overgenerous gift, so big that it cannot be returned, becomes a humiliation," or as Jean-Paul Sartre put it, "to give is to enslave." 144


142. Vargas Llosa, Feast of the Goat, 90.

The Politics of Denunciation and Panegyric during the Trujillo Regime

Trujillista political speech has been largely dismissed by scholars, either because of its dramaturgical excess or its irrelevance to the distribution of the material rewards that were seen as the true basis of state power. 145 Yet denunciation and official oratory were forms of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot has called "practical consent": political practices that furthered regime hegemony without individuals' conscious choice, and that blurred the boundaries between the state and civil society by encouraging individuals to act as, and thus see themselves as, state proxies. 146 These speech forms helped create acquiescence, if not submission, and compliance, if not belief. 147 They worked not through persuasion, but rather by entangling individuals in a political economy of discursive exchange. Like votive offerings, praise to Trujillo was an investment that could potentially convert to other forms of capital—economic, social, or cultural. 148 More broadly, I suggest that denunciation and praise also demonstrate the inadequacy of models of authoritarianism that categorically oppose the state and civil society, hegemony and resistance, or public and private, because these discursive genres manifest the bidirectionality, and thus complexity, of the links between them.

145. Wiarda argues that the letters in the Foro originated in the National Palace and served to justify the demotion of public officials for other reasons; Listenership and Development, 73, 127. Francisco Rodríguez de León, Batangay y Trujillo: Entre la espada y la palabra (Santo Domingo: F. Rodríguez de León, 1996), 221, describes the Foro as an "escape valve."


Praise and denunciation became forms of currency in a hierarchical web of exchanges between officeholders and citizens that over time trapped them in circuits of favors, and thus in Trujillo’s web. These forms of political oratory also helped forge an official identity under the regime, and as such are important in explaining the “banality of power” of the Trujillato: how everyday forms of domination and terror became normalized over the course of three decades, and thus how individuals actually experienced a regime that has been described as totalitarian due to the state’s invasiveness. As Herzfeld has said, “[R]hetoric is not simply an epiphenomenon of other sources of power. It is the key to the social production of indifference in nation-state bureaucracies.” It may also be one of the keys to the production of consent under authoritarianism. Together, these oratorical genres informed the culture of complicity under the regime and help us understand how Trujillo was able to maintain power for over three full decades. They also help explain how a regime that thrust aside the traditional elite was able to forge a social base. The official speech protocols described here drew political subjects into the regime, even if they forced them to perform according to a set of scripts not of their own accord and often against their will.

The politics of denunciation also underscore the importance of the interstitial middle ground between formal and informal politics—what I call the shadow state and its shadow bureaucracy—in understanding the dialectics of coercion and consent under dictatorships. Scholars have recognized the importance of bringing informal practices such as graft, as well as quasi-official bodies such as intelligence agencies and paramilitary groups, into the analysis of state policy. Indeed, the forms of denunciation explored here were largely a product of the rise of the official Dominican Party and a web of intelligence-gathering mechanisms that played an important, if at times oblique and obscure, role in civic life during the Trujillato. Yet these forms of political oratory also extend the analysis of politics to an even more implicit realm—the structure of expectations regarding rewards, a domain where the material and the moral conjoined.

Thus my focus on the form and deployment of denunciation extends beyond the structural framework of an authoritarian regime and into the less formal arenas of what I have termed the “shadow state” or shadow bureaucracy, an arena that mediated the very boundaries between formal and informal politics, official persons and private selves. Moreover, I have argued that denunciations not only invoked this shadowy arena—the backstage of official politics and display—but rhetorically produced it by binging private transgressions into the public arena and, conversely, by bringing public opinion to bear on the private self. It may thus have helped spawn the inordinate preoccu-


151. Of course, no discussion of Trujillo’s longevity is complete without some discussion of the role of the military and U.S. military and diplomatic support, but that issue has been well treated elsewhere.

152. David Nugent also uses the term “shadow state,” but with a slightly different meaning. He refers to an alternative rival clan in provincial Peru in the early twentieth century that mirrored official functions and alternated in power with the municipal bureaucracy; see “State and Shadow State in Northern Peru circa 1900: Illegal Political Networks and the Problem of State Boundaries,” in States and Illegal Practices, ed. Josiah McC. Heyman (New York: Oxford, 1999), 63–88. Pakistani intelligence agencies have a strong structural similarity to the behind-the-scenes role of the D iman, a recent case, see Ursula Verkasik, “The Captive State: Corruption, Intelligence Agents, and Ethnicity in Pakistan,” in States of Imagination, ed. Hansen and Stepputat, 345–65. Other parallels might be the paramilitary groups of El Salvador in the 1980s, or Colombia today. Analyses seeking to extend the analysis of statecraft beyond the domain of formal politics include Heyman, ed., States and Illegal Practices, as well as Claudio Lomnitz, ed. Vínculos públicos, vínculos privados: La corrupción en México (Mexico: CIESAS, 2000).
occupation with “looking and being seen” that characterized life in 1950s Ciudad Trujillo, most especially for the new state elite forged by the regime.153

Additionally, a focus on the discursive production of the shadow state helps us rethink the very character of formal political arenas by bringing the informal networks of social capital into the picture and, in the Dominican case, helps explain a basic question in Dominican historiography. To repeat, why did a regime reputed to be based on terror, but whose violent persecutions were in fact relatively limited, endure into the affluent postwar period without serious challenges? The politics of denunciation under Trujillo suggest that the decline in actual violence in the 1940s and early 1950s corresponded with the rise of a new form of symbolic violence that was part and parcel of a new state elite, one whose concerns with honor, reputation, and family secrets became social currencies of, if not life and death, then what was equally important—social life and social death.

153. I am taking inspiration from John Brewer’s argument here ("This, That, and the Other," 15).

Archival Research and the Program for Latin American Libraries and Archives

Dan Hazen

The Program for Latin American Libraries and Archives, based at Harvard University, has, since 1996, awarded more than one hundred small grants to preserve or enhance access to scarce research materials held within Latin America. This essay outlines the background to the program, explains its history and operations, describes some of the grants, and discusses both continuing issues and emerging possibilities.

The Context

The sources that support Latin Americanist scholarship cluster unevenly around the world. The imperial archives in Spain and Portugal are, of course, unique. The strongest library collections, too, are to be found in Europe and North America; local holdings in Latin America are in some cases more complete, but even the region’s best libraries lack the mass of complementary books and journals, from adjacent countries as well as more distant locations, that allow comparison and provide context. But Latin Americanists also rely on the newspapers, pamphlets, photographs, film, music, video, and, most importantly, archival holdings, that can be found only within the region itself. Local libraries and archives are called upon to organize these sources, preserve them, and make them available for use.

Many of the region’s repositories, however, have trouble fulfilling this charge. Tales of preventable damage and loss are depressingly common. While mismanagement, ignorance, or short-sightedness are sometimes to blame, aggressive climates, inadequate buildings, untrained staffs, and insufficient resources are more frequently the cause. Some collections are trapped in an inertia resulting from budgets too small to support relatively inexpensive, but nonetheless critical, improvements. A personal computer, for example, might allow some repositories to catalog holdings that are now inaccessible. Simple