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'Acapulco in the Atlantic': Revisiting Sosúa, a Jewish Refugee Colony in the Caribbean

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This article examines the foundation objectives, settlement history and ethnic relations of the tiny but idyllic Sosúa in the Dominican Republic. Sosúa was established in 1940 as the first and only Jewish agricultural colony resulting from discussions at the 1938 Evian conference in France, which unsuccessfully addressed the growing refugee displacement produced by Nazi Germany's relentless persecution of Jews and other minorities. Fleeing from the grasp of one dictator to the ostensible embrace of Hitler's Caribbean counterpart, Rafael Trujillo, Jews in the tropical settlement were celebrated as the solution to this underdeveloped, peasant-populated, mainly agricultural northern region. Yet, the lack of international, institutional and financial commitment, settler apathy for intensive labour, and feelings of cultural displacement meant that the colony never reached Trujillo's desired yet wildly unrealistic projection of 100,000 settlers. Instead, no more than 500 settlers passed through Sosúa from 1940 to 1947. Today, the town thrives as a transnational site of displaced settlers, sex tourism and itinerant labour, with its markers of Jewish ethnic and settlement history barely visible.

The small town of Sosúa in the Dominican Republic has a layered history of settlement that competes for visibility with its appeal as an international tourist destination for escapist holidays and sex tourism. At the nearby airport in Puerto Plata, international visitors – couples, families, retired groups and single men, particularly from the United Kingdom and Germany – pack the arrivals area. They appear unable to speak a few words

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of Spanish, but are apparently conversant enough to indulge in the *lingua franca* promised by postcard images of exotic Caribbean holidays. Air-conditioned tour buses wait outside the arrivals terminal, ready to transport these pale-faced tourists to the seaside town of Sosúa, where accommodation of all expenses and tastes awaits, as do market stalls, the turquoise-framed Sosúa Bay beach, Cuban and Mexican themed tapas bars, German restaurants, and the Haitian-themed club, 'Voodoo Lounge'. Such is the impression of a day or two in Sosúa. Transactions range from the social, financial and to the visibly in-demand sexual, which when negotiated, are conducted in many tongues: Spanish, English, German and Dutch. This veneer of beach leisure, Caribbean idyll and sex economy has come to displace the area's rather modest beginning as the first all-Jewish agricultural colony established as a haven for persecuted European Jews during the Nazi regime. With the support of American Jewish philanthropists, Jewish relief agencies, President Roosevelt and Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo, Sosúa emerged as the first and only agrarian colony established as part of the Dominican Republic's ambitious resettlement scheme for 100,000 Jews offered refuge at the Evian Conference in July 1938. With funds provided by the American Joint Distribution Committee, this plan materialized in the establishment of the Sosúa agricultural settlement near Puerto Plata on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The ambition, however, was never fully realized. Its first settlers arrived from Europe in May 1940, but it never exceeded a peak population of 500 Jews.[1]

This settlement history is now all but memory; it remains a marginalized narrative in English-language historiography of Central European refugee destinations. What is the significance of revisiting Sosúa, which was described by a visiting journalist to the town in the 1980s as an 'Acapulco in the Atlantic'?[2] The sixtieth anniversary of the Allied liberation of the major Nazi concentration camps in occupied Poland, Germany and Austria permits us to revisit Sosúa in the context of its uncertain and ostensibly unknown place in the historiography of refuge and European colonization in the Afro-Hispanic Caribbean. The positive representation of Sosúa as one of the 'great untold stories of Holocaust refuge' reflects its renaissance as a belated scholarly focus of ethnic group survival and inter-ethnic cooperation in the face of persecution, and further underscores the recovered narrative of a lost and disappearing colony.[3] This article attempts a corrective by examining the migration history and memory of Sosúa. It does not intend to be comprehensive, but maps out the background and basis of a larger research project based on preliminary consultation with archival sources, interviews and secondary sources.

I survey various locations in the British, French and Hispanic Caribbean as temporary and permanent sites for European Jews before exploring how historians have interpreted the motivations for Sosúa in the context of the Evian Conference of 1938 and Dominican racial and demographic objectives related to European colonization. I then examine the migration history of Sosúa, its relief purpose, administrative problems, practical obstacles and the ambivalent testimonial narrative of settlers. Finally, I comment on the visibility of contemporary Sosúa's Jewish history in light of the tourism and outsider influence which threatens to displace it.

Emigration from Europe and the Caribbean as Refuge Space

The Nazis' emphasis on Jews' social and legal removal from German society was a preface to their physical removal through intercontinental and transoceanic migration, which dominated the trend of Nazi anti-Jewish policy from 1933 to 1939, and promoted the desired 'flight' and mass exodus as responses of organized Jewish groups in Germany and abroad. Yet, flight or emigration was not always immediately possible or available. Many factors, including possible destinations within or outside of Europe had to be forthcoming, as was international will and diplomatic understanding to accept that a severe refugee crisis was present and worsening. As a further example of expropriation that diminished the mobility of Jews, the Nazi regime, after having confiscated Jewish property and assets during 'Aryanisation'[4], imposed a 'flight tax' on Jews, thus advantaging only those individuals and families most financially prosperous to leave Germany once evidence of familial sponsorship and self-sustenance had been satisfactorily established to domestic and foreign diplomatic authorities.

For many Jews, the mass exodus from Nazi Europe to western liberal democracies began after Hitler was appointed Chancellor in January 1933. The principal destinations for this exodus outside Europe were the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Palestine and Australia. Emigration statistics for these destinations vary. Werner Rosenstock estimates that about 250,000–300,000 Jews left Germany during the National Socialist period in two main waves. From 1933 to June 1938, about 150,000 left, and thereafter approximately a further 100,000 to 150,000, particularly in the wake of the *Kristallnacht* pogroms on 9 November 1938. As at 1 July 1938, of the 150,000 Jews who had left, 107,000 had taken up residence overseas (including Palestine) and about 35,000 to 43,000 in other European countries. Of the overseas countries, Palestine received 44,000, the USA 27,000, South America 26,150, while the British Empire received 9400, with South Africa taking 7600, Australia 1000 and 800 to other Commonwealth

countries.[5] By 1939, Latin America had received 94,000 immigrants since 1933, slightly more than the United States for the comparable time period.[6] It is not my intention to extensively document the policies that resulted in these varying emigration statistics. Rather, it is to bring into view the importance of Caribbean locations of temporary haven and resettlement for European Jews occasioned by the responses of British, French and Dutch Colonial governments to the refugee crisis. Jamaica, Trinidad, Martinique and Curacao all housed transit camps for European Jews as well as internment camps for suspected enemy aliens, irrespective of ethnic affiliation. Between 1938 and 1942, in what Eric Jennings has called 'the Martinique Escape Route', camps outside Fort-de-France served as the reception centre for some 3000 Jews, mainly from Vichy France, including the prominent anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss.[7] Historian Oscar Lansen reported that in May 1940, the Dutch Colonial government in Curacao arrested and interned 422 enemy nationals, 77 of whom were German and Austrian Jews, and subjected them to the same regulations as Nazi internees.[8] And, at what is the now the site of the University of the West Indies Mona Campus in Kingston, Jamaica, there used to sit the barracks of the Gibraltar refugee camp. The camp was divided into two areas, one for approximately 4000 Gibraltarians (Camp I) and the other for some 3000 Jews (Camp II). Local contractors greeted its construction with enthusiasm, but the costs to the British government were high, particularly as the anticipated number of Gibraltarians never arrived. The British managed to send only some 1,500 Gibraltarians to Jamaica; the rest went to London and Madeira. In addition to Jewish refugees, many others 'finished up' in Jamaica during World War II. Between 1940 and 1945, Jamaica was also the main destination or 'dumping ground' for the internment of European political refugees, prisoners of war, and civilian enemy aliens from British West Africa, the Caribbean and Europe. At the end of January 1944, 1131 prisoners of war and enemy aliens were interned in the Up Park military camp in Kingston.[9]

The situation in Latin America was not entirely different from British policy in the Caribbean. Before and after the outbreak of World War II, Mexico, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador and Paraguay received Jewish refugees, though these migrations, with the exception of the Dominican Republic, were by 'infiltration' rather than the result of mass resettlement schemes. Lack of funding, opinions of the public and their influence on government policy, overpopulation, unemployment and potential resentment at the incoming refugees conspired to reject such proposals. Cuba is remembered as the country that refused to land the transatlantic liner, the St. Louis, which had travelled

from Germany seeking embarkation. The ship sailed with 930 Jewish refugees from Hamburg to Havana in May 1939, and its refugees were refused temporary transit visas en route to the United States upon landing, despite holding landing certificates that were invalidated while the ship was in transit.

As these brief examples illustrate, attempts at resettlement of Jews from Europe and to the Caribbean cannot be homogenized as triumphal or emphatically receptive to political refugees given the complexities of existing racial tensions, alliances with the Nazi regime, and when the time came, wartime imperial policies governing enemy aliens. Furthermore, it is impossible to understand the comprehensive threat posed by Hitler if we examine only the experiences of Jews who remained on the continent of Europe; it is through policies towards refugees that we can appreciate the intersection of imperial power and its policy of appeasement of the Nazi regime on the one hand, and political expediency and the image of humanitarianism, on the other.

It is the latter theme of expediency and humanitarianism that Sosúa's ambitious construction embodies that I will pursue. Its contemporary valorization is underscored when one considers how historians see the Evian Conference as a comprehensive refusal of the leading western nations and many Latin American countries to increase their existing immigration quotas in response to the crisis.

The Failure of Evian

At the Evian Conference in France from July to September 1938, 200 delegates from 32 countries around the world met to discuss the refugee crisis, and it is here that the Dominican Republic, under Rafael Trujillo's dictatorial presidency, was the only one to offer substantial prospects for the resettlement of a projected 100,000 European Jews. The US State Department was not enthusiastic, since they suspected German spies would be planted among the refugees and pose a security threat to American interests.[10] Expectations were also raised about Sosúa in light of the ostensibly sincere but admittedly unrealistic plans for resettlement of European Jews to American possessions such as Alaska, the Virgin Islands and the Philippines.[11] Adding to the sense of desperation if not hopelessness for the Jews was an offer by Henry Ford to make some of his Brazilian property available, and William Randolph Hearst's suggestion that the Belgian Congo be sold to the Jews.[12]

Invitations for the Evian Conference were sent out in late March 1938. The announcement of the conference was the result of Roosevelt's attempt

to placate restrictionists and aid refugees who were being supported in their efforts by American Jewry.[13] That the conference would achieve its intentions of increased quotas was hampered from the start by restrictions placed on the discussion. Much to the annoyance of Zionists, Britain demanded that Palestine not be mentioned, and as Roosevelt believed the Middle East was a British sphere he agreed, as he did not want to risk a potential rift. Apart from Trujillo's offer, the only other result from the conference was the formation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees (IGC). Roosevelt still pressed forward with his plans to pressure Latin American republics to absorb more Jewish refugees. To that end, in December 1938, a conference in Lima, Peru, was held among leaders of Latin American nations to formulate a policy in relation to refugees, but rather than respond as Roosevelt had wanted, the conference delegates strengthened their resolve to resist attempts at colonization of minorities. In February 1939, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay signed a convention that included a provision to place stronger restrictions on immigration and promised cooperation among themselves to keep out undesirables.[14] Also influencing the decision was the existence of loyal German minorities in Brazil, Chile and Argentina, who would, presumably, react negatively to the increased number of refugees. In an attempt to clarify the objectives of the IGC, Roosevelt convened a meeting on 17 October 1939, which after the failure of Evian marked the end of efforts for large-scale resettlement projects. All attention now turned to Sosúa.

Recruiting Refugees and the Colonization Motive

Sosúa occupies a curious position in programmes of relief and refuge: it is not necessarily a footnote in historical narratives of refugee diasporas resulting from Nazi persecution, and nor is it accepted as a successful experiment in reviving long-term white colonization in the Caribbean. The motivations for the Sosúa settlement are varied, and are seen as largely self-serving for Trujillo, the dictator who ruled the Dominican Republic for two long terms between 1930 and 1961. Historian Allan Metz suggests that racial and demographic considerations, the need for economic development of the Dominican countryside, a desire to improve US–Dominican relations, and personal financial aggrandizement motivated Trujillo's seeming benevolence towards Jews.[15] Historians attach differing emphases to these factors, and the immediate and historical Caribbean context damages the credibility of Trujillo's humane motives. Almost a year earlier, from 2 to 8 October 1937, 15,000 Haitian peasant cane cutters who resided and worked in the northern frontier regions of the Haitian–Dominican

borderlands were massacred by the Dominican military on Trujillo's orders. The extraordinarily negative international press Trujillo received as a so-called 'little Hitler' of the Caribbean could be reversed by an opposite action: the extension of refuge.

A consideration of the background of the massacre, the bad press Trujillo received, and its direct impact on the attempt to rehabilitate his image through offering land to Jewish refugees enables us to move beyond the common assumption that Trujillo invited Jews because of their racially desirable qualities. Common impressions attribute the Haitian massacre to a racial motivation, for example that Trujillo resented the corruption of the purity of the Dominican population by the Haitian workers' presence in the frontier regions. Richard Turits, in his study of Dominican modernity and peasantry, suggests that the massacre should be placed in the larger context of securing the trans-culturated frontier society in accordance with the ideals of Trujillo's regime particularly as they related to agricultural colonization. He asserts that 'state interest in hardening the border and securing control over the frontier, together with elite prejudices against the Haitian "pacific invasion", gave rise to government efforts to establish agricultural colonies in the region'.[16]

The impression of Trujillo's humanitarianism is also diminished in the historical context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Dominican thinking on race in relation to peasant communities, modernity, constructions of white, mulatto and Negro ethnicity, and fantasies of human capital supposedly embodied by European colonization.[17] The offer of Sosúa can be located in wider attempts by the Dominican Republic to actively recruit European labour for agricultural colonization. Indeed, it was not the first time that persecuted Jews were of interest to the developing nation. In 1882, General Gregorio Luperon, a distinguished liberal intellectual and liberation fighter, initiated a generous but ill-fated colonization plan that hoped to resettle persecuted Jews from Tsarist Russia, as well as immigrant farmers from Cuba and Puerto Rico, to Santo Domingo.[18] European immigration was perceived as a way to improve the Dominican race, and thus reinforce the country's denial, in contrast to Haiti, of an Afro-Caribbean black identity, as well as privileging European practices and beliefs.[19] For Turits, the colonization policy under Trujillo served as an instrument of agrarian transformation and of establishing state hegemony in the countryside, and perpetuated decades-old racist discourses valorizing the prospects of white immigration from Europe.[20]

This interpretation of Jewish immigration within a broad-based colonization scheme is both borne out and contradicted by measures that restricted immigration of 'undesirables' into Sosúa. In terms of geography, the

location of Sosúa was not within the contested zones of borders and what Trujillo perceived as threatening Haitian influence, although statistics of the Dominican population's racial composition reinforced the fear of white degeneration. From 1780 to 1935, the white population decreased from 80% to 13% (pure white 13%, mulatto 67%, and pure black 19.4%).[21] In relation to immigration policy, the colonization of Sosúa was prefaced by measures that limited the arrival of 'undesirables' or racial aliens. A so-called 'Jewish entrance tax', enshrined in Law 48 of 23 December 1938, was fixed in a broad-based immigration tax of 500 pesos for 'individuals of the Mongolian race and the naturals of the African continent that are not of the Caucasian race', and 'foreigners of the Semitic race'.[22] Before Sosua was established, some 500 Central European Jews who settled in the capital of Santo Domingo and other urban areas between 1938 and 1940 were forced to pay the enormous fee. Apparently, the immigration tax was designed to end the 'threatened infiltration of Jews'.[23] In 1940, Trujillo went one step further and prohibited all Jewish immigration (except to Sosúa, whose immigrants were exempt from paying this entrance tax), in spite of 'how much money they can provide'.[24] Despite these restrictions of Jews and so-called undesirables, immigration data for the Dominican Republic reveals that the racial motivation was often subordinated to the need of modernizing the countryside through recruiting European labour and Asian immigrants, who had been virtually prohibited from migrating to the Dominican Republic on account of a high immigration tax implemented in 1931. But the state decided that the Japanese were acceptable after concluding they were 'industrious and disciplined colonists'.[25] While Trujillo also permitted the arrival of refugees from the Spanish Civil War, this extension of refuge (like that accorded to the Jews), can be seen as part of a broader colonization project. The Dominican construction of race was fluid and contingent on the economic needs and political goals of the regime. People traditionally maligned as marginal could be 'reinvented' with industry and potential. This 'reinvention' was indeed one of the difficulties involved with building new communities in rural areas. The aging profile of German Jewry in particular on the eve of World War II reflected this glaring contradiction. Half of the German-Jewish population were over 50, most of them were not involved in labour-intensive occupations, and only 1.5 per cent of them were farmers.[26] These were hardly the qualities desired in a pioneer worker for the new tropical colony.

Nazi Policy and the Refugee Phase

After the Evian Conference and Trujillo's offer, Nazi policy, wartime events, and the responses of western, liberal nations all worked to produce Sosúa

as the only workable option during the refugee phase from 1939 to 1941 among the few others that were on the table, such Angola and Ethiopia, and later British Guiana. The driving force which created the 'Jewish question' was Nazi policy, which from 1933 had actively pursued the expulsion of Jews from Germany and its territories through emigration, and also through its own resettlement plans for Madagascar, the Nisko plan in the Lublin area of occupied Poland, and a further eastward push to the USSR. Since Nazi plans for the Jews, such as extermination, were not publicly advertised or promoted during the period when emigration possibilities were viable, few organized groups, with the exception of American Jewry and Zionists, understood the gravity of the displacement. Put simply, when emigration was possible, it was not an urgent priority of those receiving nations since the mass murder planned for the Jews was not known or revealed, and nor was it, if we are to examine the oscillations in Nazi anti-Jewish policy, fully articulated as a coordinated genocidal plan for Europe-wide mass murder at the outbreak of the war and by the end of 1940.[27] What is clear, however, is that the termination of emigration options in October 1941 for Central European Jews intersected with the concretization of plans for the 'Final Solution', the Nazi euphemism for mass murder.

The hopes for Palestine as a realistic option were shattered on 17 May 1939 when the British government issued its White Paper, which restricted emigration there to 75,000 people over a five-year period, a capacity much too small to relieve the refugee crisis. And yet, as Henry Feingold suggests, the rescue of European Jewry, especially after the failure to act during the refugee phase from October 1939 to October 1941 was so severely circumscribed by Nazi determination that it would have been difficult to overcome it.[28] When the Nazis closed the borders to Jewish emigration, the fate of the Jews was sealed. And it is with the retrospective knowledge of Nazi genocide of the Jews revealed in its horrific scale with the Allied liberation of the concentration and extermination camps in 1945 that those projects which did resettle Jews, such as Sosúa, are now being valorized as successes, a triumphal outcome that can be qualified by closer examination of its motivations and outcomes, and as they have been interpreted by the resettled migrants.

Settling on Sosúa

After Trujillo's offer at Evian, the Refugee Economic Corporation of New York in collaboration with Roosevelt's advisory committee on political refugees investigated settlement possibilities in the Dominican Republic.[29]

Sosúa was not recommended as particularly desirable by the committee of experts who visited there in 1939, citing it as unsuitable for agriculture, on account of low rainfall, shallow soils, small areas of plowable land and scattered rock outcrops.[30] Favourable aspects were its availability, lack of capital investment needed by aid organizations, and existing buildings.[31] With the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939, the resettlement of displaced Jews from Germany and Austria would be even more difficult given that waging war against Germany was now a priority.

Transportation from Europe, arrangement of transit visas, building shelters, finding food sources and paying for the relocation entailed enormous logistical difficulties. Political refugees numbered in the hundreds of thousands also necessitated an enormous fiscal investment. Despite this, Roosevelt pursued the project, and the AGRO-JOINT (American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation), a subsidiary of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (or JDC), provided $200,000 to cover initial costs of settlement.[32] The Dominican Republic Settlement Association, otherwise known as the DORSA, was formed in late 1939, with the American-Jewish philanthropist James N. Rosenberg as president, and Dr. Joseph Rosen, an agronomist, as vice president.[33] It was to be the main regulatory body for the financing and welfare of settlers. The deal was complete when Trujillo officially offered the site of Sosúa, a former United Fruit Company banana plantation area of 26,685 acres in a letter of 20 January 1940.[34] The formalization of the settlement was expressed in the DORSA Agreement, signed on 31 January 1940, which contained six articles outlining mutual rights and responsibilities. The first article promised the promotion and opportunities for the practice of religion and freedom from persecution, options denied to the Jews in Europe.[35] From its inception, the colony was exclusive: economically; it was hoped to be self-sustaining, as the DORSA officials had hoped that the settlers could generate income with technology in fields such as meat export, dairy products and cash crops. This would placate the Dominican government, who did not want a backlash of anti-Semitism caused by Jews displacing Dominicans in the market place.[36] On 20–21 February 1940, the Dominican Congress ratified the agreement, and endorsed the racial objective of the settlement, extending praise to Trujillo for arriving at 'the most efficient expedient to obtain an intensive augmentation of the population'.[37]

The JDC sent Solomon Trone, a retired American engineer for General Electric, to Europe to scout for potential recruits. Given the desperation of refugees languishing in various transit camps in Switzerland and France, it was difficult to elicit truthful information about a refugee's history and suitability for work.[38] In his selections, Trone imposed a rigorous, if not discriminatory

recruitment process based on appearance, and perceived strength, age and gender, with a preference for single men, not over 45, and couples. This was enshrined in Article II of the DORSA Agreement, which proclaimed that 'settlers will be chosen in accordance with their fitness and technical ability for agriculture, industry, manufacture and trades'.[39] Eric Roorda commented that ironically, 'the settlement's rigorous selectivity in some ways resembled the discrimination that Jews faced in Europe; in refusing entry to an applicant in Berlin, Rosenberg, the president of DORSA, regretted that 'the settlement is for young and strong people'.[40]

The history of the colony can be divided into several stages which reflect its evolving character of settlement, dependency and communal morale: Jewish communal colonization and agriculture (1940–41), termination of arrivals and dependency on the DORSA (1942–45), exodus, capitalist self-sustenance and stability in the post-war years from 1946 to the late 1960s, and the tourist phase from the 1980s. The geography of the colony at the time of settlement and today reflects a physical, linguistic and cultural segregation, and is limited in interaction to market and labour forces. Historically, Sosúa's two communities were divided by the main beach into El Batey and Los Charamicos: the former what is known to Jews as Sosúa, and the latter location resident to predominantly Dominican villagers on pasture lands. El Batey was the more industrial location for Jews in Sosúa, the site for shops, schools and recreation halls, while those settlers on the homesteads, who lived about ten kilometres from El Batey, often resented their lack of opportunities on the farms. This division of communities was, however, not entirely discrete. The colony's early economic flourish impacted on the growth of distinct Dominican and European-Jewish cultures, shaped still-visible patterns of socio-economic development and contributed to the emergence of a creolized Dominican-Jewish identity.[42] And yet, despite these integrations, and the Jews' dependence on the labour of the Dominican peasant population, Dominicans are rarely mentioned in Jewish testimonies of settlements. Dominicans assisted in the refurbishment of barracks before the first settlers arrived, provided labour for homesteads after their arrival, for farming, and later the dairy industry.

From Refugees to Colonists

From January 1940, when the DORSA agreement was signed, through to September 1941, only 13 of the 413 settlers had previous experience in farming. Six persons were established at Sosúa in March and April 1940, and on 10 May 1940, the first group of refugees from Europe arrived via Switzerland, consisting of 27 men, 10 women and an infant child. The

inexperience of incoming settlers led the US Federal Bureau of Investigation to continue to doubt the sincerity of their status as suddenly reinvented colonists. In May 1940, Robert T. Pell, assistant chief of European affairs in the US State Department, wrote a confidential letter to Rosenberg, stating that the Departments of State and War believed the DORSA's operations threatened American security by potentially allowing German spies into the Dominican Republic and into a strategic area of the Caribbean.[43] While unfounded in relation to Sosúa, these fears persisted and spread into a wider wartime panic resulting in the forcible deportation of Germans in Latin America to internment camps in the United States.[44]

The next substantial contingent of settlers did not arrive until the end of September 1940. The colony was cosmopolitan and multilingual, reflected in the backgrounds of settlers, which in turn referenced the scale of Nazi threat and invasion. By mid 1941, there were about 352 persons in Sosúa of which the largest contingent came from Switzerland and the remainder from Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, England and France. However by nationality the settlers were mainly German and Austrian, with others from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Russia. After 1942, it was almost impossible to leave Europe, as the Nazis closed down American consulates in Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, and occupied France.[45] Pressure also mounted on Spain and Portugal, two countries that provided exit routes, to restrict their transit visa quotas.[46]

With their arrival from Europe, the refugees officially moved into settler status. The language of reinvention, from 'refugees' to 'settlers' or 'colonists', implied a breakage with the past, to leave behind the dislocation and make a permanent commitment to the colony, with this commitment formalized in an agreement refugees signed before leaving Europe. After arriving and living in barracks which accommodated up to 100 people and were separated by gender and marital status, settlers could apply to be located on homesteads (farms) and thus begin producing and attempt to repay DORSA their investment.

The tasks of the new settlers in Sosúa appeared simple enough, yet the settlers were unaccustomed to the climate and demands of working in humid tropical heat, and were inexperienced in the requisite farming techniques. With the hired assistance of Dominicans who were used to such conditions, the settlers cleared the land of forest and overgrown bush, made charcoal, fences and plank boards for houses, and they planned and built roads, bridges, water systems and homes.[47] In the early years of communal labour organization, Sosúa had developed into a modestly productive agricultural cooperative colony. The main products were milk, and also corn, tobacco, coconuts, oranges, bananas, beans,

pineapples, papaya, potatoes and other vegetables. This mixed farming was not without its economic difficulties and frustrations of low crop production.

Social relations that would induce permanency and commitment of the settlers to the colony had mixed results as well. Between March 1940 and June 1941, six children were born, several divorces were granted, and there were two marriages between refugees and Dominican women. By 30 June 1942, the settler population at Sosúa was 472 persons, with 104 married couples, 158 single men, 38 single women and 68 children under 15.[48] While the number of people who 'passed through' Sosúa between 1940 and 1955 has been estimated at around 670, Sosúa operated at its peak permanent Jewish population of 476 in 1943. Incoming migration occurred alongside expulsions, as settlers were also removed from the colony for lack of performance and non-adjustment. In April 1942 the DORSA evicted around 50 settlers to the capital, Ciudad Trujillo, as it was then known, who lived on JDC relief.[49]

Flagging Fortunes

The vision of Sosúa as a centre for rehabilitation had been interrupted by the Pacific war, which terminated the possibility of significant incoming traffic from Europe, at least temporarily. The vision became routinized and de-romanticized in a relationship of patronage between the DORSA and settlers.[50] Dr. Rosen, Vice President of the DORSA, was ready to freeze the project in early 1941, not only because it was not performing as anticipated, and because of the low morale of some settlers, but also because it was undermining his theory about the viability of settling refugees in the tropics.[51] With a stable population of no more than 500, and no foreseeable arrivals, the colony's purpose changed. Rather than providing rescue, it was intended that Sosúa would become a 'second front' or experimental model for post-war resettlement projects. The projection was refuted outright in a commissioned 1942 report 'Refugee Settlement in the Dominican Republic' authored by the Washington DC-based Brookings Institution, which considered the 'future of the refugee'. The report commented on the long-term possibilities of European immigrant settlement in the tropics, the comparative survival of whites relative to the demographic and racial dominance of indigenous races, Negroids and mulattos, and fears of racial degeneration through 'miscegenation'.[52] The report also found that in Sosúa the amount of arable land was less than half available in the area; the paternalistic attitude of the DORSA threatened to diminish individual incentive; the health of the settlers had to be more seriously considered, given that there were 40 cases of malaria in the first year; and the cost of homesteads to the DORSA was $3000 per

settler, while it cost the settlers $1600.[53] The Brookings Institution report commented that until a self-sustaining mode of life was organized and sufficiently established to assure a reasonable degree of success for the existing refugee population, the project was an 'ineffective settlement' and 'extravagant relief'.[54] At 400 people, they commented that the colony was already overcrowded.[55] Yet this did not stop Trujillo from making further curious offers of refuge during and after the war. In August 1942, Trujillo offered his own 'Kindertransport', a home in the Dominican Republic for 3500 Jewish refugee children between ages of three and 14 living in unoccupied France. He offered to personally pay for the shipping of the children.[56] On 24 February 1953, Trujillo represented the Dominican Republic at the United Nations general assembly where he stated that the country was receptive to receiving non-Communist Jewish refugees, which he discussed in relation to Soviet anti-Semitism.[57] Neither offer came to fruition.

Several factors inhibited the smooth operation of the colony and management of work relations. Everyday communications between Jews, Dominicans, visiting agricultural experts and the DORSA officials were conducted in three languages: Spanish, German and English. Ineffective farming techniques, poor transport networks for the distribution of goods, the gender imbalance to induce marriage and cement a couple's permanent commitment to the colony, and the unsuitability of the area for successful crop production and self-sustenance all led to settlers' resentment of the DORSA. The paternalism of the DORSA was questioned with the arrival in July 1944 of Dr. David Stern, an agronomist with the JDC, who sensed that the colony was supporting people who had no inclination to work in the tropics. He helped push Sosúa into its modestly successful capitalist phase. He recommended individual ownership of homesteads, co-operative production and marketing, a move away from agriculture as the main industry, and that the DORSA disengage itself from fiscally burdensome maintenance costs. These recommendations were subsequently implemented under his supervision from 1945 to 1949. Settlers soon developed industries such as meat processing and a butter and cheese factory, among others, which remain today as the Jewish-run *Productos Sosúa*. Businesses were run as cooperatives, in which individual settlers owned their own farms but pooled their resources. A library, clinic, kindergarten and primary school were also established.

Testimonial Sosúa: Visual, Oral and Written Accounts

If the JDC provided the funds to sustain the colony for its first few years, anticipating self-sustenance rather than dependency, the settlers also bore a significant degree of responsibility. Did they possess the requisite attitude

and desire to remain in the tropics, displaced from a familiar urban and cultural environment? Were they willing to embrace the pioneering spirit, when their skills and abilities far exceeded the demand for them in the colony? In the promotion of Sosúa as a successful haven, and indeed to solicit additional funds from philanthropic and private organizations to sustain the colony, large sums of money were spent on the production of Sosúa as a model of effectively revived white European labour in the tropics. These campaigns of gentle persuasion were designed to quash long-held historical and cultural anxieties about the survival and adaptation of ethnic minorities, and also to depict the settlers as contented labourers. In addition to the private photos of settlers, which now contribute to the visual narrative of Sosúa in the *Museo Judio*, the JDC worked with Rosenberg to promote Sosúa's successes and the acculturation of the settlers. The promotion of Sosúa was a coup for Trujillo. The DORSA president, James Rosenberg coordinated press releases and worked with Paramount News to produce a newsreel and short film about this 'amazingly human story'. Called 'Sosúa: A Haven in the Caribbean', the film was released in 1941 and downplayed the Jewish ethnicity of the refugees, calling the colony a non-sectarian venture, with settlers drawn from Europe's 'heterogeneous stocks'.[58] In the film, gender roles were clearly delineated: 'women folk play a major role, attending to home, house and children. Settlers learn Spanish and are guaranteed freedom from discrimination'. The only adjustment they had to make was to tropical life and 'primitive surroundings'.[59] Not entirely dissimilar from this validation of the colony were images taken by settlers and photographers working for the Joint Distribution Committee in New York and other aid agencies. This visual record expresses gratitude to Trujillo and the Dominican Republic.

Sosúa possesses definite postcard appeal, an idyllic location of safety that is reinforced with the retrospective knowledge of the opposite fate that met two thirds of Europe's Jews. The positive narrative is further validated through the pioneering contribution of the settlers and in images of labour productivity, health and ethnic group survival. A selection of photos evokes these readings. Figure 1 depicts a female Jewish refugee admiring the view of Sosúa Bay, where the vastness of the uninhabited landscape overpowers the image. That refugees could be happy and deservedly indulgent is encapsulated in what is a timeless 'postcard' image (Figure 2), with four recently arrived refugees from England taking a break on the main beach in Sosúa. The reinvention of European intellectuals and urban professionals into colonists in rural environments is symbolized in this image (Figure 3) and its caption 'New Jewish farmer at work'. The image of the men (Figure 4) using shovels in the cleared yet desolate field suggests

Figure 1 A female Jewish refugee admiring the view of Sosúa Bay. *Source:* Reproduced with permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

Figure 2 Four recently arrived refugees from England taking a break on the main beach in Sosúa. *Source:* Reproduced with permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

Figure 3 New Jewish farmer at work. *Source:* Reproduced with permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

cooperation, adaptation and labour, and a refutation of the FBI's scepticism about the sudden reinvention of European migrant. The final image (Figure 5) from October 1941 is a celebration not only of the new births in the colony, but also of ethnic group survival, precisely what the Nazis intended to end. These images are just a few which have contributed to the positive narrative of Jewish settlement in Sosúa. Yet the testimonial narrative of settlers, in unpublished, published and oral form, can also be considered in relation to this visual record. Did the settlers embody, contest or elude the image of their representation?

It is difficult to generalize about the themes expressed in settler testimonies, simply because of the time they were recorded, interviewed, and the certain processes of elision and self-selection of content or impression that settlers want to convey about their relocation and its impact on their lives. Certain topics, like Trujillo's political record and human rights abuses, are not discussed. To many settlers today, Trujillo remains 'El Benefactor'. Relations with Dominican peasants or workers also do not feature extensively, especially in the accounts of early settlement, excepting those few instances of sociability, labour and intermarriage. References to Dominicans increases based on their

Figure 4 New colonists at work. *Source:* Reproduced with permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives

integration into the dairy and meat factories of settlers after the war, through domestic service, and in tourism. Noticeably absent from these testimonies are themes of social integration and anti-Semitism, though tensions between the settlers themselves certainly accounted for considerable friction.

Ambivalence shadows the testimony of Ernest Hofeller, who arrived via New York from Lisbon in December 1940 as part of the second Swiss transport. Among other themes, his testimony highlights the enmity felt by settlers towards Rosenberg and Rosen and also among the settlers themselves. There was a sharp division between Germans and Austrians, with the dominance of the Viennese, who were constantly exchanging stories of their past and recreating a visible European identity, such as the building of coffee shops in El Batey. The European influence was terminated with Pearl Harbour, 'when all contact with Europe came to an end. Everything from then on became American. American books, magazines, movies, food, cigarettes, and particularly radio'.[60] The gender imbalance and lack of romantic possibilities was a definite obstacle to settling in, as many men wanted to marry. Hofeller recalls that 'there were about 140 bachelors and to have any of these take over a house and handle the livestock, the farming, the cooking and all other chores without a wife, was out of the question'.[61] Affairs occurred between Jewish men and women, and the opportunity for mingling with Dominicans and American officials was non-existent, which contributed to

Figure 5 October 1941. Female nurses holding new babies. *Source:* Reproduced with permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

the feeling of alienation. Hofeller also commented that there was no contact between Jews and German authorities and no German newspapers except refugee weeklies from New York and Mexico.[62] Hofeller tired of this lifestyle after a few years, recalling that 'one day in the fall of 1943 I decided I had had enough of cows, chickens, Viennese and the DORSA. It was time to leave Sosúa and move to the city. Sosúa, where the hurricane lamps had been replaced by electric lights by then, had absolutely nothing to offer other than sitting around and waiting. I got it into my head that I had to be near the American consulate if and when they opened up again to grant visas'.[63]

The physical displacement from Europe had varying effects. Encounters with Dominican society were limited to a small incidence of intermarriage, which Hofeller says were 'frowned upon', and the employment of cheap labour. In many cases, the enmity between settlers and DORSA officials contributed to the rejection of the label 'colonist' or 'settler', and to a sense of victimization. DORSA expected the new migrants to work at farming and other industries to repay the DORSA investment, but many settlers saw themselves as victims because of their unwanted displacement. Certainly their cultural output during the first five years of settlement suggests that while the economic fortunes of the colony slumped and

DORSA officials sought to justify its existence, its cultural life flourished, continuing Jewish traditions of investment in cultural and intellectual life rather than physically laboured outputs. Europe was vividly transplanted in the Caribbean, reflected in the colony's unofficial language of German, and information and entertainment was circulated in the publication of regular newsletters and bi-lingual papers such as 'Sosúa Laugh', 'The Voice of Sosúa', 'The Bulletin', and 'Sosúa'. The performance of mini operas, and theatre, were made possible by the diverse artistic and intellectual backgrounds of settlers, a few of whom were concert pianists. Attendance at dances, coffee houses and the local movie theatre, showing films mainly arranged by the American Embassy, were a must for settlers. The Association of Friends of Jewish Culture and Theatre was dedicated to the preservation of Jewish values through the arts. Polish Jews presented plays such as *The Dybbuk* in Yiddish, as well as *Tevye the Milkman*. Cultural events included choral presentations, recitations and variety shows. In the early years of the colony, Orthodox services were held in the synagogue, the site of a former barrack, but without a permanent rabbi in the community, its spiritual life was subordinated to other concerns, yet still intermittently expressed: Passover, Purim and Chanukah were observed by most of the settlers and those who intermarried and their families.

Luis Hess was the first settler to marry a Dominican woman, in 1941. Fluent in English, Spanish, French and German, he left Germany in 1933, and did not arrive in the Dominican Republic until 1939, whereupon a DORSA official approached him to move to Sosúa, which he did in June 1940, to teach Spanish to the settlers. Adjustment difficulties were profound. He said: 'Most Europeans could not adapt to the climate and a very primitive life. It was a wilderness. And we were not used to working in fields with a machete; most of us were from cities. No one had ever farmed before'.[64] When I interviewed Mr. Hess in October 2003, at the age of 95, he said rather pithily that, at the time, 'most of the settlers were not very happy'. He had a farm, as well as teaching Spanish, and became principal at the local elementary school, opposite his house, which he did for some 33 years until his retirement in 1975.[65]

Otto Papernik's unpublished account is also quite remarkable as it records in intricate detail his adjustment, marriage and adaptation into Sosúa over a ten-year period from 1940. He describes his departure from his family in Vienna upon heading to Luxembourg in July 1938: 'I took along some of my clothing, underware (sic) and shoes and my mandolin, my favourite instrument and a small, old movie camera. The parting with my family cannot be described'.[66] His profile was not that of the pioneering farmer, but of a cabinet maker and furniture polisher, skills that were to

make him more appealing to Trone and the DORSA officials. Papernik's account details the difficulties involved in procuring transit visas to leave for himself and also for the other 51 potential travellers to Sosúa.[67] The undeveloped nature of the Dominican Republic reinscribed the developmental distance between Europe and the Caribbean. Upon entering the harbour of Puerto Plata, he recalled that: 'We saw very quickly what we had to expect, a few wooden buildings on the mall was all we could see. We were taken into one of those buildings where our papers were examined. A small group from 'Sosúa', our new destination, were there, helping us with the immigration process'.[68]

Post-war Departures and Stabilization

The end of World War II contributed to a marked settler exodus. Otto Papernik was among those who left for New York, though not until 1951. The reasons for emigration varied, but were mainly economic and cultural. Most of the settlers were former urban dwellers, and could not make the adjustment to rural life. Many went on to international cities and professional careers as doctors, lawyers, engineers, artists or artisans or craftsmen.[69] There was minimal replenishment: a contingent of 90 people arrived from a Shanghai Displaced Persons' camp in 1947, but the community never again attained its peak Jewish population of 476 at the end of 1943. Sosúa's 382 people in 1946 consisted of 106 homesteaders (on farms) and 276 Batey residents, marking a shift from rural to urban residence. The major gender imbalance was a frustration for the settlers who were reliant on women to assist with farming and domestic tasks, and the marriages that resulted between Jewish settlers and Dominicans must have had a nominal impact in relation to Trujillo's professed racial objectives, since it was reported that between 1940 and 1965, there were at least 20 marriages in Sosúa between Jewish men and Dominican women.[70] Education for children was limited to primary or elementary school, and the colony's hermetic, self-governing character ended in 1957 through political integration and civic administration as an official municipality of the Dominican Republic.[71] As settlers and their children were now citizens, parents feared their children might be drafted into the Dominican army and so sent them abroad.[72]

Reportage on Sosúa's viability continued in the international press throughout the 1940s and 1950s, in scholarly studies, and also in the local DORSA annual reports, with similar predictions about the colony's disappearing Jewish character. Many commented that the colony could not sustain departures, especially with minimal replenishment of a permanent

rather than seasonal Jewish migration. There were very limited educational opportunities for teenagers, and with incoming tourism and an increase in the permanent demography towards Germans, Americans and the British, the Jewish character of the colony was expected to dissipate. Writing in 1972, two American geographers predicted the 'eventual disappearance of the original Jewish colony, increasing Dominicanization of the farm lands and El Batey, additional consolidation of the farm lands, and significant tourist development around El Batey and extending into the former colonial lands'.[73]

This prediction has been borne out. Today there are fewer than ten Jewish families in the area, with less than five of the original settlers still alive. Once an intimate community, living, working and socializing in close proximity, the Jewish history of the colony remains in material traces in the town's streets and buildings, and in the memories of the very few remaining settlers, in the lives of their children, and in organized attempts to commemorate the foundation of the colony. The diffusion of Sosúa's ethnic character was accelerated with burgeoning tourism, occasioned by visiting aid workers and the sex trade in Dominican women. My visit to Sosúa in October 2003 allowed for a first-hand view of the intersections of a once-Jewish settlement, impacts of global tourism, and sex holidays. These intersecting histories make Sosúa in many ways a 'trans-national town', since it has 'long been an economic, social and cultural crossroads between the local and the foreign'. [74] 'Trans-nationalism' is a description of the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Settlers and the children born into the colony have expressed this process in their return journeys over the years, to visit parents and holiday, and more consciously, in their attempts to 'keep alive' the town's Jewish memory in organized reunions to commemorate the fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries of settlement.[75] To coincide with the fiftieth anniversary, a museum dedicated to Sosúa's foundations was opened with the contributions of settlers; its success as a repository was dependent on the contributions of artefacts, photos and oral histories, and it sits beside the sporadically used synagogue (Figure 6).[76] Traces of Jewish colonization are also evident in urban monumentality, for example in streetscapes and signage, and a monument to Mr. Hess at the re-named Colegio Luis Hess (Figure 7). Sylvie Papernik, the daughter of Otto and Irene, who was born in Sosúa in 1942, is part of this tourism and evidence of return migration. She maintains a local connection in calling Sosúa home. Her resort, Tropix Hotel, advertises its appeal on the Jewish foundations of the colony and herself as a living example of the town's refuge history.[77]

Figure 6 *Source:* © Simone Gigliotti

In the conclusion to their 1942 survey, the Brookings Institution commented rather optimistically that 'the Sosúa project may have great importance in demonstrating that successful refugee colonies can be established under tropical or subtropical conditions'.[78] This importance is now beginning to be realized though perhaps not for the reasons of successful mass resettlement as intended. That the colony failed to materialize to its unrealistic projections does not diminish the achievements of the refugees who resettled there, and the contributions they made, however frustrated and temporary. As Henry Feingold notes:

> The tragedy of the effort to rescue Jews by resettling them was that in order to be successful it required extreme efforts, a passion to achieve it even under the most dismal circumstances and that neither the nations involved nor the Jews seemed able to muster. In the difference between the energy expended to establish an Auschwitz as compared to a Sosúa may lie a good part of the reason for the failure of rescue between 1938 and 1942.[79]

This foregoing acquaintance with the narratives of Sosúa's foundation and memory has intended to humanize the regional impacts of war and displacement through the personalization of refugee experiences. The experiment of tropical colonization attempted the transplantation if not a creolization of a largely urban Jewish minority. It is hoped that the emerging renaissance of Sosua's complex refuge history in this commemoration year may bring with it a focus that revisits the colony's legacy as one of triumph and survival.

Figure 7 *Source:* © Simone Gigliotti

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Notes

[1] The Brookings Institution, writing at 30 June 1942, estimates there were 472 Jews in the colony. Other sources consulted suggest this figure did not exceed 500 in total. See The Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*.
[2] Michael Berry, 'Sosuas Fremdenverkehr wächst – aber langsam', in *Aufbau* (20 March 1981), 24.
[3] In April 2005, the American Jewish Congress sponsored an exhibition, 'Sosúa: An Island Refuge' at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. Accompanying it was a panel discussion with leading Jewish and Dominican scholars such as Henry Feingold and Ramona Hernández, and original settlers from Sosúa.
[4] 'Aryanisation' refers to the confiscation of Jewish property, businesses and assets by the Third Reich. For a recent study see Bajohr, '*Aryanisation' in Hamburg*.
[5] Emigration statistics vary. Rosenstock, 'Exodus 1933–1939', 373–4.
[6] Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 35. On general Latin America and refugees from Nazism, see Avraham Milgram (ed.), *Entre la acceptacíon y el rechazo*. On Trujillo and his offers of rescue see Haim Avni's chapter in that volume, 'La Guerra y las posibilidades de rescate', 13–36.
[7] Jennings, 'Last Exit from Vichy France', 289–324.
[8] Lansen, 'Victims of Circumstance', 437–58.
[9] See National Archives of Jamaica (N.A.J.) Colonial Secretariat Records IB/5/77/95: CSO No. 1341/41 III. Files from the Colonial Secretariat's Office document the diverse national origins of these internees: Germany, Italy, British Honduras, British Guiana, Trinidad, Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, French Cameroon, Dutch Sierra Leone, Norwegian Sierra Leone, and Romania. On Britain and Jewish refugees see A. J. Sherman, *Island Refuge*; Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews*; Joanna Newman, 'The Colonial Office and British Refugee Policy in the 1930s', 259–67.
[10] Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 93.
[11] Ibid., 94.
[12] Ibid., 93.
[13] Ross, 'Sosúa: A colony of hope', 239.
[14] Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 99.
[15] See Metz, 'Why Sosúa?' 3.
[16] Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 151.
[17] Ibid., 200.
[18] See Wischnitzer, 'The Historical Background of the Settlement of Jewish Refugees in Santo Domingo', 48
[19] Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 152.
[20] Ibid., 196.
[21] Metz, 'Why Sosúa?' 7–8.
[22] This also applied to stateless refugees, for example Jews in transit and in refugee camps. See Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 87.

[23] Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 197.
[24] Ibid., 197.
[25] Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 200.
[26] Nicholas Ross, 'Sosúa: a colony of hope', 248.
[27] The refugee phase roughly correlates to the period of resettlement and ghettoization of Jews. Ghettoization of Poland's Jews began in late 1939, and other Polish cities occupied by German forces also were subjected to brutal and violent segregation of their Polish, Aryan and Jewish populations. While there is much debate about exactly when Adolf Hitler made the decision for mass murder and conveyed this to his subordinates for implementation, historians approximate the timing for it to somewhere between June 1941 and December 1941, and even into early 1942. See Christian Gerlach, 'The Wannsee Conference, 759–812; Ulrich Herbert, ed., *National Socialist Extermination Policies*; Mark Roseman *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution*; Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*; and Browning, 'The Decision-Making Process', 173–96.
[28] Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 301.
[29] Sosúa was one of six possible locations.
[30] Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 285.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Total investment of the JDC/AGRO Joint in Sosúa was estimated at $3 million: a third in land improvement, a third in bringing the refugees to Sosúa, and a third in maintaining them for a year and half while they became self-supporting. See 'Dominican Haven for Jews Waning', *New York Times*, 29 Nov. 1953.
[33] Rosen had engineered the settlement of Jews in the Crimea Plains. See Kisch, *Sosúa: The Golden Cage*, 28, unpublished manuscript, in Lili Wronker Papers, 1984–1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Acc. 2000.220.
[34] Trujillo said Sosúa is a 'property of about 26,685 acres, contains 24 dwellings, a reservoir, and other installations for accommodation of settlers. The property has 4,950 acres of cultivated pasture and a large extent of virgin forest, with an abundance of valuable timber, which represents for me an actual investment of not less than $100,000'. See Wischnitzer, *Historical Background of the Settlement of Jewish Refugees*, 47.
[35] Article 1 of the DORSA agreement reads 'The Republic guarantees to the settlers and their descendants full opportunity to continue their lives and occupations free from molestation, discrimination or persecution, with full freedom of religion and religious ceremonials, with equality of opportunities and of civil, legal and economic rights, as well as other rights inherent to human beings'. Reprinted in the Appendix of Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 406.
[36] Ross, 'Sosúa: A colony of hope', 247.
[37] Metz, 'Why Sosúa?', 7.
[38] Ross, 'Sosúa: A colony of hope', 248–9.
[39] See Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door*, 146.
[40] Ibid.
[41] The homestead population was initially greater on the farms, but when the dairy industry became a more viable source of employment and production, and with the end of the war, the homestead population relocated to El Batey. Many of the

colonists refused to work in agriculture, preferring instead to work in the more urban area of El Batey where they could work as artisans and merchants.

[42] Symanski and Burley, 'The Jewish Colony of Sosúa', 367.

[43] Ross, 'Sosúa: A colony of hope', 249.

[44] See Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and good neighbors*.

[45] Ross, 'Sosúa: A colony of hope', 254.

[46] It is estimated that between July 1940 and September 1942, at least 10,500 Jews escaped Nazi Europe through Spain and left Europe via Portuguese ports, while in the six months alone from January 1942, the Joint Distribution Committee in Lisbon organized eight ships to transport 4000 Jewish refugees to the Americas, with Jamaica presumably among those destinations. See Haim Avni cited in Bartrop, 'From Lisbon to Jamaica', 49, and Patrik von zur Muehlen, *Fluchtweg Spanien-Portugal*, 187.

[47] See Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 292.

[48] Ibid., 296. Eighty-one units of settlers, including 28 married couples, 44 single men, and one single woman were either on farming homesteads, or about to go to homesteads. Other groups were considered as less classifiable, as there were 41 settlers in a more doubtful status, and 44 persons as semi-settlers (artisans, mechanics, and chauffeurs).

[49] Kisch, *Sosúa*: *The Golden Cage*, 84.

[50] Sosúa, in its administration, limited the mobility of the settlers, and promoted settlers' economic dependence on the DORSA.

[51] Kisch, *Sosúa: the Golden Cage*, 98.

[52] Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 44-45.

[53] Ibid., 102.

[54] Ibid., 332.

[55] The report did not recommend more than 5000 settlers, and that was contingent on the purchase of additional land for which the DORSA would have to raise funds. But the report did conclude that the 'Sosúa project may have great importance in demonstrating that successful refugee colonies can be established under tropical or subtropical conditions'. See Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 342.

[56] Report in *The New York Times*. 29 Aug 1942, 5.

[57] Metz, 'Why Sosúa?' 12.

[58] Roorda, *Dictator Next Door*, 145.

[59] Text from the film, *Sosúa: A Haven in the Caribbean* (Paramount Pictures, 1941). This film is housed in the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

[60] Hofeller, 'Timetable to Nowhere', 236.

[61] Ibid., 238.

[62] Ibid., 240.

[63] Ibid., 241. Hofeller was issued with Visa No. 1.

[64] Brennan, *What's Love Got to Do with It?*, 59.

[65] Author interview with Luis Hess, Sosúa, 4 October 2003.

[66] Otto Papernik (unpublished memoir), 18. Papernik was a master craftsman from Austria. He was soon installed as the head of the furniture shop in the colony. With the help of Dominicans, the settlers made the furniture for all of the homesteads: tables, chairs and small cabinets and screens. Thanks to Sylvie Papernik, who kindly lent me a copy of the memoir in October 2003.

[67] Ibid., 70.

[68] Ibid., 87–8.
[69] Papernik left with his wife and daughter Sylvie for New York in 1951. Destinations for departing settlers included the capital Santo Domingo, Israel, the United States (particularly Miami, Los Angeles and New York), Canada, Germany and Austria, and some Latin American countries. See Kisch, *Sosúa: the Golden Cage*, 139.
[70] See 'Vital statistics of Sosúa' in Kisch, *Sosúa: the Golden Cage*, 118.
[71] Sosúa's mayor was now appointed by the governor, and other services such as police, water supply and roads are maintained by the state.
[72] Denny Herzberg, the first immigrant baby in Sosúa, who arrived with his parents from Germany in May 1940, was fearful of being drafted into the army, and his father arranged an abrupt departure: he disguised him as a priest and put him on the same flight to Miami with other Spanish priests who were being deported. See Maxine Olian Apsel, 'An Island in the Sun becomes a Homeland' in *The Jewish Standard*, 15 June 1990.
[73] Symanski and Burley, 'The Jewish Colony of Sosúa', 378.
[74] Brennan, *What's Love Got to do with it?*, 18.
[75] These were held in 1980 and 1990 respectively. The 1990 reunion was attended by about 300 people including extended family.
[76] The museum was funded by *Productos Sosúa*, one of the most successful dairy businesses in the Dominican Republic, started by Erich Benjamin, a settler who arrived from Shanghai. It is now owned and run by his son, Joe Benjamin.
[77] See website www.tropixhotel.com and accompanying narrative.
[78] Brookings Institution, *Refugee Settlement*, 342.
[79] Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 125.

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