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***Museum Publishes Landmark Companion Book to
Sosúa: A Refuge for Jews in the Dominican Republic
Sosúa: Un Refugio de Judíos en la República Dominicana
A new exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust***

New York, NY—The **Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** is pleased to announce the publication of ***Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa 1940-1945*** by **Professor Marion Kaplan** of New York University. The publication marks the first major English-language scholarship on this fascinating topic and is the companion volume to the Museum's new bi-lingual exhibition ***Sosúa: A Refuge for Jews in the Dominican Republic***, opening February 17. The soft-cover text includes an introduction by Museum Director **Dr. David G. Marwell** and will retail for \$19.95; review text is available upon request.

This important volume examines the experiences of European Jewish refugees who settled in Sosúa between 1940 and 1945. It explores settlers' expectations, adjustments, successes, and, ultimately, why most left the Dominican Republic. It further highlights four essential players in this drama: the Dominican government that welcomed the refugees when other governments closed their doors; the American government that agreed to the refugees' haven in the Dominican Republic and then callously changed its mind; the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint) that supported and administered the settlement; and the Dominican workers who helped build Sosúa. Dr. Kaplan has drawn from Sosúan community records, a variety of archives, and oral histories to produce an informative, accessible, and truly captivating account that explores the lives of Jewish refugees as well as the political agendas that inevitably guided their fate.

Dominican Haven illustrates the issues faced by refugees even today; Sosúa serves as a microcosm that can help to illuminate the political difficulties that refugees face on local, national, and international levels and the utter necessity of governmental, intergovernmental, and private assistance to refugees. But, *Dominican Haven* goes well beyond politics to give readers an intimate look into the lives of individuals, from their often-harrowing escapes from Europe to the ambivalence they felt toward Sosúa. Brought to the settlement to work on farms, most of the new settlers were of urban, middle-class backgrounds with no agricultural experience. The hardships of their new lives as well as the tenacity of their European culture compounded by their longing for loved ones trapped in Europe and the traumas they had recently faced complicated their relationship to their Dominican haven. Nevertheless, with the help of Dominican neighbors and the Joint, the European Jews transformed their settlement into a thriving community of hundreds of refugees, complete with a school, meat and dairy cooperative, shops, cultural activities, and a synagogue.

When World War II ended, many of these refugees-turned-settlers began emigrating to countries whose cultures were more familiar to them; where they could engage in their pre-war professions; where their children could pursue a greater variety of educational opportunities; and where they found surviving family members. While Martha Bauer, who worked as a nurse in Sosúa “really loved it there,” she “missed cultural life,” and left for the United States with her husband. Whether they chose to stay or not, all settlers were thankful for the acceptance shown them by the Dominican Republic, where they encountered “not the slightest bit of antisemitism.” In the words of settler Walter Baum, “It’s an astonishing experience in contrast to other countries and to the anti-Semitism... in other parts of the world.”

Advance Praise for *Dominican Haven*

Marion Kaplan, whose principal reputation as a historian rests on her studies of German Jewry, especially Jewish women, has studied a small but remarkable slice of German-Jewish history in the tropics. It is a fascinating story as Kaplan brings to bear all her historian's skill and literary lucidity, making hundreds of Central European businessmen and housewives, confronted by a new climate, a new vocation, and a new language, come alive. Peter Gay, Sterling Professor of History Emeritus, Yale University

A definitive history of this small and evanescent colony of German-speaking Jews in the Dominican Republic, Dominican Haven expands our understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and barriers to refugee resettlement anywhere in the world. The author, who is Skirball Professor of Modern Jewish History at New York University, makes full use of published and archival materials and oral interviews, integrating these into a coherent and fascinating story. Well researched, well organized, and highly readable. Judith Laikin Elkin, Founder of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association. Associate of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, The University of Michigan

Dominican Haven begins to answer so many of the questions we long held about this most peculiar case of refugee migration that changed the lives of those fleeing the horror of Nazism and of those in the Dominican Republic that welcomed them. This is a long overdue contribution that, through sound scholarship and a lively narrative, recreates a piece of history. Ramona Hernández, Professor of Sociology and Director of the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, The City College of New York

About the Author

Dr. Marion Kaplan is Skirball Professor of Modern Jewish History at New York University. She is the author of *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany: The Campaigns of the Jüdischer Frauenbund, 1904-1938* (1979), and National Jewish Book Award winners *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1991) and *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1998). She further edited and contributed to: *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History* (1985) and *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945* (2005), and was a co-editor and contributor to *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (1984) and *Jüdische Welten: Juden in Deutschland vom 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart* (2005). She has also served on the advisory committees of the Museum of Jewish Heritage for its permanent exhibit as well as *Sosúa: A Refuge for Jews in the Dominican Republic*.

About the Exhibition

Sosúa: A Refuge for Jews in the Dominican Republic
Sosúa: Un Refugio de Judíos en la República Dominicana

In 1938, a time when openings for Jewish refugees were hard to find, the government of the Dominican Republic offered to resettle up to 100,000 Jews. Sosúa, an abandoned banana plantation on the north coast of the island, would become a refuge to hundreds of Jews. The settlers were given resources to cultivate the land they were provided, and built a thriving town – one that still exists today. This exhibition will tell how the settlers were recruited and came to Sosúa, what awaited them there, what role the Dominican and U.S. governments and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee played in the story, how the settlers worked with their Dominican neighbors to establish themselves, and what kind of a town they created. Sosúa speaks poignantly to one chapter in a shared Dominican and Jewish story.

This exhibition is made possible, in part, through major funding from the Leon Levy Foundation, with additional support provided by: New York State Senator Eric T. Schneiderman, Former City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, City Council Member Miguel Martinez, and the American Jewish Congress.