

# 1937 Parsley Massacre

## Tool Kit & Resources



The *Border of Lights* collective has created the following resources to support awareness and action regarding the 1937 Parsley Massacre also known as the Haitian Massacre. For more information or to get involved please contact [info@borderoflights.org](mailto:info@borderoflights.org)

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## Tool Kit & Resources

### Table of Contents:

I.	Objectives	3
II.	Learning Purpose	3
III.	Historical Background	3
IV.	Timeline ( <i>Pre and Post Massacre</i> )	4
V.	Glossary	5
VI.	Geographical Background	6
VII.	The Aftermath of Oppression - 17 & Unidentified (Short Documentary)	8
VIII.	Activities ( <i>Grade</i> )	8
	- On The Map: Word Search (Grades 3-5)	8-10
	- On The Map: Crossword (Grades 6-8)	11-13
	- Reporting the Haitian Massacre (Grades 6-8)	14-15
	-No Papers, No Rights (Grades 9-12)	16
IX.	Solidarity Efforts: Community At-Large	17
	- Plan your own Event	
	- Write to the Dominican Government	
	- Start your own group	
X.	Suggested Reading	17

## OBJECTIVES

1. To raise public awareness of the historical persecution Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent have suffered within Dominican Republic.
2. To analyze the impact of activism by individuals, their networks and the media on the occurrences of human rights abuses/violations.

## LEARNING PURPOSE - Students should be able to:

1. Identify personal and civic responsibilities and explain the importance of this event in history.
2. Evaluate the importance of individual and society contributions by fulfilling civic responsibilities.
3. Evaluate when their responsibilities as a human being require that their personal rights and interests be subordinated to the public good.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Hispaniola is the second largest island in the Caribbean, occupied by both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Haiti occupies about 1/3 of the island, while the Dominican Republic has the balance of the island. In 1937, Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina ordered the genocide of 10,000 - 20,000 ethnic Haitians. The genocide was called the Parsley "Haitian" Massacre and carried out along border towns on the Dominican side of Hispaniola. It was named the Parsley Massacres because the word perejil (*Spanish word for parsley*) was used to identify who was a native Spanish speaker in the Dominican Republic. If the word was not pronounced properly in accordance to Dominican officials, the person was killed on site.

Trujillo was born on October 24, 1891 and ruled the Dominican Republic with an iron fist from 1930 until his assassination on May 30, 1961. Trujillo was one of eleven children born in San Cristobal, Dominican Republic to father José Trujillo Valdez, a small retailer possibly of Canarian origin, and Altagracia Julia Molina Chevalier, of Afro-Dominican ancestry. He was known for his open-door policy, accepting Jewish refugees from Europe, Japanese during the migration during the 1930's, and exiles from Spain after the civil war in order to integrate more whites into the country. This open door integration policy was called Dominicanization. Additionally he developed a unique Dominican policy of racial discrimination called antihaitianism. Antihaitianism is the policy of racial segregation/bias of Haitians and descendants of Haitians by Dominicans. Trujillo concealed his mother's ancestry due to his policy of ethnic cleansing of Afro-Dominican and Haitian immigrants. During his 30 year of dictatorship, it was considered one of the bloodiest eras in the Americas and known as the Trujillo Era (Spanish: *La Era de Trujillo*). It is estimated that he is responsible for the deaths of more than 50,000 people (*including ethnic cleansing of 10,000 to 20,000 in the infamous Parsley Massacre*).

## TIME LINE (Pre and Post the Trujillo Era)

### Colonial and Post-Independence Era

- 1492: Columbus encounters Indigenous people called Tainos on the island of Hispaniola
- 1697: Treaty of Ryswick (settling the Nine Years' War and giving France control of Haiti)
- 1777: Treaty of Aranjuez (France and Spain define the border of their colonies in Hispaniola)
- 1791 - 1804: Haitian Revolution and Independence from France (Haiti becomes the first successful slave revolt which leads to its independence)
- 1822 - 1844: Haitian unification of Hispaniola
- 1844: Dominican Independence from Haiti
- 1844 - 1856: Military wars between Haiti and Dominican Republic
- 1874: Treaty of Sovereignty and Mutual Friendship between Haiti and Dominican Republic
- 1895: Treaty of Agreement between Haiti and Dominican Republic to determine border limits.

### Pre- Trujillo

- 1915 - 1934: US occupation of Haiti
- 1916 - 1924: US occupation of the Dominican Republic
- 1917: Rafael Trujillo joins the US-created National Guard as an officer

### Trujillo Era

- 1930: Trujillo comes to power
- 1933 - 1935: Border Treaty Negotiations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic
- 1935: Definitive Border Treaty signed between Haitian and Dominicans governments
- 1936: Border Treaty ratified by Haitian and Dominican Congresses

### Massacre of 1937

- September: Killing of Dominican-Haitians begin
- October 2: Trujillo publicly announces the massacre for the first time during his visit in Dajabon.
- October 12: Dominican and Haitian Foreign Ministers draft a diplomatic communiqué which emphasized cordial relations and proposed an official Dominican government investigation of "incidents" of an "exaggerated" nature on the border.
- November-December: Diplomatic impasse between Haiti and the Dominican Republic
- December 14: Haitian government invokes the 1923 Gondra Treaty and the 1929 Convention of Conciliation. These two inter-American treaties which required diplomatic assistance of several Latin American countries to resolve regional hemispheric disputes.
- January 1938: Dominican and Haitian governments reach an official agreement to end the diplomatic dispute over the massacre. The Dominican Republic accepts no responsibility for its role in the massacre.
- 1938 - 1961: Intermittent Dominican state-sponsored antihaitianism
- 1942: The Dominicanization of the Border is officially proclaimed to reclaim the borderlands
- 1961: Trujillo is assassinated

## GLOSSARY

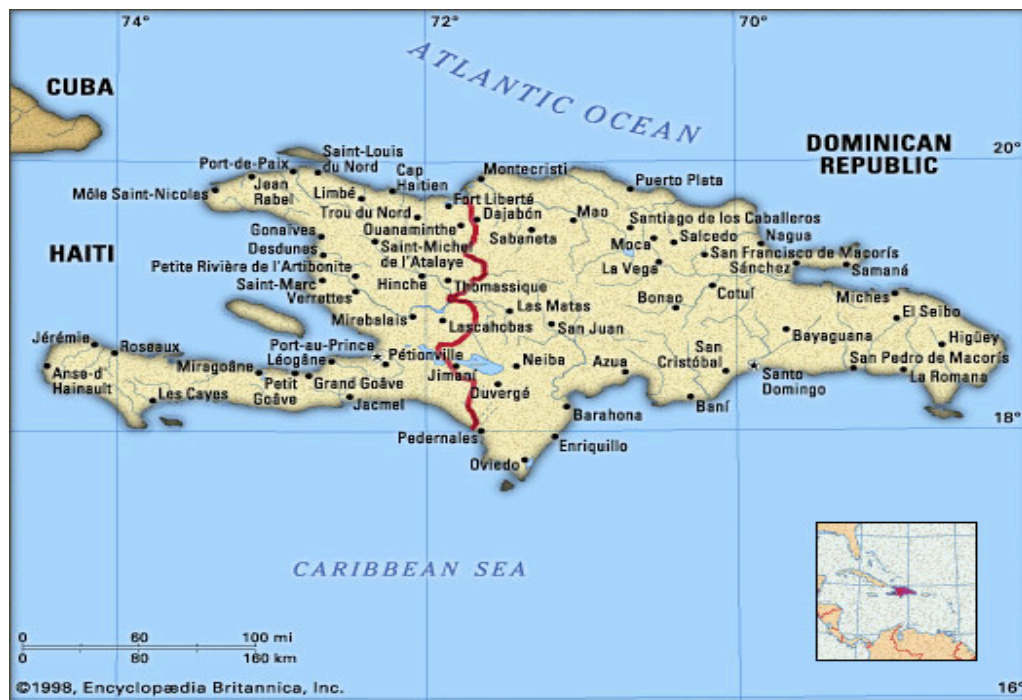
- **authoritarianism:** unquestioning obedience to authority
- **antihaitianism:** policy of racial segregation/bias of Haitians and descendants of Haitians by Dominicans.
- **batey:** poor rural community built by agriculture companies to house field workers; these communities have little to no potable water, electricity, access to healthcare and schools.
- **border:** defined geographic boundaries of political entities or legal jurisdiction
- **cédula:** Dominican identification card
- **citizenship:** associated with the right to work and live in a country and to participate in political life.
- **dehumanization:** deliberate efforts to lessen an individual or group sense of humanity
- **dictator:** a ruler who assumes absolute power; tyrant
- **demonstration:** public display of group feelings toward a cause or person
- **ethnic group:** a group of people having a common cultural heritage or nationality
- **ethnicity:** relating to or characteristic of a human group having racial, religious, linguistic, and certain other traits in common
- **ficha:** worker identity card
- **genocide:** systematic/purposeful destruction of a racial, political, religious, ethnic or cultural group
- **identity:** person's self-affiliation as a member of a cultural group
- **integration:** the condition in which all members of society or an organization have equal rights and privileges, regardless of background, race or religion
- **Leadership:** ability to guide or give direction
- **mobilizing:** preparing people to take action together
- **nationality:** denoting a person's membership of a nation
- **nonviolence:** a philosophy or strategy for change that opposes using violence
- **oppression:** act of suppression by cruel or unjust use of power or authority towards a person or group.
- **Parsley "Haitian" Massacre:** genocidal killing spree of 10,000 - 20,000 ethnic Haitians in October 1937 on Dominican territory.
- **perejil:** Spanish word for parsley; this word was used to identify who was a native Spanish speaker in the Dominican Republic. Word was utilized and assumed that those who could not pronounce the Spanish word *perejil* were Haitian; both French and Haitian Creole both pronounce the letter **R** in a different way.
- **persecution:** to oppress cruelly for reasons of race, religion or politics

- **racist ideology:** belief in the superiority of one race over another
- **Rafael Leonidas Trujillo:** dictator who ruled Dominican Republic for 30 years and carried out the Parsley Massacres.
- **Root cause:** Underlying factors that create community problems, and make those problems likely to persist.
- **segregation:** keeping people in separate groups based on their race or culture
- **stateless:** a concept describing the lack of any nationality, is the absence of a recognized link between an individual and any state; individual who does not have citizenship or nationality tied to a country.
- **Social change:** Any work/analysis that addresses the root causes of oppression and promotes fairness, equality, equity, and sustainability.
- **Sonia Pierre:** a Dominican human rights activist who advocated for Dominicans of Haitian descent

## GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

- **Hispaniola:** second largest island in the Caribbean, at 29,273 sq miles, (75,843 sq km).
- **Dominican Republic:** nation in the island of Hispaniola, occupying the eastern two thirds of the island. The Dominican Republic is the second largest Caribbean nation after Cuba, with the official language being Spanish.
- **Haiti:** nation in the island of Hispaniola, occupying the western one third of the island. The total area of Haiti is 27,750 square kilometers. Haitian Creole and French are the official languages.





- **Dajabón, DR:** The city was initially founded between 1776 and 1864 and has maintained a municipality since 1864. Dajabón sits on the border of Haiti, across from Ouanaminthe, Haiti. Dajabón is located on the Dajabón River also known as Massacre River, a name given not for the 1937 massacre but for a bloody battle that occurred during colonial times between Spanish and French colonial soldiers. Dajabón serves as a trade centre for agriculture and goods within the region. Dajabón became one of the strategic border cities which Dictator Rafael L. Trujillo Molina designated to abolish the existence of Haitians and Dominican-Haitians.
- **Port Au Prince, HA:** It is the largest city and capital of the country of Haiti.
- **Santo Domingo, DR:** It is the largest city and capital of Dominican Republic.
- **Puerto Plata, DR:** City was founded in 1502 and has maintained a municipality since 1844. It was known as one of the first cities in the New World.
- **Santiago, DR:** Santiago is an intellectual, educational, and cultural center. It is also a major industrial center with rum, textile, cigarette and cigar industries. It is the second largest city after Santo Domingo. It is the cultural heart of the fertile Cibao region.
- **San Francisco de Macorís, DR:** The city was founded in 1778 and has maintained a municipality since 1844. City is located in the northeast part of the country in the Cibao region. It is known for one of the most political active cities and has an active role in shaping Dominican history.
- **Monte Cristi, DR:** the City is located in the northwest of the country in the coastal lowlands, close to the border with Haiti. The city was founded in 1533 and has maintained a municipality since 1822.
- **Jimaní, DR:** Jimaní became part of the strategic plans of Rafael L. Trujillo Molina as one of the targeted cities to rid the border area of Dominican-Haitians, which resulted in the genocide of thousands of Haitians in 1937. After the massacre took place, Jimaní, was officially recognized as a municipality in 1948. The city serves as two connecting points to Haiti and duty free open air marketplaces operating on the border along with Dajabón.

## AFTERMATH OF OPPRESION

### Short Documentary - 17 & Unidentified

A film made by 17-year-old Alicia from Brooklyn, about Deivei Medina, also 17-years-old, from a batey in the Dominican Republic but who goes to school without a birth certificate. He struggles to find his own identity and Alicia reflects on their similarities and differences.

View the documentary here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc6ow3ijUKc>

In-class or Community-At-Large Questions

1. What does identity mean to you?
2. Who sets the standard on who receives an education or privileges in Dominican Republic?
3. Why can't all school age children attend school past 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Dominican Republic?
4. What does it take to stand up for a cause? Why do some people choose to participate in human rights violations and others are bystanders?
5. How do you measure social change?
6. Do you have to be a "person of influence" to be influential? Explain why or why not?
7. What can be done currently in Dominican Republic in order to stop human rights violations?
8. Please feel free to generate your own questions and start a discussion. Send your generated questions to [info@borderoflights.org](mailto:info@borderoflights.org) in order to be included in the updated tool kit.

## HANDS ON ACTIVITY

### ON THE MAP – WORD SEARCH

This activity is recommended for children in 3rd through 5th grade.

#### Map Activity

- Where is Hispaniola located in the world map? Is it in the Eastern or Western Hemisphere? Northern or Southern Hemisphere?
- Name the capital of Haiti.
- Name the capital of Dominican Republic.
- Where is the capital of Haiti and Dominican Republic located? North, South, East, West, or Central?
- Where is the town of Dajabón located? What is the importance of this location? What happened at Dajabón River?
- Name at least five border towns in Hispaniola.
- What is the importance of Jimaní and Dajabón?



# 1937 Massacre – Word Search

H A T A P H X D U H P S B M L O N  
C I L B U P E R N A C I N I M O D  
G S F O A I O R G I L O G C Q X P  
O C C N I T H S D T B L Z X A E Q  
D S Z S A N E W H I K L C Q G B Z  
S D F T I R A Y P D A I J H U D F  
M L C L K P B P E D A J A I X N M  
I I C I C N K A S K P U L F Y Y Z  
D K N D X F O X B I U R X Z V Q K  
B O R D E R T C K I H T M T G P J  
Z D O Q B S T R L C B U D D E A W  
X F C E J P X J J D Y Q T N F S Z

BATEYE  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
TRUJILLO

BORDER  
HAITI

DICTATOR  
HISPANIOLA

# Teachers' Solution

+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	H	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
C	I	L	B	U	P	E	R	N	A	C	I	N	I	M	O	D
+	+	+	O	A	+	O	+	+	I	+	O	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	I	T	+	+	+	T	+	L	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	A	N	E	+	+	I	+	L	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	T	+	+	A	Y	+	+	+	I	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	C	+	+	+	+	P	E	+	+	J	+	+	+	+	+
+	I	+	+	+	+	+	+	S	+	+	U	+	+	+	+	+
D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	I	+	R	+	+	+	+	+
B	O	R	D	E	R	+	+	+	+	H	T	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

(Over, Down, Direction)  
 BATEYE(4,2,SE)  
 BORDER(1,10,E)  
 DICTATOR(1,9,NE)  
 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC(17,2,W)  
 HAITI(10,1,S)  
 HISPANIOLA(11,10,NW)  
 TRUJILLO(12,10,N)

## ON THE MAP – CROSSWORD

This activity is recommended for children in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**Lesson Plan:** Students will create pinpoint areas on the Hispaniola map.

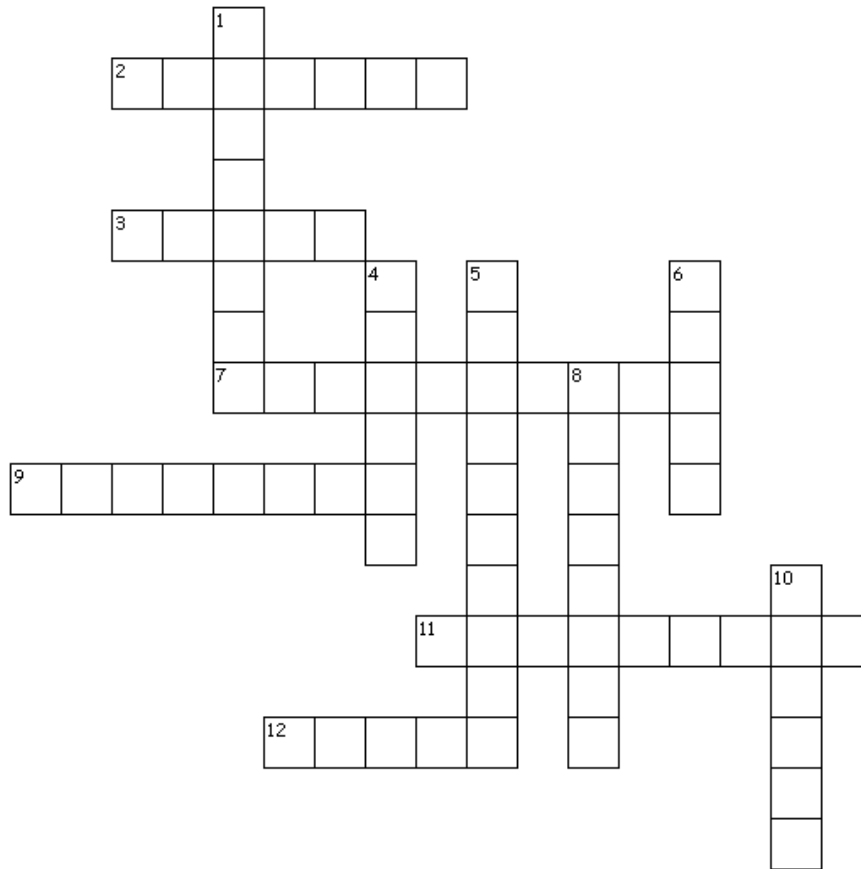
### **Activities:**

- Teacher will present the components of several maps of Hispaniola.
- Students will answer questions based on the selected area.
- Students will learn the difference between bystander and upstander.

### **Review Questions**

1. What is a border?
2. Why did Trujillo order the killings?
3. How and where were the killings carried out?
4. Was Trujillo or the government ever punished for his crimes against humanity?
5. What was the legacy the 1937 Massacre left behind?
6. Name three major genocides that occurred during the 20th century.
7. How would observance of basic human rights (*freedom, equality, and justice*) have prevented the Haitian Massacre? Give examples.
8. What is a bystander? What role did bystanders play in the massacre?
9. What is an upstander?
10. What is the relationship between Dominican Republic and Haiti in terms of tragedy, racism and opportunity?

# 1937 Massacre - Crossword



## Across

2. Spanish word for parsley
3. shares eastern half of Hispaniola
7. act of suppression by cruel or unjust use of power or authority towards a person or group
9. unnecessary killing of a large number of people
11. Republic second largest Caribbean nation
12. worker identification card

## Down

1. dictator who ruled Dominican Republic from 1931 - 1960
4. geographic boundary
5. second largest island in the Caribbean
6. Pierre non-violent human rights activist
8. member of a group or culture
10. poor rural community built by agriculture companies

# Teachers' Solution

## Across

2. **Perejil**: Spanish word for parsley
3. **Haiti**: shares eastern half of Hispaniola
7. **Oppression**: act of suppression by cruel or unjust use of power or authority towards a person or group
9. **Massacre**: unnecessary killing of a large number of people
11. **Dominican**: Republic shares the western half of Hispaniola
12. **Ficha**: worker identification card

## Down

1. **Trujillo**: dictator who ruled Dominican Republic from 1931 - 1960
4. **Border**: geographic boundary
5. **Hispaniola**: second largest island in the Caribbean
6. **Sonia**: Pierre non-violent human rights activist
8. **Identity**: member of a group or culture
10. **Batey**: poor rural community built by agriculture companies

## REPORTING THE HAITIAN MASSACRE

This activity will work best for children in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Lesson Plan:** Create a newspaper article on the 1937 Haitian Massacre

### Introduction:

- Students will conduct research about the Trujillo regime and the 1937 Haitian Massacre
- Students to create a concept map with using research gathered and delineate the following: Birth/Death- Occupations- Manifestations of Human Rights Abuses- Important Historical Events during the life of Trujillo-1937 Massacre

### Activities:

- Students will create concept maps with pertinent information
- Students will share information on their concept maps with their classmates
- Teacher will lead a discuss on the social, political and economical climate during the Trujillo regime and the 1937 Haitian Massacre
- Teacher will tell ask students how they would have reported the 1937 Haitian Massacre
- Teacher will present the components of a newspaper article
- Teacher will then present information on the 1937 Haitian Massacre under the headings: What?, Who?, When?, Where?, Why? y ¿How?

### Evaluation:

- Students will write a newspaper article on the 1937 Haitian Massacre as an eyewitness journalist using information on the social, political and economical climate during the Trujillo regime and the 1937 Haitian Massacre.

### **Review Questions**

1. Why did Trujillo order the killings?
2. How and where were the killings carried out?
3. Was Trujillo or the government ever punished for his crimes against humanity?
4. What is the legacy of the 1937 Massacre?
5. Name three major genocides that occurred during the 20th century.
6. How would observance of basic human rights (*freedom, equality, and justice*) have prevented the Haitian Massacre? Give examples.

**Newspaper Article**  
**The Components of a Newspaper Article**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** States the most important information of the article

**Dateline:** Place of origin of the report

**Introduction:** Summarizes the most important details

**Body:** Answers the Questions-What?, Who?, When?, Where?, Why?, How? The body Includes details on the most interesting points in the introduction. It can include sources of information and quotes

**Conclusion:** Recapitulates the most important points, indicates the significant of the issues presented, and can include the author's opinion

**Title:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Dateline:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Body:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## NO PAPERS, NO RIGHTS

This activity is recommended for children in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and Community-At-Large

### No Papers, No Rights - Garcia, Michelle "Amnesty International" Fall 2006

Download the article here: <http://bit.ly/O6H4wB>

1. What types of human rights violations and exclusions do Dominican-Haitians and Haitians suffer in the Dominican Republic?
2. In the article, why is the future of Dominican-Haitians dependent on the government's willingness to adhere to international rulings?
3. How does not having a *cédula (Dominican identification card)* affect Dominican-Haitians opportunities?
4. Since Dominican-Haitians lack proper form identification for their past (*birth certificate*) in the eyes of the government, how can they plan for their future?
5. With the current policies in place for Dominican-Haitians, how has the Dominican government created a permanent underclass?
6. What other opportunities do people in the bateyes have in order to pull themselves out of poverty?
7. What law was passed in the Dominican Republic in 2004? Since the passing of this law, why does it make it nearly impossible for Dominican-Haitians and Haitian migrants to be visible in the eyes of the country?

### Reflection Journal Questions

1. Name three major genocides that occurred during the 20th century. How are they similar? How are they different?
2. The Haitian Massacre happened in 1937. Why is it important to study it today?
3. What are some of the consequences Dominican-Haitians face today?
4. Are basic human rights (*freedom, equality, and justice*) a privilege for a selected few or a birth right for everyone?
5. Analyze the events leading up to and after the massacre. Could there have been an opportunity to mend ties between the two countries? How important is healing in this event?



## SOLIDARITY EFFORTS

### Community-At-Large

#### Join Us

October 2012 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1937 Massacre where thousands of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent were murdered. Border of Lights is organizing a two-day commemoration on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> to acknowledge the atrocious events that happened and to build a better tomorrow. Please feel free to join us in Dajabón, DR. More information log onto [www.borderoflights.org](http://www.borderoflights.org).

If you cannot join us please feel free to post pictures, videos, poems or stories on Facebook or Instagram sharing how you commemorated this day.

#### Host a Solidarity Event

If you would like to organize an event (*teach-in, dinner, art exhibit, performance*) we would love to hear from you! Our goal is to have at least 20 solidarity events around globe.

Interested? Need ideas? Register on our site and contact [info@borderoflights.org](mailto:info@borderoflights.org)

#### Write to the Dominican Republic Government:

Amnesty International Urgent Action <http://bit.ly/PX00gf>

## SUGGESTED READING

### Fiction:

- *The Farming of the Bones* by Edwidge Danticat
- *A Wedding In Haiti* by Julia Alvarez
- *In the Time of Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez
- *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez
- *La Fiesta del Chivo* (Feast of the Goat) by Mario Llosa Vargas
- *General Sun, My Brother* by Jacques Stéphen Alexis
- *Massacre River* by René Philoctète

### Non-Fiction:

- *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians and the Struggle for Hispaniola* by Michele Wucker
- *We've Got A Job - 1963 Birmingham Children's March* by Cynthia Levinson
- *If the World Were a Village: A Book About the World's People* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: Smith, David J.
- *Caribbean Connections-The Dominican Republic*: Callin, Anne; Glasser, Ruth; Santana, Jocelyn
- *Trujillo, Trauma, Testimony*: Vargas Llosa, Mario; Alvarez, Julia; Danticat, Edwidge; Díaz, Junot and other writers on Hispaniola
- *Quisqueya La Bella-The Dominican Republic in Historical and Cultural Perspective* by Alan Cambeira
- *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint* by Eugenio Matibag