



Christopher Columbus



Napoleon Bonaparte



Woodrow Wilson

Haiti: A History of Tyranny and Resistance

The following overview of Haitian history strings together a series of slightly edited quotations from various sources selected by Press for Conversion! editor, Richard Sanders.

Haiti's history is a history of foreign exploitation and domestic class struggle, of gut-wrenching violence and debilitating corruption; above all, however, Haiti's history is a history of resistance.¹

1492: Genocide and Slavery

Spain used the island of Hispaniola as a base to establish their domination of the so-called New World. Haiti's indigenous Arawak population suffered near-extinction. The Catholic priest, Bartolome de Las Casas, wrote that by his arrival there in 1508 "over three million had perished from war, slavery and the mines." This genocide can be attributed to disease, acts of slaughter, unrelenting forced labour, harsh punishments for disobedience to slavery and the putting down of resistance.

By the 1540s, very few Arawaks survived.² The African slave trade began in Haiti, initiated by Christopher Columbus's son in 1505. In 1519, Haiti had its first, large-scale slave revolt. It was finally put down in the 1530s.³

By 1600, Spain had vacated the western third of the island. French pirates later used it as a point from which to harass English and Spanish ships. In 1697, Spain ceded the western third of Hispaniola to France. St. Domingue, as it was then known, was "the pearl of the Antilles"—one of the richest colonies in the French empire, producing 40% of the sugar and 60% of the coffee consumed in Europe by the 1780s. It produced more than all of Britain's West Indian colonies, combined. During the 1700s, about 790,000 African

slaves were imported to work on Haitian plantations (accounting for a third of the entire Atlantic slave trade between 1783 and 1791).²

1791-1803: Revolution

Between 1679 and 1778, Haitian slaves organized seven major conspiracies.⁴ Following the 1789 French revolution and a slave revolt in 1791, Britain invaded St. Domingue attempting to stop the rebellion's spread to its Caribbean colonies.⁵ Upper and Lower Canada, as well as the Maritimes, provided not only the lion's share of the resources and many of the desperately needed soldiers for this conflict but also many of the commanding officers. In every way imaginable, Canada was an essential part of Britain's plan to smash the Caribbean's fight for liberty.⁶

France abolished slavery on the island in 1793 and freed slaves throughout its empire the next year. In 1802, Napoleon sent a large force to reinstitute slavery.⁵ France's 70 warships and 25,000 troops⁷ were supported by the U.S. which contributed the then-immense sum of \$400,000.⁸ Haitians defeated Napoleon's navy and won independence in 1803.¹ U.S. President Jefferson refused to recognize Haiti.⁹

Haiti's independence marked the beginning of the end of the transatlantic slave trade. For slave nations such as the U.S., the Haitian revolution was a wake-up call. Suddenly there was a new potential down-side to importing massive numbers of African slaves to be overseen by white masters. By politically undermining the slave trade, Haitians also undermined the foundation of Europe's economy. Needless to say, newly-independent Haiti was politically isolated and friendless in the world community.¹

1825: Debt Slavery Begins

In 1825, the French threatened to reconquer Haiti and enslave its population again unless Haiti paid reparations to France for the property that they "stole" during the revolution. (Much of that property was their own formerly-enslaved bodies.) So, under this threat, Haiti agreed to France's demands, and thrust themselves into a crippling quagmire of endless debt and institutional poverty that exists to this day.¹

The Haitian government was able to pay the first instalment of 30 million francs only by closing down every school in the country.

By the late 19th century, payments on this extortionate debt "consumed as much as 80% of Haiti's national budget."⁸

In 1862, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln finally recognized Haiti. In 1888, the U.S. began its habit of intervention when U.S. forces responded to the Haitian authorities' seizure of a U.S. ship that had landed illegally. In 1891, U.S. troops landed "to protect American lives and property ...when Negro laborers got out of control."⁹

1915-1934: US Occupation

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson deployed Marines to Haiti in 1914 and 1915 to "maintain order" in a time of "chronic and threatened insurrection."⁹

The U.S. invasion and 20-year occupation left deep scars on Haiti and created the military, an institution that dominated Haiti's political life long after the occupation. According to Wilson, the occupation's goals were to "pacify" peasants, control customs houses and diminish European influence in Haiti. Noam Chomsky describes the mission's many "successes":

"[T]he acceleration of Haiti's eco-

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conomic, military and political centralization, its economic dependence and sharp class divisions, the vicious exploitation of the peasantry, the internal conflicts much intensified by the extreme racism of occupying forces, and perhaps worst of all, the establishment of 'an army to fight the people.'" ("Democracy Enhancement Part 2," *Z Magazine*, Jul/Aug 1994.)

Other achievements included reinstating virtual slavery, dissolving the National Assembly and imposing a U.S.-designed constitution allowing foreign ownership of land.³

1934-1956:

Coups and more Coups

In 1934, FDR ended the occupation by turning the government over to a clique that looted the country.⁹ The U.S.-groomed leadership grew increasingly dictatorial, eliminating the opposition. Pres. Stenio Vincent, elected in 1930, decided to remain beyond his second term, but was forced out in 1939. President Lescot, elected in 1941, was overthrown in 1946 by the military. The man who replaced him was forced out of office by a military junta in 1950.¹⁰

Haiti's final debt payment (which had begun in 1825) was made in 1947 to the U.S., which had 'bought' Haiti's debt to France (Engler and Fenton, *Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority*, 2005).⁸

1956-1986:

"Papa Doc" and "Baby Doc"

In 1956, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier staged a military coup⁹ and passed legislation declaring himself "President for Life." He established an irregular armed force of venal henchmen, the Tonton Macoutes, to dispatch his rivals and help control the population through intimidation and terror.¹⁰

Haiti then endured decades of immiseration under the brutal, U.S.-backed kleptocracy. "Papa Doc" (1956-1971) was succeeded by his grotesque son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" (1971-1986), who inherited his father's thieving propensities together with the murderous apparatus of his dictatorship.⁸

About 50,000 Haitians were killed by the military and the death squads during the Duvalier period.

The Duvaliers were anointed by



The Duvalier Dictators: "Papa Doc" and son, "Baby Doc"

the real papa, the U.S., which had long been training and arming Haiti's military. Most U.S. military aid to Haiti was covertly channelled through Israel, thus sparing the U.S. embarrassing questions about supporting this brutal regime. After a popular uprising that led to the collapse of Baby Doc's regime, the U.S. resumed open assistance.¹¹

1986-1990:

Duvalierism Continues

While Haiti's wretched rabble celebrated the end of Duvalierism, the U.S. was occupied in preserving it under new names.⁵ Haitians thus endured a period of "Duvalierism without Duvalier," punctuated by coup d'états, voting-day massacres and military governments.³

On the day after "Baby Doc's" departure in 1986, U.S. military cargo planes were disgorging small arms and ammunition in Haiti—apparently to ensure that successors to the Tontons Macoutes were equipped to deal with any possible outbreak of democracy in a form unpalatable to the CIA.

Within three weeks, the U.S. announced it was providing Haiti with \$26.6 million in economic and military aid, and in April it was reported that "Another \$4 million is being sought to provide the Haitian Army with trucks, training and communications gear to allow it to move around the country and maintain order."

Maintaining order in Haiti translates to domestic repression and control. In the 21 months between Duvalier's abdication and the elections in 1987, the Haitian government was responsible for more civilian deaths than "Baby Doc" had managed in 15 years.

The CIA was meanwhile arranging for the release from prison, and safe exile abroad, of two of its Duvalier-era contacts, both notorious police chiefs. This saved them from possible death sentences for murder and torture.

Haiti's main trade union leader declared that Washington was undermining the left before the elections. U.S. aid agencies, he said, were encouraging people to reject the entire left as "communist," although the country clearly had a fundamental need for reformers and sweeping changes.¹¹

Following the abortive election in which "the army and paramilitaries stopped the voting by firing at voting centers, killing at least 34 people," Leslie François Manigat ascended to the presidency, but was overthrown four months later in a military coup.⁸

1990-1991:

Aristide's "Flash Flood"

In the December 1990 elections, a diverse array of grassroots organizations called Lavalas (Creole for "flash flood") swept Jean-Bertrand Aristide into the presidency. The rich in Haiti and the U.S. government had expected their candidate, former World Bank economist Marc Bazin, to win easily and were stunned by the victory of Aristide, an advocate for the poor.³

Aristide, a slender, soft-spoken priest whose life's work had been ministering to the poor, won with an overwhelming 67% of the vote.⁸ Seven months with him as president yielded a virtual halt in human rights violations, a reduction in "boat people" fleeing Haiti, a successful anti-corruption campaign and a higher minimum wage.³



Coup leader, Gen. Raoul Cedras was on the CIA payroll before and during the coup. "Toto" Constant, the FRAPH death-squad leader, said FRAPH was CIA-funded and organized.

1991-1994:

"Made in US" Death Squads

In 1991, when it was clear Aristide intended to fulfil his campaign promises, he was overthrown, after seven months in office, by a CIA-backed coup.⁸

The coup followed a familiar script: the elite organized and financed the operation while military and death squads did the dirty work. They were brutal with Lavalas. Massacres, assassinations, rapes and beatings were commonplace. The army, aided by a paramilitary organization (Front Révolutionnaire pour l'Avance-ment et le Progrès Haitiens—FRAPH), killed 5,000 people between 1991 and 1994.

The U.S. government was deeply implicated. Coup leader, General Raoul Cedras, and other top Haitian military figures, were on the CIA payroll before and during the coup. According to its leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, FRAPH was organized and funded by the CIA as a "counterweight" to Lavalas. (Anthony Arнове, "Interview with Allan Nairn," *Z*, June 1995.)³

However, the fascistic gangsters of the military and FRAPH were an embarrassment to their U.S. masters. Openly involved in drug-trafficking, they continued the Duvalier régime's work in CIA-protected, cocaine-transshipments between Colombia and Miami. Moreover, they unleashed an appalling campaign of violence. While thousands of civilians were murdered, most of them Lavalas activists,

"[s]ome 300,000 people became internal refugees, thousands more fled across the border to the Dominican Republic, and more than 60,000 took

to the high seas.'" (Dina Parks, National Coalition for Haitian Rights, to U.S. Senate Judiciary Cttee., Oct. 1, 2002).⁸

1994-2000:

Taming the Priest

In 1994, President Bill Clinton sent 20,000 troops to Haiti to reinstall Aristide. Aristide was returned to office after a prolonged U.S. campaign of media vilification and bullying by

U.S. diplomats, who made it clear he would have to implement, not his own policies, but those of his defeated rival, the World-Bank's, Marc Bazin.⁸

Aristide's return exacted a heavy price in terms of justice and democracy: amnesty for the military, "broadening" of the government to include those who supported the coup, implementing Bazin's "structural adjustment" plan and an end to Aristide's five-year term, thus treating his three years in exile as time in office.

Yet Aristide was no political pushover. In September 1995, he:

"dismissed his prime minister for preparing to sell the state-owned flour and cement mills without...any of the progressive terms the IMF had promised to honour" (Peter Hallward, "Option Zero in Haiti," *New Left Review*, May/June 2004.)

And, before the end of his truncated term, Aristide disbanded the murderous army. This was probably his greatest contribution to democracy in Haiti.³

However, the globalizing institutions of the so-called 'Washington Consensus' went to work—among them the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, and a host of U.S.-funded NGOs and 'civil society' groups. Their goal was to

"impose a neoliberal economic agenda, to undermine grassroots democracy, to create political stability conducive to a good business climate and to bring Haiti into the new world order appendaged to the U.S. as a source of markets and cheap labor" (Jane Regan, *Covert Action Quarterly*,

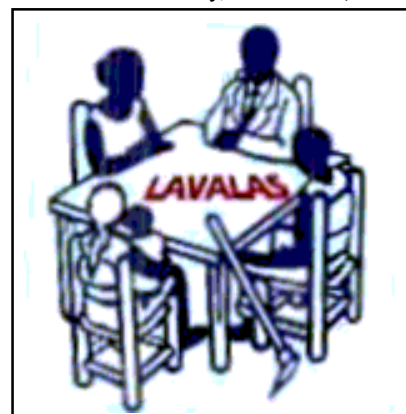
1995, cited by Engler and Fenton.)

At the same time, a U.S. promise to disarm the Haitian military and the CIA-funded FRAPH paramilitaries, went unfulfilled. The U.S. instead

"confiscated 160,000 documents detailing activities of FRAPH and the military regime, confounding efforts to bring justice and closure to the Haitian people who endured its death squads for three years" (Engler and Fenton, *Canada in Haiti*, 2005).

Having served only two years of his mandate—mostly under tight U.S. control—Aristide handed over the presidency to his associate René Préval, who had won the 1995 election in another landslide, with 88% of the vote.²

After Préval took over in 1996, Aristide split with Politique Lavalas who were comfortable with implementing neoliberal policies (i.e. the "sweatshop model of development": liberalization of trade, private-sector deregulation and privatization of state-owned enterprises) and formed Fanmi Lavalas (FL). Aristide could then criticize the reforms forced upon him, while opponents carried them out, putting him on solid political footing for the upcoming elections. (Robert White, "Haiti: Democrats vs. Democracy," Center for International Policy, Oct. 1997.)³



2000-2004:

Another Aristide Landslide

In the May 2000 elections, Aristide's FL emerged with a crushing victory, taking 89 of 115 mayoral positions, 72 of 83 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 18 of the 19 Senate seats contested. The Organization of American States (OAS) and other observers estimated the turnout at over 60% with "very few" incidents of either violence or fraud.

The propaganda effort to discredit the elections and FL, began when

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the OAS reversed its assessment claiming that the counting method used for eight of the Senate seats was “flawed.”

OAS aspersions were the rallying point for the opposition and their imperialist allies to overturn the government. Disparate strands of the opposition—such as “left” dissidents formerly linked with Lavalas, along with business leaders, ex-Duvalierists and other elements of the right—united in 2000 under the Convergence Democratique and said they would boycott upcoming presidential elections. This was an empty gesture. Over 50% of the electorate turned out to deliver Aristide the presidency with 92% of the votes.³

After 2000, the U.S. imposed an embargo on all aid and loans.⁸

In July 2001, former military and death squad members, led by former police chief Guy Philippe, mounted attacks against police stations along the Haiti-Dominican Republic (DR) border, killing at least five police. Philippe had received U.S. military training in Ecuador during the 1991-1994 coup, and was incorporated into the Haitian National Police (HNP) in 1995. His tenure there was marked by reports of summary executions by police under his command and accusations of drug trafficking. In 2000, he fled to the DR after he and fellow police chiefs were discovered plotting a coup against Préval’s government.

Philippe, and FRAPH second-in-command Louis Jodel Chamblain, led attacks against Haiti’s Presidential Palace in 2001 and a Haitian hydroelectric dam in 2003. These and numerous other attacks from the DR, left dozens of police and FL members dead.

A retired DR general, Nobel Espejo, said 20,000 M-16s sent by the U.S. in 2003 were never received by DR. However, new M-16s were used by Philippe’s rebel force (in 2004).

The DR government did nothing to halt the attacks and ignored repeated, extradition requests from Haitian authorities for human rights abusers in the DR. These Haitian rebels were discreetly integrated into the DR army and trained at a base close to the Haitian border. The U.S. embassy in the DR was aware of their presence and helped to train and arm them.³

Aristide launched a lawsuit against France, attempting to recover

the “debt” that Haiti began paying in 1825. Adjusted for inflation, it totalled \$21 billion. On January 1, 2004, in celebrating Haiti’s bicentennial, Aristide boldly told a jubilant crowd that this money, rightfully the property of the Haitian people, would lift the hemisphere’s poorest country out of the poverty it has known since 1825.¹²

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Jean-Bertrand Aristide

Achievements of Aristide’s Lavalas Government

Health Care

- Health clinics, hospitals and dispensaries were renovated and built.
- Medical services were improved and added. Health care workers, including doctors, were greatly increased.
- A larger percentage of government spending was on health care than during any previous government.
- A meaningful AIDS prevention and treatment program was started.
- A new medical school provided free education to hundreds of students.
- Infant mortality declined from 125 to 110 per 1000. Underweight births declined from 28% to 19%.

Education

- 20% of the budget went to education.
- School enrolment rose from 68% to 72% (2001-2004).
- 195 new primary schools and 104 new public high schools were built.
- School books, uniforms subsidized.
- Lunch programs served 700,000 hot meals a day to children.
- National literacy campaign printed 2 million manuals, trained thousands of

literacy workers, taught 100,000 to read (2001-2003), reduced illiteracy from 85% to 55% (1996-2003), opened 20,000 adult-literacy centers.

Justice and Human Rights

- The government opened a school for magistrates which graduated 100 new judges and prosecutors (1996-2003).
- Courthouses and police stations were constructed and refurbished.
- A child protection unit was created.
- Laws were passed prohibiting corporal punishment of children, child domestic service and human trafficking.
- The U.S.-trained, Haitian military was disbanded. This removed the main instrument of repression and dozens of coups, and resulted in unprecedented freedom of speech, assembly and personal safety.
- A National Commission for Truth and Justice was created to report crimes of the 1991-1994 coup period.
- Former soldiers and paramilitaries were convicted in fair trials.
- Those arrested had formal hearings before judges, usually within 2 days.

The Coup-Installed Regime and its Reign of Terror

By Richard Sanders

2004: Regime Change

In early February 2004, a small, rebel force of “thugs,” that was “directed,...operated,...equipped,...financed and organized”¹ by U.S. intelligence services, entered Haiti from the Dominican Republic. Most were former members of Haiti’s military (disbanded by Aristide in 1995) and the FRAPH death squads that tortured and assassinated thousands of Aristide supporters during the CIA-sponsored, military coup regime of 1991-1994.

Led by former military and police chief, Guy Philippe, and two leaders of FRAPH, Emmanuel Constant and Jodel Chamblain, their strategy was to “attack cities, drive out the police, burn police stations and... swiftly withdraw.”²

But, as Aristide later explained: “They couldn’t take the [capital] city, and that’s why their masters decided ...to create the illusion that much of the country was under their control.... There was no great insurrection:

there was a small group of soldiers, heavily armed,...able to overwhelm some police stations [and] kill some policemen.... The police had run out of ammunition, and were no match for the rebels’ M16s.”³

They also freed about 3000 prisoners, including convicted rapists, murderers and fellow FRAPH members and military men imprisoned by Aristide’s



Jodel Chamblain, co-founder of the CIA's FRAPH death squads posing at a pro-U.S. rally, 1994 (left) and while helping lead rebel attacks, 2004 (right).

One day after the 2004 coup, Chamblain thanked the U.S., Canada and France “for allowing us to get rid of Aristide.”
(*Globe & Mail*, March 2, 2004.)

government for serious human rights abuses.⁴ Given weapons, some of these convicts swelled the rebel’s ranks.⁵

The following timeline outlines how rebel attacks were used as a pretext by the U.S., Canada and France to overthrow Haiti’s elected government.

Feb. 5: Rebels begin attacks on northern cities and move towards capital.

Feb. 7: 100,000 rallied to demand that Aristide’s government be allowed to finish its five-year mandate.

Feb. 11: Canadian government memos reveal plans to use “Responsibility to Protect” to justify regime change. Memos also “indicate speculation about working with members of Haiti’s former military.”⁶

Feb. 20: U.S. Ambassador James Foley, told Aristide that he must accept a U.S./Canada/France plan to install a new prime minister and cabinet.⁷

Feb. 21: Aristide accepted the demand, but his opponents did not. They did not want him to remain as president until his mandate ended in 2006.⁸

Feb. 23: U.S. Marines arrive in Haiti, supposedly to protect the embassy.⁹

Feb. 26: Canadian Commandos arrived in Haiti. Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell publicly support rebel demands that Aristide resign.¹⁰

Feb. 29: U.S. Marines and embassy officials came to Aristide’s home at 3 a.m. Aristide says they told him that rebels and U.S. troops were ready to “open fire on Port-au-Prince. Right then, the Americans precisely stated that they will kill thousands of people and it will be a bloodbath.... This was no bluff.... we were under an illegal foreign occupation which was ready to drop bodies on the ground.”

U.S. diplomat Luis Moreno told Aristide that the U.S. would do nothing to stop the rebels who were poised to kill him. Aristide was taken at gunpoint to the airport¹² (which Canadian Forces had “secured”) and was flown to the Central African Republic.¹³

Political Gains

- Haiti’s independent electoral commission oversaw the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections and three parliamentary and local elections.
- In 2000, 29,500 candidates ran for 7,500 posts. Four million registered for the election and 60% voted.
- For the first time, women served as Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Chief of Police.
- Aristide created a cabinet-level Ministry of Women’s Affairs.
- There was unprecedented freedom to organize, speak out and assemble.
- The Haitian constitution was printed in Creole and widely distributed, so Haitians learned their rights which, for the first time, they really had.

Economic Gains

- The minimum wage was raised in 1995 and doubled in 2003.
- A land reform program distributed land to 1500 peasant families.
- The government provided tools, credit, technical assistance, fertilizers and heavy equipment to farmers.
- Irrigation systems were repaired bringing water to 7000 farmers.

- The government distributed tens of thousands of Creole pigs. This reversed a 1980, U.S. extermination policy that prevented competition with U.S. farmers, and cost Haitians hundreds of millions of dollars.
- Unpaid tax/utility bills were collected from the wealthy, creating revenues for health care and education.
- 30,000 fishermen got aid and training to build boats. Lakes were stocked and 50 new lakes were created.
- Hundreds of community stores were created to sell food at a discount. This forced wealthy elites to drop prices.
- By 2003, malnutrition dropped from 63% to 51%. (Many community kitchens were opened to provide low-cost meals to communities in need.)
- More than 1000 low-cost housing units built (2002-2003). Low-interest loans enabled workers to buy them.
- Carpentry programs, sewing workshops and agricultural cooperatives were set up (1994) to aid the return of 100,000 who fled the 1991 coup.

Source: Stephen Lendman, “Achievements Under Aristide, Now Lost,” *ZNet*, Dec. 16, 2005.

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Aristide also explained that: “On Feb. 29, a shipment of police munitions—that we had bought from South Africa, perfectly legally—was due to arrive in Port-au-Prince. This decided the matter... If the police were restored to something like their full operational capacity, then the rebels stood no chance at all.

Interviewer: So at that point the Americans had no option but to go in and get you themselves?

Aristide: That’s right. They knew that in a few hours, they would lose their opportunity.... They grabbed their chance...and bundled us onto a plane in the middle of the night.”¹⁴

A few hours later, in a brief ceremony attended by U.S. Ambassador Foley, Haiti’s Chief Justice, Boniface Alexandre, was made president. This was illegal because it was not approved by Haiti’s elected parliament as is required by their 1987 constitution.¹⁵

To protect this unconstitutional regime, Alexandre asked the UN Security Council to send armed forces. It quickly authorized a “Multinational Interim Force,”¹⁶ and the U.S., Canada France and Chile sent troops.¹⁷

Mar. 4: A “Tripartite Council” was chosen by Haiti’s new regime, the anti-Aristide group “Democratic Platform” and “the international community.”¹⁸

Mar. 5: The “Tripartite Council” handpicked a seven-member “Council of Wise Men,” to represent Haiti’s elite and their foreign backers.

Mar. 9: The “Council of Wise Men” selected Haiti’s Prime Minister, Gerard Latortue, an international business consultant based in Miami, Florida, who had lived outside Haiti for decades.

Mid-March: Latortue picked the “Interim Government’s” thirteen cabinet ministers. Anyone who had worked for Aristide’s duly-elected government was “automatically disqualified.”¹⁹

2004–2006:

A Human Rights Disaster

In its first month, the puppet regime “summarily cut off” all “funding and other support” to “literacy programs, food and shelter programs, and orphanages.”²⁰ In April, Latortue dropped the government’s law suit against France for \$21-billion in reparations for the “debt” Haiti had paid for French losses

during Haiti’s 1791-1803 revolution.²¹

Several U.S.-based groups issued reports detailing attacks against Aristide supporters by Haiti’s police and their allies in revitalized paramilitary death squads. For instance, the U.S. National Lawyers Guild said there was

“overwhelming evidence that victims...have been supporters of the elected government of...Aristide and the Fanmi Lavalas party, elected and appointed officials in that government or party, or employees of the government.... Many are in hiding.... others have been beaten and/or killed. Many of their homes have been selectively destroyed.”²²

With Aristide supporters being “hunted down, arrested and sometimes beaten and killed,” some sought asylum at the U.S., Canadian and French embassies but were turned away.²³

Miami University’s Law School report was another damning indictment of the coup-installed regime. It stated: “Haiti’s security and justice institutions fuel the cycle of violence. Summary executions are a police tactic.... UN police and soldiers....resort to heavy-handed incursions into the poorest neighborhoods.”²⁴

When asked about this report, then-Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew said: “I absolutely think that it is propaganda which is absolutely not interesting.”²⁵ (See page 22.) Despite such off-hand dismissals by cheerleaders for Haiti’s brutal regime, human rights reports kept exposing the truth.

In July, the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti said “murder, torture, mutilation [and] rape” was largely done by “the government’s armed forces” or “armed gangs” acting:

“with impunity and what appears to be...the tacit consent of the authorities. Many...cases of arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and torture,... are linked to...victims... expressing their support for... democracy.”²⁶

Amnesty International reported:

- Several unlawful killings, allegedly by police officers.



In November 2004, Paul Martin became the first Canadian Prime Minister to visit Haiti. He met with “president” Boniface Alexandre and “prime minister” Gérard Latortue, of the illegal, coup-installed puppet regime.

- Numerous reported incidents of ill-treatment, sometimes amounting to torture in police custody.
- Numerous reports of arbitrary and illegal arrests
- Defenders of workers’ rights faced intimidation, harassment and death threats from police.²⁷

A report in *The Lancet*, a prestigious British medical journal, stated that “kidnappings and extrajudicial detentions, physical assaults, death threats, physical threats and threats of sexual violence were...common.” Researchers estimated there had been 8000 murders in the capital region, during the coup regime’s 22-months. Of these, 21.7% were committed by “police and other government security forces,” 13% by the “demobilized army” and 13% by “armed anti-Lavalas groups.” “Lavalas members or partisans” were not accused of any murders.

The study also found that 35,000 women had been victimised by “sexual assault.” While “officers from the Haitian National Police accounted for 13.8% and armed anti-Lavalas groups accounted for 10.6% of identified perpetrators of sexual assault,” “Lavalas members and partisans” were, once again, not responsible.

This study also estimated that there had been 13,000 “government detentions or arrests” in the capital region during the coup-installed regime.²⁸

The report’s authors soon received death threats, “a package wrapped to look like a bomb,” and “a dead rat in the mail.”²⁹ And, their work came under immediate fire by AP, the *Guardian*, *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*.³⁰ Although these media ignored the congruence of data in other reports, they gave credence to government assurances that their “peacekeeping” mission in Haiti as a wonderful success.

The following timeline is but a

sampling of human rights abuses committed against poor supporters of President Aristide's government by police, right-wing death squads and UN troops (MINUSTAH) during the coup regime:

2004

Mar. 7: The State Morgue in Port-au-Prince, "dumped" 800 corpses into a mass grave. Many "had their hands tied behind their backs, had black bags over their heads, and had been shot."

Mar. 28: The State Morgue buried another 200 bodies.³¹

May 18: When 30,000 to 60,000 Fanmi Lavalas supporters marched peacefully in the capital, police fired into the crowd killing at least nine. U.S. Marines ("peacekeepers") stood by with heavy artillery and threatened to arrest a photographer.³²

Sept. 30: Police shot at unarmed, pro-democracy protesters in the capital.³³

Oct. 15: The General Hospital disposed of 600+ corpses stockpiled during two-weeks of police/death squad raids into pro-Lavalas slums.³⁴

Dec. 1: Police and prison guards kill 107 inmates³⁵ (many illegally detained).

2005

Feb. 28: "Police opened fire on peaceful protesters, killing two...and scattering an estimated 2,000 people.... Peacekeepers, whose orders are to support the police, stood by."³⁶ After leaving the rally, 27 protesters were killed by police and associated "men-in-black."³⁷

Mar. 24: "Police opened fire during a street march in Haiti's capital to demand the return of...President Aristide....At least one person was killed."³⁸

April 27: Nine were killed by police who used "indiscriminate violence...to disperse and repress demonstrators."³⁹

May 18: After a Flag Day rally, unarmed prodemocracy protesters were killed by death squads.

June 3-4: While police torched 15 homes in a pro-Lavalas slum and then execute 54 people, UN troops in tanks stood by and gave cover to the police.⁴⁰

June 29: UN troops killed unarmed bystanders during a large military operation in a pro-Lavalas slum.⁴¹

July 6: "About 400 UN troops with 41 armored vehicles and helicopters, and several dozen Haitian police, conducted a raid in Cite Soleil." Doctors Without Borders said: "We received 27

people wounded by gunshots. Three quarters were children and women."⁴² More than 60 were killed.⁴³

Aug. 7-8: Death squads, accompanied by police, used machetes to kill at least 19 women. Many of them were Lavalas community leaders. In addition, the State Hospital's morgue received 40 other people, killed by bullets.⁴⁴

Aug. 10: "Police vehicles led dozens of hooligans armed with guns, machetes, axes and clubs" into a pro-Lavalas slum. "More than 12 people were hacked to death...or riddled with police bullets," including a pregnant girl.⁴⁵

Aug. 20: More than 12 police vehicles surrounded a soccer stadium with 6000 people attending a U.S. funded game to promote peace. Police in black masks with assault rifles, and machete-wielding thugs, burst in, ordered people to the ground and fired into the crowd. Some victims were handcuffed and shot in the head, others were hacked to death or murdered as they tried to escape. UN soldiers stood by watching the massacre, in which 30 were killed.⁴⁶

Nov. 8: When UN troops with tanks and helicopters raided a pro-Lavalas slum, they wounded 15 and killed two.⁴⁷

2006-2007

Despite the victory of René Preval in the 2006 presidential elections (see pages 35-40), the human rights disaster in Haiti is far from over. In December 2006 and January 2007, UN troops massacred numerous innocent civilians in a pro-Lavalas slum. (See page 34.)

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