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## **The Dictator and the Mafia: How Rafael Trujillo Partnered with US Criminals to Extend His Power**

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### Abstract

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Transnational relations between state institutions and organized criminal groups have excited tremendous interest among criminologists since the 1990s but have been largely neglected by historians, in part because of the paucity of source material. Thanks to the extensive declassification of FBI and CIA files, we can now glimpse the importance of such relations during the Cold War through a case study of the tactical alliances forged between powerful US criminals and Gen. Rafael Trujillo, who ran the Dominican Republic

with an iron hand from 1930 until his assassination in 1961. Trujillo tapped their expertise in gambling, arms trafficking, and even murder to increase his wealth and to extend his power into the United States and other nearby countries, such as Cuba. US organized crime bosses in turn were drawn to the Dominican Republic as a market for the kind of lucrative gambling businesses they had enjoyed in Cuba before the Castro revolution. They came on Trujillo's terms, as business partners and anti-Communist allies, never as rivals for power. But they maintained enough independence to stay entrenched in the country even after Trujillo's assassination.

# THE DICTATOR AND THE MAFIA: HOW RAFAEL TRUJILLO PARTNERED WITH US CRIMINALS TO EXTEND HIS POWER

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JONATHAN MARSHALL

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