

TRUJILLO  
A FULL SIZE  
PORTRAIT  
(TRUJILLO DE CUERPO ENTERO)

BY  
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Casting a retrospective glance at the panorama presented by the last four years of Dominican history, the personality of President Trujillo stands out in gigantic relief; and as time passes and the perspective recedes into distance, his imposing figure acquires titanic proportions and shines forth with more dazzling meridian radiance against the drab background of our sultry past.

His greatness is not comparable to the humble hill which is made eminent by the surrounding lowlands, but is rather that of the Himalayan peak which dominates beyond our limited horizon, exciting the fervid admiration of the present, while looking with penetrating gaze into the future.

A. R. N.

August 1934.

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**TO DOÑA  
JULIA MOLINA VDA. TRUJILLO**

“To the tender motherly love and modest, silent virtues of the mother of our hero, the author dedicates this book”.

**A. R. N.**



# P R E F A C E

TO THE SECOND EDITION

I commenced publishing these essays in December 1932, that is to say, sixteen months after General Trujillo first took the oath of office as President of the Dominican Republic. I then published the first of the series, a Silhouette of President Trujillo, the most salient features of which remain unchanged.

Other word pictures in the shape of newspaper articles under divers titles have been published by me in the "Listín Diario" and in "La Opinión", from 1932 to 1936. In August 1937 my work "Trujillo de Cuerpo Entero" (Trujillo, a Full Size

Portrait) which exhibits some new aspects of his proteiform personality, completes the series. The present edition is a reproduction of that work, revised and accreted with other hitherto unpublished material.

As the reader may see for himself, what in 1932 appeared as mere intuition, or to some as a fantastic vision of the future, has now become a positive, tangible fact. What may have been considered fantasy has withstood the acid test of reality.

The upstanding figure of General Trujillo has passed beyond our frontiers and is now known and discussed in other countries and continents, detracted or defended by a larger number of writers of world repute—and that having had a little island in the Caribbean Sea for the theater of his activities, according to J. W. Vandercock—than any other statesman or personality in Spanish America.



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Much has been written and is still being written about Trujillo, but it cannot yet be said whether he has reached or not the culminating moment of his useful life.

The hero of a great battle has his name and his fame consecrated by History united forever with the name of a place. The glory of an attitude taken during one sublime fleeting moment is made eternal by the hand of Art impressed upon marble or bronze; but who can focus with definite precision a life so fruitful, so intense and many-sided, and which is still in the process of development? All that loyally can be done without distortion of historical truth, is to follow and observe that process of development trying to interpret its provident designs in order to ratify or to rectify impressions or judgments in the light of knowledge later acquired. Or, to use a phrase borrowed from J. Gunther, in his "Pilots of Peoples" where he studies and analyzes

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with wonderful insight this unfoldment: we must put our impressions up to date.

In the present case, however, it must be stated that though more than seven years have elapsed since I wrote my first articles on Trujillo, I have never found it necessary to erase one word nor a single line already written, nor have I had to alter any concept expressed. Later happenings have proven that I was right.

March 1939.

# FOREWORD

TO THE FIRST EDITION

This is not a biography of President Trujillo, to produce which greater abilities than I possess and a finer pen than mine would be necessary. This perhaps is not even a portrait; it is at most an outline sketch delineating the fundamental and outstanding features of a great character. It is an effort at interpretation of a singular personalty, expressing the conception which I have formed of President Trujillo, after prolonged observation at close quarters, contemplation of his work rendered and meditation on the words spoken by this extraordinary man. These pages contain the direct personal impressions —at times perhaps unconnected and incoherent -- but always a sincere reflexion of what the author has felt and feels. And the author is one who says what he feels and feels what he says.

August 30th 1939.



I

THE GENERALISSIMO Trujillo of 1937, Brigadier General Trujillo of 1927, and Lieutenant Trujillo of 1917 are all one and the same. It is all the same material, odorous timber of the virgin forest, the same sap of distilled sunshine; the same tree planted in fertile soil, ever green and laden with promise of future fruitfulness, in full equinoxial bloom, the autumn still far ahead.

His is a life free from brusque alternation and wonderful leaps; it is the nor-



mal and logical unfoldment of a personality predestined to be glorious.

The basic qualities which show forth in the man to-day are the same that caused surprise in the youthful stripling of yesterday; the gift to command, the ability to organize, conscious responsibility, intelligent patriotism, bravery, and above all, the urge to be superior, ambition to attain lasting glory. Trujillo offers the case of splendid development of the latent gifts of an exceptionally privileged nature; the wonderful manifestation of a select mentality destined providentially to carry out a transcendental mission, a superhuman task: the complete regeneration and reorganization of the Dominican Republic; a material reconstruction and a moral rehabilitation of the country and its people. This was a task of crushing difficulty; only a major hero, a Titan of genius could carry it to success with no intervening intermitence of failure nor discouragement.

Trujillo is an outstanding example of the truth that really great men can only be defined by contrasts, by their own contrary qualities. He is tender and implacable; serene and impulsive; poetic dreamer and stern possitivist, by his power of self-control, he is the forger of his own destiny. In him all is deliberate, even his audacity. He is frank, even to rudeness; at times his words are as hard as tungsten steel and at the same time as clear as crystal. He is a man of contrasts, but contradictions cease to be antipodes in him, because all perspective, the four cardinal points meet and concentrate in his spirit; they are patriotism, thirst for glory, intelligence and valour, and after converging they form one straight line.

Men like Trujillo are more apt for paradox than for hyperbole. They appear simple through extreme complexity. They are concordant in their incoherence;

harmonious in their very dissonance, they possess the harmony of a conjoint whole, despite the diversity of tones and colours, just as a bunch of many-coloured flowers form one beautiful bouquet. His sentiments, at times contradictory and incompatible, instead of clashing, they meet and are welded and mutually strengthened.

Trujillo possesses a bright mind, perspicacious and penetrating intelligence, quick comprehension and rapid decision, an iron will, well disciplined and great impulsive power, capable of the greatest exertion without fatigue; capable of hard and protracted work without being tired; capable of patience in toil without loss of hope; a spirit at once simple and complex, multiple and diverse; flexible and highly tempered as Damask steel; haughty as an eagle of audacious flight when confronting the proud; as soft as velvet toward the humble. Generous in friendship without



ostentation; severe without cruelty in the punishment of delinquency; never knowingly unjust, although sometimes inexorably unsparing; but always unfailingly sincere. In despite of his radical positivism, he is the possessor of a very delicate sensibility of soul, not to be suspected as existing in the breast of one so hermetically uncommunicative.

Hard, with adamant sternness towards the traitor; he is affectionate and tender-hearted to loyal friends. A staunch friend, but an implacable enemy. Always responsible; always profoundly human; always a man in the best and truest sense of the word. And something more, a chief among men; the chief.

Genius recognizes no barriers; it breaks all moulds; it submits to no fetters. Only the man who moves in the realm of vulgar mediocrity can be subjected to the

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monotony of an existence imprisoned between the narrow parallel lines of the ordinary. The average man is mediocral, he is the comon measure, the mean level. Trujillo moves in a higher plane. He is at home in the heights; but his greatness is not solely in one dimension, it has great breadth. It is not like a monolithic obelisk which points upward alone; it is comparable to a mass of mountains, which while lifting its peak heavenward spreads its base over a wide country; comparable to the Andes, the very backbone of a continent.

II

**T**HE GENEALOGICAL ascendance of President Trujillo is well known. On one hand he is descended from a Spanish soldier of cloak and sword. On the other side, from a marquis of France; two conquerors of lands of the New World, whose prowess adorned their breast with golden crosses. His immediate forebearers are remarkable through the winning cordiality of his father and the soft affability of his mother, a peaceful stream of quiet virtue. From his Dominican grandmother he deri-

ves his astute suspiciousness; from his Spanish grand-father he inherits his daring temerity. This strange but harmonious amalgamation has produced the exceptional, enigmatic being: Trujillo.

Trujillo's face is an oval of soft outline, characteristic and very expressive, of choleric passion when in a rage, illumined as the sunshine on a flower, when graced with a smile of cordiality. His eyes are always full of expression and of an undefinable hue not easily to be described; his gaze is penetrating and searching, and makes one feel a piercing to the very depths of one's soul, as with a burnished hard-pointed arrow. At times his glance is soft as silken velvet, and caresses with humid tenderness.

Trujillo, like most men of truly superior merits, is solitary and meditative; really one may qualify him as taciturn; thus, as is quite natural, around his person

there exists an atmosphere of dreamland and mystery, which weaves the webs of legend, the fanciful mother of history.

Trujillo's eyes are truly the windows of his soul. When he is engulfed in profound meditations, when he shuts himself in his own soul, his eyes become enigmatical, taciturn, as if looking through a veil into vague distance. These moments of self concentration are not rare with him. Frequently does he close the shutters of his soul to remain retired within himself, free and far from the world about him. On such occasions his eyes acquire the vagueness of a foggy horizon of almost opaque twilight hues. Then all the light of his eyes is turned inward; in such moments the inside of his soul becomes the condensed glory of imprisoned sunshine.

Above his rather thin lips and beneath a well formed nose which denotes wilfulness, the black hairs of his close clipped

moustache are mingled with silver threads; and the same is to be said of the hair on his head, especially about the temples, premature grey exceeds the black, contrasting strongly with the juvenile freshness of his unfurrowed cheeks.

The open forehead and the curve of the eyebrows bespeak obstinate pride, haughty energy. This open, sprightly brow tells in unequivocal terms of the serene nobleness of purpose, of the elevated thoughts, of the creative and constructive brain which throbs behind it.

When in a festive mood, Trujillo's laugh is hearty and communicative, sans reticence, contagious. His humour is then expletive, and with small urge breaks out in sonorous laughter, which grips all those who may be near him.

Trujillo is a very modern statesman. He owns several residences in divers towns and villages in the country. All are com-

fortable, and a few deserve to be styled mansions or palaces; and they are all carefully prepared to receive him whenever he may chance to arrive.

He is fastidiously careful of his person. Always clean, always tidy, well groomed, well tailored. He dresses with elegance and simplicity. His neckties are famous. His wardrobe could be envied by many a prince; it is repleted by the best tailors of London, Paris and New York. His manners are suave and free. He is always at his ease, whatever the situation: circumspect and dignified without affectation in official ceremonies, gallantly obsequious in social functions; cordial and ruggedly jovial in the midst of rural workers. In military uniform or in civilian attire, his would be social success in the most exclusive aristocratic salons of Europe or America.

He loves women. His contacts with them show delicate gallantry; suavity in

repartee; he is seductively gratifying. A pretty feminine face is to him the best letter of introduction. Briskly graceful, free from affectation, his popularity among the ladies is owing to something outside of politics. When he strides amidst the frenzied plaudits of a cheering multitude, many feminine sighs and avid glances are elicited, as much by the man as by the patriot.

His figure is martial, erect, though not tall, he exudes a certain indefinable prepossessiveness, which causes a favorable impression and inclines one towards him and even disarms the hate of enemies. On two occasions, he has penetrated into the encampments of factious insurrection, with great peril of his life and to the greater astonishment of his officers, to whom he had given orders to await him at a certain place. The magnetic attractiveness emanating from his person, together with his innate gift of seductive persuasion won



the battle without a shot from gun or rifle: the insurrectionists put down their arms at his command.

President Trujillo's gift for complacent conversation is one of his most winning trump cards in his rich pack. His chats are sprinkled with irony and sarcasm, which sometimes bites without leaving any trace of its mordacity. His converse is pleasant and familiar, free from the stiff formality of diplomacy or the presumption of military authority. He forgets his position of high authority when talking with intimate friends. On such occasions his joviality surges up in spontaneous outbursts and his argumentation flows forth convincingly in terms of cordial companionship. The chief attraction of his talk lies, not so much in the gentility of gesticulation as in the tone of voice, which though soft, retains the metallic ring of command with the emotional sonority that fires an

applauding multitude and as by some magic spring injects enthusiasm in an army on the march.

He is fond of animals, but not so passionately as other men are towards dogs, cocks or cats. He has no hobbies, no manias. Nor is he a fanatic for hunting or fishing, nor any other sport. But he likes good horses and rides well and with elegance. Unlike Franklin D. Roosevelt, he does not collect postage stamps; nor walking sticks as did Edward VII; nor ancient coins as does Vittorio Emanuelli; nor lions and tigers as Juan Vicente Gómez did and Hitler's Goering does. Although he has lived in barracks among soldiers, he is no gambler; not even does he know any game of chance. He both eats and drinks sparingly, with extreme sobriety; he does not smoke. As the poet, Ruben Dario would say: "Trujillo is a professor of energy". On foot or on horseback he makes long journeys without

ever being tired. His agility is astonishing, his physical resistance, phenomenal. In hard travels in broken country, up in steep mountains or through quaggy swamps, he has outdone the most robust and vigorous of his retinue. A soldier by profession, having been trained in the army from early youth, he is, never-the-less a farmer by preference and a cattle breeder by vocation. He is a born sower in more than one sense.

Trujillo's first employment, when he was obliged to leave school in order to help his parents to maintain their numerous family, was that of telegraphist, which was the profession of his two maternal uncles, Teódulo and Plinio Pina, who taught him. But he loved to be in contact with Nature and his persistent inclination towards rural pursuits manifested itself even in his early youth. Later on he went to the School of Agriculture, which for several

years functioned at San Cristóbal and which was closed by the Government some time after.

The ups and downs of life with its ineluctable demands made him go from one place to another in search of a living until he finally enlisted in the army and entered the training camp at Jaina, not far from his home town. From that moment the star of his destiny shines with ever increasing splendour and ascends towards the zenith.

Since the year 1930 he employs his few spare hours of leisure overseeing and directing the work on his large and well cultivated estates where he grows a variety of agricultural products and breeds fine cattle of the best European races crossed with selected specimens of the old creole type. His horses and cows are kept in mangers and stables that speak the latest word in cleanliness and hygienic

installation, and are able to withstand comparison with the most up-to-date model farms and breeding centres of the United States; here he finds his greatest enjoyment. Here he feels really at home. He delights to hear the languid lowing of the cows; to see the frisking gambols of mares and geldings; to feel the tang of acrid odour emanating from the earth and animals; to breathe the morning air laden with the fragrance of new-blown flowers. He loves to look at the distant hills and mountains wrapped in an opalescent veil of descending fog, as much as he revels at the sight of the undulating sea of verdant pasture beneath the mid-day sun. He knows many of his cows and singles them out, calling each by her name, and they know his voice and like to be caressed by his pats on their rumps or necks. It is an undisputed fact that Trujillo enjoys rural life and feels happier in the crepuscular calm of the countryside than amid the bustle and ceremony of the

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city. The dense foliage of the forest, the ripple of the rivulet or the impetuosity of a mountain torrent, all have a potent enchantment for him.

Of the **beaux arts** he prefers music and poetry, though he has never cultivated persistently neither of the twain. True it is that in his youthful days he did write verse. Incidentally I recall a friendly meeting in which several of his most intimate friends were gathered, he crossed swords with the poet, Osvaldo Bazil, who responded reciting stanzas written by Ruben Darío, Amado Nervo and by Apolinar Perdomo, after which Bazil recited some of his own verses; then Trujillo gave us a surprise in the recital of a sonnet of his own production, written some years before he became a soldier. He was overwhelmingly applauded. Bazil somewhat crestfallen remarked later that the circumstance of being President gives a man a great advantage over his fellows even in literature. . .

III

**P**ERSONALITY in a human being is the result of a combination of divers factors—ethnical, atavical, social atmosphere and education—all contribute in the moulding of a character. In order to be able to judge the Trujillo of the present day, it is necessary to know the boy and young man of yesterday and see him through past struggles, see him overcome obstacles, shake off deceptions, cherish his ambition in the face of disappointment and contrariety, without ever being down-hearted. He had to go through this maze of dark

clouds and contrary winds before emerging in the clear firmament, a bright star of the first magnitude.

Not all has been for him a life of ease, but to men of his mettle obstacles serve only to spur them onward. Disappointments incite his will to conquer and urge him on in new endeavours. His road to success has been strewn with encumbrance. The arrows of anonymous contumely, the claw of hypocrisy and envious dissembling, and even the dirks of treason have been thrown at him in the hope of baffling him. But he has triumphed, and we cannot but recognize that few men have attained so complete a victory over adverse forces, so ponderous as this triumph of Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo.

Taking his stand on the very Dominican ground of democratic conviction, he has never acknowledged the *raison d'être*



of disturbing differences whether social, racial or political in this country. He has swept away the swarm of suckers and parasites, who harbored by the tolerant complicity of the Powers that were, found their fat and succour in politics. The old self-sufficient patriarchs of the upper classes of society who claimed a strict monopoly of mediocre intelligence and political prestige have been shaken and roused from comfortable laziness and forced to take their due in subordinate place in the ranks of the New Republic forged by Trujillo, while the process of revaluation, still unfinished, goes on unremittingly.

Trujillo is a man who never loses sight of his chief objective. He knows what he wants and where to find it. He trusts not to chance; he lays his plans carefully with a margin for unforeseen contingencies. So it is not very easy to take him by surprise. Usually it is he who surprises his

adversaries. When he was twenty years old, he said to a friend: "I'm going to enlist in the army, and I shall not stop until I become a general". Neither did he stop there; but he knows how "to bide a wee" as a Scott would say.

In the year 1928 President Horacio Vásquez forced through Congress the prolongation of his term, which constitutionally was four years, to six years. This he did without taking account of the fact that by wrong doing he released those under him from their legal and moral obligations toward him. Trujillo had already become a man of powerful influence throughout the country. It even may be said that ever since then he has governed the Republic, as being the depositary of the armed forces, he had everything in his hands; whether it was to be peace and stability or the terrors of war, the decision was up to him. If there was anyone who did not see this, he

was truly shortsighted. Never-the-less Trujillo took no leap, which might have resulted in a fall. Like Essex, "fain would he climb, but feared to fall" and his prudent self dictated the Elizabethan advice: "if thy heart fail thee, climb not at all" Unlike Essex, Trujillo, through his unshaken self control, his insatiate upward urge notwithstanding, has overcome all pitfalls and saved his ever dominant personality.

He saw with pain and pity the disintegrating lack of organization, the suicidal indiscipline, and with hard repressed indignation the frauds and squanders of malversation of a government rushing blindly to its fall; despite of insistent incitation on the part of the impatient, he remained aloof and strong in his barracks and forts, with great resources at his command. He, who is brave and audacious, remained calm, serene, vigilant. No impulsiveness, no impetuosity; the doors were

unhinged, there was no need to force them open; his day was at hand. He was sure that it would come. It did come; not sooner nor later. It came in the due appointed time. Therefore we call him providential. His personal characteristics and the especial unforeseen circumstances in which the country was engulfed when he took the helm and came to the relief, justify his title to the epithet. In this light, his assumption of the Presidency in 1930 was only a natural, logical consequence. It was simply consistent. Of such a man at the head of the Administration, not otherwise could be the outcome. The fates were adverse, contrary circumstances opposed him; but, as he alone could, he has conquered them. Only those who have had the privilege to be near to him in the bitter moments of despondency; only those who have seen him, hour after hour, struggle with titanic strenuosity, with indefatigable persistence in the search for

solution of apparently insolvable problems and have witnessed how he has evinced new hope out of discouragement; only those who have seen his gigantic will force surmount the unsurmountable difficulties laid in his way, can take full account of the potentiality of the man who, sacrificing his quiet rest through sleepless nights, who has gone through mental torture caused by painful cavilation, in a colossal task, has come forth in simple triumph announcing: "at last the Budget is balanced, the deficit has been wiped out". Yes, only the few persons who have been near him know how hard he has worked. Only they know what exhausting fatigue he has endured, having in his own and only hands all the entangled threads of the administration and politics, the tortuous, fallacious politics traditionally practised in the Dominican Republic. Having to sit and see, having to listen to and talk with men of so different stamps, each with his burden of pain or of

selfseeking interest, to patiently ponder over so much truth and too much mendacity; when concentrating his powerful mind on the abstruse problems of State, to be interrupted and obliged to hasten to put down the hydra of sedition wherever and whenever it should try to lift its serpent head, this has been his envied lot. But very few have been sufficiently intimate with him to appreciate the moral anguish, the unrelenting struggle, the heart bleeding that his colossal triumph has cost. The great public is only aware of the fact that peace reigns throughout the country.

As I have already stated, one of the most potent influences which have contributed to the formation of his character and to the development of his inborn inclination to self restraint and to the disciplining of instinctive impulse, is undoubtedly his military training which commenced during his early youth. The ambient of the army exerted a salutary restrictive influence

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towards sobriety just when his juvenile imagination was apt to be tempted irresistibly by the lure of wine and women. In him is not to be found the false austerity, the jesuitic hypocrisy of the dissembler, who would hide his moral filthiness beneath a flaxen fledge of joviality. His sprightliness is frank and cordial, but never indulges in excess. As a gay yeoman he has sown his "wild oats", but with veteran restraint, it was not in vain that he has spent three lustres in military quarters, with the conscions obligation to set a good example for his subordinates to follow.

Patriotism, thirst for glory, intelligence and valour; here we have the four foundation stones of his robust personality, and upon these granitic foundations he has erected the monolithic column of his astonishing success as a ruler.

Generalissimo Trujillo possesses the sense of human penetration in rare mea-

sure and his personal experience in life, that pitiless school-mistress that has left her impression on his heart and mind, has taught him to be comprehensive.

He is ardently affectionate towards his family, and is sedulous in his friendships, in a degree incredible in a man of state, on whom the constant struggle with politicians is hardening, as always is the frequent contact with the lower instincts and baser promptings of the beast hidden in man. True, he is still a young man, and youth is sheathed against the contamination of plotting selfishness.

His boundless love for his little son, Ramfis was evidenced when the child was suffering from an illness, in which his life was in imminent danger. Then all the pent-up tenderness burst forth; during those long hours of anguish and uncertainty, the sufferings of the loving father were greater than those of the beloved child



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Oh! what cruel anxiety alternating with remissive hope!

The dark, silent sadness of that soul-rending vigil was pitiable to see in one so strong and untiring under physical exertion of the most strenuous nature. That was a long extenuating journey through the craggy lanes of doubt and sorrow. But it ended well; the clouds went past. The pale, wan cheeks of the child began to acquire a rosy tint; the light of returning health gave back their lost luster to his large, brown eyes. The merry sprightliness of healthy childhood was there again, and the affectionate father was once more a happy man.

One cannot mention the good qualities of Generalissimo Trujillo without especial stress upon the generosity of his great, kind heart, which is one of the brightest lights of his robust personality. Profoundly and sincerely humane, his works of philanthropy

are done in silence; his stimulating help is given without stint, spontaneously and without ostentation; and his left hand knows not what good his right hand is doing. Those good deeds done are numerous and often repeated. There is not a town or village in the Republic, never mind how small and insignificant it may be, but holds within its narrow precinct many grateful hearts for benefits opportunely given by his munificent hand. Generous gifts freely given, with not even a shadow of theatrical show-off, without political calculation, given in simple obeisance to his innate open-handed temperament. All those who have lived in touch with Trujillo know that when he outstretches a lavishing hand to a friend, he does it for his own generous satisfaction, never thinking of any possible recompense. Yes, I have well said: his natural temperament is altruistic; he rejoices in the alleviation of suffering and he is always pleased to be able to con-

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tribute to the well-being of his neighbor. He never opposes a deaf ear to the pleading of want; nor does he look with disdain upon imploring adversity. Mercy "falleth like the gentle rain from heaven" and flows from his kind heart.



IV

**T**HERE IS in every individual a predominating spiritual trait—either good or bad—to which all the rest of his being is subordinated; his affection, his passions and the other proclivities of mind and of heart recede to second place. For example, in a man in whom avarice is the outstanding characteristic, his hardened sordiness eclipses all the other degrading passions and vices. Should he be naturally timorous, his avarice will make him brave even to temerity in defense of his grasping; if he be inclined to lasci-

viousness, his avarice will compel him to appear chaste; if obtuse, his insatiable thirst for lucre will sharpen his dormant intelligence; notwithstanding his moral depravity, his horror of expense may make him look like a model of parsimonious virtue.

Trujillo's brilliant success is the result of a happy combination and coordination of fundamental qualities that make up his personality; his patriotism, his ambition to attain glory, the constant urge to surpass himself; and these traits are unerring signs of the superior man that he is. Unlike a certain King of France, reputed to have often said "après nous le déluge", and also unlike another President of the Dominican Republic who cynically affirmed his disregard for the verdict of History saying: "yo no he de leer mi historia" (I shall not read what history will say of me), Trujillo, in all his acts has ever in mind the judgment of posterity. Little

wonder therefore that he seeks immortal glory!

If it were possible to deprive Trujillo of his ambition, he would become inexplicable; shorn of his pervading patriotism, his personality would lose all its charm, and History would have no interest in him. Many presidents of the Republic have preceded him, but none has equaled him. He is truly Dominican; aggressively proud of his nationality and of his nationalism; he aspires to win the love of his fellow-countrymen as his greatest recompense for his untiring efforts for the welfare and the aggrandizement of this his native land. He has awakened, as none other could, the dormant sense of national dignity in the Dominican people and has transmitted to them his profound faith in himself and in the prodigious destiny of the Dominican Republic.

Before the year 1930, three men stand out in stark relief in the history of Domi-

nican politics, by reason of the long years during which they ruled the Republic, and because of the undeniable influence they have exercised on the life of the Nation. Their names are Pedro Santana, Buenaventura Báez and Ulises Heureaux, and each one of these three names fills a period, an epoch. Their predecessors lacked the prerequisites for domination, and so have those that came after them. But those three men possessed extraordinary qualities, some good and many bad ones; however, neither the stupenduous valour and political insight of Santana; nor the keen intelligence and perspicacity of Báez; nor the foxlike astuteness and insuperable ability of Heureaux in the handling of men, could save them from the just censure of history or wipe off the indelible stains from their reputations. Santana concocted and consummated the annexation of the country to Spain. Báez rented the Bay of Samaná to the United States



and solicited the annexation of the Republic to that nation. Heureaux brought about the financial ruin of the country by onerous foreign loans and squandering the money received, and by the fraudulent sale of a strip of territory to Haiti. Neither of the three had any thought for the future welfare of the country. They had no ideals; no faith in the destinies of the Republic. Their pervading ambition was for power, to retain power for the selfish enjoyment of power and all that limitless power can give. They were lacking, deplorably lacking, in true patriotism; the quality with which Trujillo is so richly endowed.

From now henceforth the Dominican people feel a justified sense of security; no future Chief of State will dare to tamper with the sovereignty and stability of the Nation; no-one durst traffic with the sacred rights of the Dominican people. Trujillo has shown the way. He has established

the norm, and when he shall have passed into History, the index of his hand will continue to point out to future generations the highroad to honor and national dignity.

At the beginning of Trujillo's public career there were many who stigmatized him as a **parvenu**, an improvised personage. He was not a college graduate; he had never before figured in the political scenario; he was no rebellious bush-whacker. But his critics and adversaries have found out their error; they have repented of their mistake. However, their repentance is unnecessary: long ago has he forgiven the unjust moral injury of the presumptuous proud, the calumny of the envious, the ambushes of the conspirators. He has shown a spirit of tolerance and conciliation which has convinced the world of his firm purpose to be in reality, not the chief of a group or party, but the President of the whole Dominican Nation.

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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People of superficial mentality, who never strive to penetrate the underlying sense and reason of things are always apt to judge hastily, almost always erroneously; so it is not at all strange that in judging Trujillo's actions, they have misinterpreted his intentions. Smug lovers of their personal ease and comfort, they are incapable of any sacrifice in behalf of any spiritual ideal or noble motive, they cannot conceive that any man should devote his life and labor to the achievement of a patriotic ideal. Such incomprehension is due to a lack of mental elasticity; and this lack has been very noticeable in the generality of Dominican politicians. Clinging instinctively to a blunted concept of conservatism and a grovelling pessimistic fear of change, they cannot bring themselves to understand the fact that the antiquated moulds have been broken, that the dead past is now buried and the day has dawned of a new and enlightened political

ideology. The policy of Generalissimo Trujillo is, though not in external form, fundamentally, intrinsically revolutionary. Revolutionary in the better sense both as to method and as to the end in view.

It is a revolution without bullets nor bloodshed, but which spells a complete, transcendental transformation of the practise of administration and in the concept of what constitutes a good government for the Dominican people.

To Trujillo, the lack of understanding on the part of his critics, has been a stimulus rather than an obstacle. He has found strength in his isolation; it has given him time to concentrate and coordinate his ideas, to accumulate impulsive energies. That which in others would be the cause and excuse of discouragement, has turned out to be in him a source of unexpected strength. His ardent youth lightens the fires of enthusiasm in the

hearth where senile sloth had quenched them.

Granted the general lack of understanding in the so called professional politicians, the fact that to them Trujillo's complex temperament should be a labyrinthic puzzle is quite natural. His personality presents so many and such varied phases! As time passes, new and unexpected veins of rich metal are discovered in the prolific mine of his powerful brain. Different aspects, new modalities may follow in bafflingly quick succession. Some observer has remarked: "with Trujillo we never know what to expect next" his decisions are so surprising. This notwithstanding, we may assuredly affirm that no act of his has lacked a justifying reason-why or an underlying important motive.

The great mistake of those who opposed him at first, was that they judged him

according to the old standard; they saw or thought that they saw in him the same tendencies and objectives, the same short-sighted passions which were the ruling characteristics of his predecessors. But Trujillo never lost heart, imperturbable, he carried on. He turned his back upon the augers, his face towards the common people. He looked for support to those who work and suffer, to the laborer and the peasant; to these he spoke the word of encouraging prophesy: "No hay peligro en seguirme" (There is no danger in following me). And they have had faith in him, united they have followed him to victory.

As I have already stated, the lack of understanding was the cause of the opposition which Trujillo encountered at the beginning of his career, that explains why they branded him with the epithet of upstart. He was and is different. He is

unlike other soldiers of fortune who through luck or by a **coup de main** have sprung to the heights of power; he has nothing in common with the political boss, whom party bias or, rather, party interest, has elevated to prominence. Trujillo himself is the sole creator of his success.

Trujillo has not to await opportunity; he makes opportunity, then grasps it and dominates it; therefore his success is not the result of eventuality, nor is it evanescent; his success is due to his efficient method, and it is lasting.

His military career is a vivid example of organized, deliberate planning for logical success. His record shows no leaps, no untimely promotion; but steady, gradual and merited advancement. From lieutenant to captain, from captain to major, from major to colonel, from Colonel to Brigadier General; and now, Major General, Generalissimo.

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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Step by step, rundle after rundle, with never a slip backwards, never stopping nor stumbling, always onward, always upward, he has arrived at the top of the ladder, a shining proof of conscious, orderly perseverance and powerful impulsive energy. Trujillo's success is a conclusive argument against the fatalistic theory that the achievement of success is the result of casualty, of pure luck. It is evidence in favor of the thesis that a disciplined will combined with a clear vision and tenacity of purpose can work the miracle; but there must be unrelenting effort and circumspection; in other and fewer words, success is the prize of well directed will force.

What has been called the lucky star of great men was no other than their ready grasp and adaptation to the development of their innate qualities of sagacity and resolution; and this is a divine gift that God only can give.



V

**I**N THE sense that the term is generally used among us, Trujillo never was a politician. The natural inclination of his aspiring manhood did not point in that direction. In former days, to call one a Dominican politician was the equivalent of dubbing him a bush-whacker, an enemy of public order, and Trujillo has always been the friend and servant of order. His moral contexture, his inner man was structured for efficient and edifying activities, for useful and methodical progress. "Slow and sure" could be assigned to him as his

motto. His life is one constant devotion to discipline and order. Punctual, obedient to legitimate authority, he has acquired a subconscious habit to be prompt and ever ready to fulfil the demands of his chief or of his own conscience; this has become in him a second nature. He is firmly convinced that without discipline there can be no order, and without order there can be no true peace. And this is the reason why he is so severe in the punishment of insubordination; which he considers as bordering on disloyalty.

Very soon did Trujillo take account of the gravest short-comings of the Dominican people, and that only by establishing strict discipline could their unruly temperament and their individualistic restiveness against all restraint be corrected or at least modified. So on his accession to power, he at once set about to impose strict rules of conduct in all the sphere of

government. He was convinced that only thus could he obtain for his country the good fruits of his strenuous labors.

Let us suppose Trujillo to be wanting the other great gifts and noble qualities that adorn his personality, leaving him his one remarkable gift for organizing and his unfeigned love of discipline, we should still have to proclaim him the most conscientiously stalwart statesman that has ascended to the Presidency of the Dominican Republic, from the date of its independence in 1844 up to the present.

His performance in organization has been widespread and variegated; but especially in two departments has his achievement attained transcendental importance. One is the perfect reorganization of the Army; the other, the scientific organization of the governmental finances. The lack of order in these two branches was always the weak spots in former ad-

ministrations, and the muckmuddle of the Treasury, the political embroilment and economic disjointment of the country were the immediate consequence and the direct cause or pretext invoked by American imperialism in its unjustifiable demands; the imposition of a Military Mission and a Financial Adviser, and a little later on, the shameful humiliation of foreign intervention; then, the total eclipse of our independence and national sovereignty (1).

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(1) Very plain was the advertence given by Mr. William W. Rossell, the American Minister, in his comminatory Note N<sup>o</sup> 14 of November 19th 1915: "The lack of fulfillment of the Budget, the fact that sums voted are in excess of probable income, the purchase of which no provision has been made, all this is considered by the Department of State as contravening Article III of the Convention".

And Captain H. S. Knapp, who in his proclamation sought to justify the Military Intervention by the United States, a year later, declared: "Whereas the Government of Santo Domingo has violated the said Article III on more than one occasion, etc." "Now, therefore, I. H. S. Knapp, Captain, United States Navy. . . declare and announce to all concerned that the Republic of Santo Domingo is hereby placed in a state of Military Occupation etc."

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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In order to appreciate the gravity of the situation when President Trujillo assumed the government in the year 1930, account must be taken of the fact that while the Administration of President Horacio Vásquez had at its disposal in 1929 a revenue amounting to fourteen million dollars, which was more than sufficient to attend to all budget disbursements, the total collections for the year 1931 suddenly dropped down to a scarce seven million, or say, about 50% of the former amount. On the other hand, while in 1929 the Government had to pay interest on the funded debt to the sum of \$1,082,619.00, Trujillo's Administration had to pay, in 1931 and afterwards, that amount of interest plus monthly amounts for the sinking fund, and this brought the payments under the heading of debt service up to the very considerable sum of \$2,890,000.00, out of a much diminished revenue.

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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During the first half of the year 1930, that is to say, during the last months of General Vásquez'and the first months of Trujillo's terms of government, the salaries of public employees went unpaid and the sanitary service and Public Welfare were sadly disattended; work on the highways that had cost so much money to the Treasury of the Nation had to be abandoned and they fell into a deplorable condition for lack of money in the Maintenance Fund. Many schools —both urban and rural— were forced to close their doors. Our exportable products of the soil fell to low-water mark in foreign markets, while the Treasury had for sole inheritance from the preceding administration a new floating debt of some \$3,000,000.00 for unpaid services and supplies. The credit of the Government fell to zero, and on several occasions President Trujillo had to resort to his personal credit and his own funds in order to attend to current expen-

ses of the Government. To make matters worse, the Capital, which is the chief city of the Republic, was suffering from the consequences of the terrible hurricane which nearly destroyed it in 1930, leaving its water works in a very deteriorated condition, the greater number of public and private buildings seriously damaged, its streets and parks torn to pieces and obstructed with debris; the debased value of what property did outlive the catastrophe led their bankrupt owners to cede their titles to the rapacity of grasping money-lenders. It was an almost total paralyzation of the economic life of the nation. The fatidical spectre of 1915 loomed among the heavy clouds that darkened the horizon. The storm seemed to menace the very existence of the Republic as an autonomous entity among the nations of the world.

It is dreadfully soul-racking to remember what we suffered, and more so to

think of what we should have been called on to endure had Trujillo not been there, providentially placed at the helm of State to steer us through the labyrinth. What would have been the consequence of the revolutionary movement which began on the 23rd of February had Trujillo not been at the head of the Army? How could the Treasury of a country in ruins have met its engagements, had he not been at hand to establish order where chaos existed? Who but he could have solved the problem presented by the city in distress with three thousand unburied dead and more than ten thousand wounded to be cared for? The hovering menace of hunger, thirst and the ravages of epidemic disease; who else could have coped with such a situation? Trujillo was the man mentally and morally equipped to handle successfully such a dreadful situation, and he did handle it with unexpected ability and complete success.



## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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In reviewing the achievements of Trujillo's two presidential terms, sight is sometimes lost of the circumstance that the universal public endearment to Trujillo is not owing exclusively to the numerous public works executed, but also for the painful tears, the shameful humiliation, and immense losses which his presence in power has avoided. Those tragic days of 1930, days of confusion and uncertainty, were sadly enough to fill the stoutest breast with pessimism and discouragement, especially as the only means in sight was a meagre, inadequate budget, even the execution of which seemed problematical in view of the rapid decline in revenue. But Trujillo never knew what it is to be downhearted; he set himself with inflexible resolve to overcome the apparently unsurmountable difficulties. He swept corruption out of the Treasury, he punished all defrauders inexorably, he put a stop to salaried loitering, he rescinded

the lucrative contracts granted to influential parasites, thereby undermining the power and influence of the petty provincial bosses. He endowed the country with an honest and efficient administration; and having put the house in order, by means of energetic measures —condemned by some as impolitical—, he turned all his wholehearted attention to the disentanglement of the finances and to obtaining less onerous conditions for the service of the exterior Public Debt. Trujillo is the only Dominican ruler who has given himself so consciously and entirely to the financial redemption of the Republic, with a clear vision of its transcendental significance for the future.

And it has been precisely by the mysterious working of providential destiny that President Trujillo, who has seen himself beleaguered by the adverse financial circumstances and pressed in the most

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dispairing world crisis, has achieved so much.

Far from fearing the imminent peril of failure which the accumulation of adverse circumstances threatened, he found strength where weakness was evident; with his back against the wall, he entered the lists in silent hope. There was not a bit of boasting fanfaronade in that strenuous struggle in which he engaged at the categorical order of a clear and patriotic conscience, and from which he emerged triumphant with the financial agreement of August 1934. This agreement while not fulfilling the ultimate aspiration to free the country from financial and economic subordination, gave a breathing space in which the country might recuperate; and under the then existing circumstances constituted a greater success than the most optimistic could have expected.

It would be erroneous, even bordering on injustice to judge the achievement of

President Trujillo, as the simple and foreseen result of the effort of a financier. Certainly it is all that, but it is moreover the miracle wrought by a great heart and powerful mind saturated with active and vigilant patriotism. It was not the problematical efficaciousness of cyphers and arguments; it was the unflinching tenacity of purpose, the obstinate pushing toward the final goal of economic emancipation that won the battle and prepared the way for the ultimate realization of our supreme aspiration to be a free nation in the full enjoyment of absolute and honorable sovereignty.

An eloquent and unquestionable proof of the efficacy of Trujillo's labors in administrative organization, it suffices to state here that all the yearly budgets of his two successive terms have been closed with superavits, after full payment of all governmental expenses. The Dominican Repu-

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blic is the only nation in the world that can pride itself of having done so portentous a feat in the midst of the terrible crisis the whole world is passing through. And this great triumph has been won by the sole, direct and personal action of President Rafael Leonidas Trujillo.

And he can justly pride himself with having attained such brilliant results, without foreign help, without the Improvement Company, without Dr. Hollander and without Vice President Dawes.

Immediately on becoming Comander-in-Chief of the Army in 1927, he commenced to organize it along lines of modern standards, and this work, which has ever been close to his heart, was completed with patriotic satisfaction when he ascended to the Presidency of the Nation. The rank and file are all devoted to his person, which they have set up as their stimulating model.

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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His constant preoccupation has been to see the men well fed, well housed in comfortable and hygienic quarters and to have them well drilled for efficient service in any part of the country. But the very basic foundation of this magnificent organization is the strict discipline implanted by Trujillo.

A year ago he made the Army a splendid present in the new Hospital, equipped fully with all necessary instruments of the most up-to-date type. It is a generous gift, paid for out his private purse. On the other hand, he does not tolerate bad conduct on the part of enlisted men, all delinquents are inexorably cashiered out of the ranks.

Trujillo, having organized the Army, which assures peace, then organized the Finances, which tends toward prosperity. He has thus brought about the present satisfactory situation of the Republic.

VI

**T**RUJILLO is not what is called a dilettante in politics. He does not play at politics. He is fully conscious of the great responsibilities he has assumed and he knows the meaning of the enormous work of renovation that he has undertaken and is carrying out. He lives on the alert. He confides to nobody but himself the direction of his policies. His are the sole guiding hands; careful and cautious, he watches the movements of his friends and adversaries on the stage of public life. His keen eye searches out minute details

that escape the scrutiny of others, or to which no importance is attributed by them. He formulates his plans carefully, and not often does he take counsel concerning them; so it sometimes happens that those who are in most intimate contact with him, and who by virtue of the position they occupy, are considered his official advisers, exercise little or no influence at all in his decisions; at times they appear to be less informed than the average man on the street. Trujillo is hermetical, and when he secludes him within himself, his intrenchment becomes more impenetrable than the Chinese Wall. Ready for any emergency-whether military or political-his sagacity and unerring instinct never fail him. His calmness when in doubt is comparable to his rapidity in action, once his decision is made.

No, it is truly said, Trujillo does not play at politics, nor does he tolerate such



## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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play in others; and this is a rule which admits no exception.

How deeply Trujillo is seated in the hearts of the Dominican people was put in indisputable evidence during the electioneering period which culminated in May 1938. Trujillo had announced his refusal to be a candidate for reelection. Immediately compact multitudes paraded the streets of every town and hamlet acclaiming him as their one unchangeable candidate. Women at church and in the silence of their homes prayed incessantly that he continue in the Presidency. Professional men and merchants in their offices, artisans in their work-shops, laborers in the streets and in the fields, men of culture in the University and boys in the country school; in the aristocratic club and in the café of the suburbs, all proclaimed Trujillo as the one man whom they wished to see in the Presidential

Chair; they admitted no possible substitute. All that signifies the active life of the land in its varied manifestations clamoured for the continuation of Trujillo at the helm of State. And although this was the universal will and desire of the Republic, Trujillo remained unmoved and unmovable in his firm resolve. His alarmed friends, protested and begged him to relent; his adversaries cherished new hopes and concocted their plans; but nothing availed: he stood firm. He must teach his country the great lesson of republican democracy; and on the 16th of May 1938, in obeisance to Trujillo's recommendation, the people elected Dr. Jacinto B. Peynado, the candidate advanced and supported by Trujillo, thus proving once more that Trujillo is the only man in whom the great majority of Dominican citizens have implicit faith, the chief whom they follow and obey blindly, unflinchingly, the sole director of the destinies of the Dominican Republic.

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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It may be truly said that the public peace has suffered no alteration since Trujillo arose to power. There have been, however, some plotting and two or three attempts at insurrection, but these disturbances were limited to certain small areas and have been stamped out in less time than it took formerly to muster troops and send them to the affected localities. The suffocation of these uprisings has been so rapid that the inhabitants of the vicinity have not even suspended their agricultural labors in view of the disturbance, when it had ceased to be; and outside the immediate theatre of tumult, the whole country remained in the enjoyment of perfect peace.

The restlessness and conspiracies of the few malcontents have been put down with lightning-like rapidity by the iron hand of Trujillo, the lover of peace.

A well disciplined army as the guardian of peace and a well organized public

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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administration, constitute the secure foundation on which Trujillo has constructed a stabilized government and brought about the progress and prosperity of the Nation.

Spurred onward by the intimate conviction of the unparalleled importance of the great work he has done, and which no shortsighted or selfish error shall be permitted to blemish nor destroy, Generalissimo Trujillo marches imperturbably, clairvoyantly upward to the realization of his glorious vision. His passionate patriotism is his sole inspiration, his irresistible urge, and each step onward and upward widens the horizon of his patriotic ambition and impresses upon his conscience the perfect sense of his constantly increasing responsibility for the realization of his great dream. Therefore he is never content with what he has done; more and better must be done. He finds the land

he has blessed with irrigation still wanting in productivity; he must plow it and fertilize it, even with his own hand. He finds the road which yesterday he built to link the city with the rural plains, too rough and narrow; he must improve it in view of the increased traffic in the prosperous tomorrow.

To him the journeys rendered lose importance; the triumphs attained belong to history, they have been left behind. The important thing is the work to be done. So every new task is undertaken with renewed enthusiasm and greater eagerness than its predecessor.

A Titan of untiring endeavour, an undeviating spirit, ever in quest of means to obtain greater prosperity, and brighter glory for the fatherland, he carries on, fulfilling his self-imposed undecidable mission. The claws of envy hurt him no

## TRUJILLO A FULL SIZE PORTRAIT

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more; the walls of incomprehension are dilapidated and fallen; the laurel of victory adorns his brow; his breast is laden with brilliant crosses. But his most precious and most appreciated guerdon is the love and loyalty of his fellow citizens.

This is the sketch in rough outlines that I have drawn of Trujillo the great, the miracle worker, and which I have ventured to call his life size portrait.

The End.



