



WORKSHEET: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

You are the representatives of the Dominican Republic at the Evian Conference. Prepare and deliver a speech with the help of the following information. Consider which of the following points can be made public in the speech, and which should better be kept hidden.



The Dominican Republic on the globe

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Flag of the Dominican Republic

wikipedia, creative commons

Background Information

- Population in 1938: about 1 Million
- The economy is largely based on agriculture (especially tobacco, cacao and sugar).



- The population of the country is ethnically diverse, and included people of Spanish origin, Haitians and West Indian.
- The country is led by Trujillo – a leader that has almost absolute power in the country.
- The USA has been a very dominant player in the region. In 1916-1924 it occupied the country, and it still has some control over the taxes in the Dominican Republic and wishes to keep its hegemony in the region.

Major points by the delegation of the Dominican Republic at the Evian Conference

- The Jews deserve rescue, and the American President Roosevelt should be praised for initiating the conference.
- The Dominican Republic is willing to accept Jewish refugees, provided they were agriculturists that met the requirements of national immigration laws: *“The Dominican Government [...] would be prepared to make its contribution by granting specially advantageous concessions to Austrian and German exiles, agriculturists with an unimpeachable record who satisfy the conditions laid down by Dominican legislation in immigration.”*
- There is a lot of productive land in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican government would provide settlers with land, seed and technical support.
- Scientists would be admitted and considered as special exceptions to immigration rules and regulations: *“The Government which I have the honor to represent here would also be prepared to grant special conditions to professional men immigrating who, as recognized scientists, would be able through their teaching to render valuable service to their Dominican colleagues.”*

Factors that influenced the position of the Dominican Republic in the Evian Conference

- Trujillo, the leader of the Dominican Republic, needs to refurbish his reputation after the massacre of thousands of Haitians in the country during a conflict in 1937. Accepting Jewish refugees on humanitarian basis could help him do that.
- Accepting “white” Jewish refugees from Europe who might replace the Haitian and West Indian workers.
- Accepting Jewish refugees would help to change the ethnic demography of the country.



- Accepting Jewish refugees may introduce outside capital and technology that they would bring with them into the Dominican economy.
- Cooperation with the U.S. at the Evian Conference may help to ease the American pressure and regional hegemony in the area.

Sources

Dennis R. Laffer, The Jewish Trail of Tears: The Evian Conference of 1938, University of South Florida, 2011. Fritz Kieffer: Judenverfolgung in Deutschland – eine innere Angelegenheit?

Verbatim Record of the Plenary Meetings of the Committee. Resolutions and Reports – Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 6th to 15th, 1938, Leo Baeck Institute New York: Robert Weltsch Collection, 1770-1997, AR 7185 / MF