

The G184:

Exposing the Haitian Elite's Enthusiasm for Violence

By Richard Sanders, editor, *Press for Conversion!*

In the late 1990s, wealthy members of Haiti's business sector became increasingly fixated on retaking the reigns of power from the country's popularly elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, the upstart priest who so eloquently represented the country's impoverished masses. Working in league with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), key members of Haiti's corporate elite created the Democratic Convergence (DC), a grouping of fourteen political parties "supported by neo-Duvalierist ex-military members as well as members of the Haitian business elite"¹ devoted to ousting Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party from government. But try as they might, the right-wing DC "couldn't win any power, they had no base of popular support, but what they did have was the backing of Washington, of Paris and Ottawa."²

Ottawa's backing came largely via the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Like USAID, CIDA monies were channelled exclusively to supposedly

"grassroots' NGOs and business organizations who were aligned with the opposition Democratic Convergence.... [which] never managed to gain more than 8% voter support in Haitian elections."³

But, when it "became clear" that the DC was "an abysmal failure" and "a failed experiment that was going nowhere,"⁴ they created the Civil Society Initiative Group (CSIG). However, the CSIG was plagued with same image problems as its progenitor. Being "predominantly a collection of business and religious elite organisations," it was "wholly unrepresentative of the Haitian majority."⁵ (See "CSIG Members: At the Core of the G184," p.40.) With the CSIG so obviously an appendage of Haiti's ruling class, a new and improved front organization was sorely needed. So, in December 2002, the CSIG cleverly

"widened its membership to include some peasant organisations, student groups and non-governmental or-

ganisations, and became the Group of 184... However, despite its pretensions to represent a variety of social sectors, the words and actions of the Group of 184 suggest that it remains under the control and direction of its initial instigators and original driving force—the private sector."⁶

The G184 quickly became the main vehicle for pushing the interests of those domestic and foreign elites whose shared goal was to rid Haiti of Aristide's popular, ruling party. Because its members owned and controlled most of the country's natural and human resources—as well as most of its mainstream radio, TV and print media—the G184 was a well-placed "fifth column," ready and willing to collaborate with the foreign governments bent on regime change. Together, they returned political control of Haiti to those who had always felt entitled to rule.

The G184's two main leaders and spokesmen—Andy Apaid, Jr., and Reginald Boulos—are among Haiti's most prosperous millionaires, whose businesses are dependent on import-export sectors. (See "The G184's Powerbrokers — Apaid and Boulos,"

pp.42-43.) With this duo firmly ensconced at the helm, the G184 orchestrated strident opposition to Aristide's government. Finally, in February 2004, their so-called "civil society" efforts—in combination with the terrorizing violence of heavily-armed, U.S.-backed rebels, an invasion force of U.S., Canadian and French troops and a compliant right-wing media—culminated in the coup that deposed Aristide's entire government and replaced it with a brutal, business-friendly administration.

During the years leading up to the 2004 coup—and then during the human rights disaster that followed—the G184 and its leadership pretended to embrace nonviolence. However, this was one of their many bald-faced lies. In reality, the G184 and its leaders were actually major proponents and instigators of violence in Haiti. As this article will show, they worked closely with criminal, paramilitary and military organizations that not only relied on carnage to overthrow the democratically elected government of Haiti, they then demonstrated their commitment to state-sponsored terror as a way of keeping their coup-installed regime in power.

The G184 melts into the ether



"For all intents and purposes the Group 184, once touted as representing 'civil society' in Haiti, no longer exists.... The organization produced almost daily press releases in the period leading up to the forced ouster of president Aristide.... Today, their voice is conspicuously silent showing that they were never an organization that truly represented Haitian society but rather a USAID and CIDA-funded project charged with creating the pretext for the removal of Haiti's constitutional government.... Once their role in overthrowing Aristide was complete, they quietly melted into the ether." **Kevin Pina**

Source: Email to Richard Sanders, August 27, 2007.

Kevin Pina is a U.S. journalist and film maker living in Haiti. He was arrested in September 2005 for reporting on the ransacking of Father Gérard Jean-Juste's church by masked members of Haiti's National Police (HNP). Jean-Juste, a popular humanitarian leader, would likely have become the Lavalas Party's candidate for president in 2006. He was, however, unable to run for office when he was illegally imprisoned for eight months on bogus charges concocted by the Canadian-backed, coup regime.



Foreign Creators/Mentors

Despite their tight grip on the levers of Haiti's economy, the G184 needed help in their antidemocratic struggle to oust and replace the country's duly-elected government. Therefore, the G184 collaborated with—and was manipulated, if not controlled by—U.S., Canadian and European government agencies that shared the Haitian elite's virulent hatred of Aristide's policies. In particular, the U.S. government played a key role in forming and then directing not only the G184, but many of its member groups.

For its part, the European Union channelled at least US\$890,000 through the CSIG to at least seven, influential members of the G184 network.⁷

Not to be outdone, CIDA directly financed at least ten members of the G184. In fact, CIDA funnelled some \$24 million into about a dozen projects that were run entirely, or in part, by these G-184 members. (See p.39.) CIDA also poured Canadian tax dollars straight into the coffers of the G184 itself. For example, CIDA gave \$334,643 for a project run by the G184 and one of its more reactionary, member groups—a think tank called the Foundation for a New Haiti,⁸ which was also led by Andy Apaid, Jr. Canada's benevolence was also cited in a French government report listing a \$500,000 grant allotted to the G184 alone.⁹

Without such generous disbursements from CIDA and other foreign governments, the G184 would never have arisen in the first place. The G184 was, in fact, largely fabricated by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). Although IFES is, in part, financed by such “renowned democracy-lovers as Exxon-Mobil, Citibank and Motorola,”¹⁰ “80 percent

of its funding” comes from the U.S. State Department and USAID.¹¹

During the coup regime, IFES directors included Jean-Pierre Kingsley, who was then Canada's Chief Electoral Officer.¹² Other IFES and USAID bureaucrats and contractors eventually ascended to top positions within Haiti's coup-installed regime. For instance, Gérard Latortue, who became the dictatorship's prime minister, and Bernard Gousse, who was its Minister of Justice, were both employed by IFES for

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many years prior to ruling Haiti's post-Aristide nightmare.¹³

Thanks to a “multi-million dollar” IFES program, the G184 became the most powerful tool in the elite's regime-change arsenal. Here's how the G184's genesis was described by Miami lawyer and human-rights researcher Thomas Griffin—who worked as a “federal law enforcement officer for 10 years”¹⁴

“IFES...formulated groups that never existed, united pre-existing groups, gave them sensitization seminars, paid for people to attend, paid for entertainment and catering, and basically built group after group.... They reached out to student groups, business... [and] human rights groups—which they actually paid off to report human rights atrocities to make Aristide look bad.... They bought journalists, and the IFES associations grew into the Group of 184 that became a solidified opposition against Aristide.”¹⁵

It was for good reason then that, when interviewed by Griffin and fellow investigators with the University of Miami's Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), IFES administrators bragged that Aristide's ouster was “the result” of the “IFES program,” and IFES and USAID employees took credit for bringing down Aristide's government.¹⁶ (See “CIDA Bankrolled Coup's Deputy Minister of 'Justice,’” pp.29-31.)

Although it is difficult to determine how many millions of U.S. dollars were funnelled to the G184 and its members, we do know that for one fiscal year alone (ending September 2003), USAID spent US\$3 million on their so-called “Government and Democracy” program in Haiti. We can safely assume that this money—going to “civil society, the media, human rights organisations and political parties”¹⁷—was directed exclusively to anti-Aristide organizations, and that the G184 secured a sizable share of the spoils.

Inciting Violence

After spending generations struggling to establish a system to represent their political interests, Haiti's majority finally felt they had achieved a remarkable success when they twice elected President Aristide and his Lavalas Party. The coups of 1991 and 2004 however reversed those victories by abruptly supplanting his administrations with militaristic regimes, and destroying the country's democratic system of government. Such fascistic regime changes are simply not possible without the ample use of brute force.

Although the G184 always claimed to embrace nonviolence, it was in league with domestic and international forces that openly used violence as if it were a legitimate means of attaining and maintaining political power. Several allies of the G184 have employed extreme violence, including mass murder, to eliminate those perceived to be in their way. To this day, violence is still being directed at pro-democracy advocates calling for Aristide's return to Haiti.

The fact that the G184 was anything but nonviolent is easily illustrated by describing their working relationships with at least five allies that used bloodshed to impose their will upon Haiti's populace.

Paramilitary Rebels

On the domestic front, leaders of the G184 conspired with vicious bands of U.S.-backed, paramilitary rebels that were largely reconstituted from death squads associated with the previous, anti-Aristide coup of 1991 and from the military that Aristide had disbanded in the mid-1990s.

In mid-February 2004, when these rebels were rampaging through Haiti, destabilizing Aristide's government and setting the final stage for the coup, BBC news garnered international support for the G184 with such typical, fawning statements as this:

"One of the most prominent opposition platform spokesmen, Andy Apaid, wanted to make it clear that he did not approve of violent methods.... Andy Apaid invoked the names of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi, saying that he wanted to try and lead the opposition in a form of peaceful protest."¹⁸

This was not an isolated example of the media's sycophantic coverage. As the Haiti Information Project pointed out:

"Apaid had been extensively quoted in the international media at the time saying their movement was non-violent and had no connections to the paramilitary bands."¹⁹

However, according to the CSHR report, the G184 actually did work in "combination with the violent band of armed attackers closing in on Port-au-Prince" in February 2004, and "provided the political force in Haiti that led to Aristide's ouster."²⁰

But the G184 has always denied that it supported these "armed attackers" who burned down police stations and other government facilities, released thousands of imprisoned criminals (including human rights violators), and murdered countless supporters of Aristide's government.

The G184's assertions that it stood for nonviolence were never taken seriously by most Haitians. They know that there have always been intimate links between their country's ruling elite and the most violent, reactionary elements in their society. It was not a real surprise then when, more than three years after the coup, the real extent of the G184's ties to the rebel forces fi-

nally begun to unravel.

This happened when two top rebel leaders and a Haitian businessman revealed that the rebels received generous financial backing, weapons and logistical support from prominent Haitian businessmen, including the G184's top representatives, Andy Apaid, Jr and Reginald Boulos.²¹

In late May 2007, Wilfort Ferdinand (alias Ti Wil)—a commander of the rebel violence in February 2004—was interviewed on two local radio stations. He exposed some telling details about the role of "certain members of the business community" who had funded the rebel's paramilitary campaign against Aristide's government. Ti Wil told Haitian listeners that he had recently refused overtures from these same business leaders who now wanted him to take up arms against the elected government of Aristide associate René Preval, who was elected president in 2006.

What would Ti Wil reveal next? We will perhaps never know because within days, Ti Wil was arrested by Haitian police and UN troops. During their search of his home, Haitian police say they discovered a kilogram of "a white substance resembling cocaine."²²

During the February 2004 coup, President Aristide had publicly denounced former-military rebel leader Guy Philippe, and his criminal colleagues, as terrorists engaged in the international drug trade. However, the U.S. and Canadian governments—along with their powerful pawns within Haiti's elite—displayed a markedly-different perspective. For instance, shortly after the coup, when Ti Wil had "appointed himself Chief of Police of Gonaives...ruling Haiti's fourth largest city as a personal fiefdom," he shared a podium with rebel commander Guy Philippe. It was late March 2004, and

"U.S.-installed prime minister Gérard Latortue was flown into Gonaives by U.S. military helicopters accompanied by David Lee, Canadian ambassador to the Organization of American States. During a mock celebration of Aristide's ouster, Latortue publicly praised the men [Philippe and Ti Wil] as misunderstood 'freedom fighters' while ambassador Lee nodded his head in approval."²³



On May 27, 2007, the day after Ti Wil's arrest, Guy Philippe went on radio and "took the accusations a step further." Perhaps fearing that he might be arrested before he could blow the whistle on Apaid and the G184's role in financing the precoup violence, over which he had presided, Philippe used the interview to

"name names of business and political leaders who backed the paramilitary insurgency against Aristide's government by providing arms, ammunition and logistical support.

Philippe's list included members of what was then touted as the 'peaceful opposition' in Haiti that led demonstrations in the capital and other cities demanding Aristide's resignation. High on the list was Andy Apaid, the leader of the civil society organization called the Group 184."²⁴

During an interview with Philippe in late March 2007, Professor Peter Hallward of King's College London (UK) asked whether the "wealthy families that despised Aristide—Apaid, Boulos, Baker in particular—did they subsidise your movement?" Philippe replied

"Yes we had meetings with various businessmen and they helped us....they contributed around [US]\$200,000 to buy arms and ammunition. The businessmen seemed keen to help us at all costs."²⁵

That interview also revealed that Philippe was now extremely angry at the G184-linked elite—which he called “the leaders of Haiti’s rotten political class and mafioso oligarchy.” They had, he said, broken their advance agreement with the rebels that the coup would not involve foreign troops. Philippe was bitter that this secret deal was discarded when “Apaid, Boulos and the leaders of our corrupt political class...pressured the international com-

is uninterrupted.”²⁷ In reality, after U.S. troops kidnapped the country’s president—with help from Canadian special forces²⁸—they set in motion the installation of an illegal government that did not have the consent of Haiti’s Parliament as required by their constitution. It was a well-planned coup, but it wasn’t the coup that Philippe had expected.

Not surprisingly, Philippe’s revelations about G184-leaders’ complicity in the 2004 regime change received

their role in the violent overthrow of Haiti’s democracy. To the contrary, their impunity—like the increasingly ludicrous but officially sanctioned story of the G184’s commitment to nonviolence—will likely remain intact, thanks to the myth-making machinery of the elite-owned, G184-linked media.

Perhaps just coincidentally, the DEA’s long-delayed actions against Philippe and François came one day after Aristide’s birthday, when many thousands of pro-democracy advocates in seven Haitian cities demanded his return from forced exile in South Africa. Even Reuters reported that 10,000 people had started marching from one poor Port-au-Prince neighbourhood alone. The DEA’s timing helped ensure that “the sparse international news reports” of these huge rallies were “overshadowed” by coverage of their raid on Philippe’s home.³¹

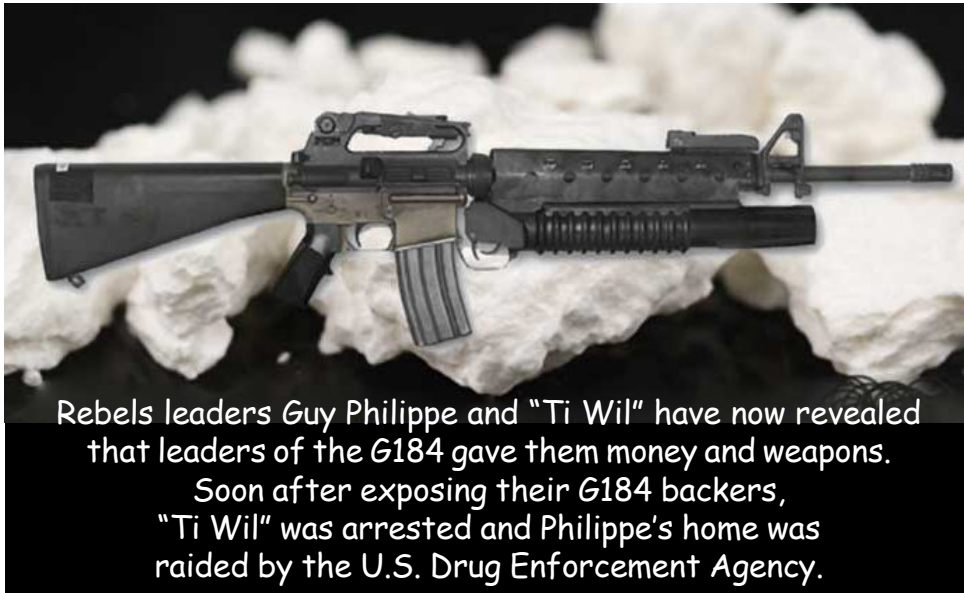
Mainstream news of the DEA raid conveniently neglected to mention Philippe’s recent interviews about rebel ties to media-darling Apaid and the G184. A Google “News” search in early August 2007 found that of the 60 initial articles about that raid, only one linked it with Philippe’s controversial disclosures.³²

A month later, an Associated Press article vaguely hinted at the rebel-G184 connection, saying that Philippe had “accused the United States of trying to silence him for political reasons.” The article did not name Apaid or Boulos. Nor did it mention the G184. It only commented that:

“months ago Philippe...denounced several powerful Haitians who he said helped finance the rebellion. Some Haitians have speculated that those well-connected people are now using their influence to get him arrested.”³³

Gang Violence

The CSHR’s 2004 human rights report revealed compelling evidence that a murderous, anti-Aristide gang in one of Port-au-Prince’s most-destitute neighbourhoods received “financial, firearms and political support from wealthy businessman and politico, Andy Apaid and businessman Reginald Boulos.”³⁴ The gang in question, led by Thomas Robinson (alias “Laban-



Rebels leaders Guy Philippe and “Ti Wil” have now revealed that leaders of the G184 gave them money and weapons. Soon after exposing their G184 backers, “Ti Wil” was arrested and Philippe’s home was raided by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

munity to invade our country.” Philippe also fumed that Haiti’s political/business elite, and Andy Apaid in particular “advised the U.S. embassy to kidnap Aristide.”²⁶

The joint U.S./Canadian/French invasion of Haiti, had come just as Philippe and his men were poised to take Haiti’s capital and capture Aristide. The worst betrayal, Philippe said was that the elite had robbed him and his men of their agreed-upon role as the “security” force for the post-coup regime. This job went instead to the UN.

In short, Philippe was used. He and his men did much of the violent, dirty work that set the stage for the coup but were then lied to and cast aside. Haiti’s elite and their foreign mentors secretly supported the rebel cause and then used it as a pretext to publicly justify their own invasion and occupation of Haiti. Pushing the limits of Orwellian doublespeak, U.S. embassy officials in Haiti even went so far as to claim that their intervention had “probably prevented a coup” and that Haiti’s “constitutional” “political process

scant, international coverage.

For almost three and a half years since the coup—including his wildly unsuccessful bid for the Presidency in 2006—Philippe had been allowed to operate freely in Haiti. Then, on July 16, 2007—just weeks after his exposé about the G184 on Haitian radio—helicopters and aircraft from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) descended dramatically upon his home. Philippe was not there, and has reputedly been in hiding ever since.

However, Lavaud François—a Gonaives businessman with “close ties to Philippe”—was arrested elsewhere on that same day by the DEA.²⁹ The reason for the DEA’s actions against François may be found in the fact that he had recently

“bragged publicly that he helped finance the rebellion against Aristide along with André Apaid of a civil society organization called the Group 184.”³⁰

Such revelations, of course, do not mean that Apaid or other G184 leaders will ever be held accountable for

yè”), operated from Cité Soleil—where most of the more than 300,000 poverty-stricken residents still support Aristide. CSHR investigator, Thomas Griffin, reported that “Witnesses repeatedly explained” that the “siege” on Cité Soleil by Labanyè’s heavily-armed gang was “an effort to hold hostage and stifle the political voice of the poor, and to wipe out the Lavalas movement.”³⁵

CSHR researchers spoke to “Cité Soleil witnesses [and] police officers” who “reported that Apaid’s support of Labanyè keeps the police from arresting him.” Apaid himself “told [CSHR] investigators that he has directed the Haitian Police not to arrest Labanyè but to ‘work with him.’” The fact that Labanyè received “official protection” was illustrated by a “wanted poster” displayed in every Port-au-Prince police station. It had the

“names and photos of 30 suspected gang leaders, but not Labanyè [who was] perhaps the best known of all local gangsters. Police confirmed that all those pictured are believed to be Lavalas supporters. Numerous police officers also confirmed that Labanyè is killing for Apaid...and that they remain under orders not to arrest him.”³⁶

The CSHR report goes on to state that

“Cité Soleil residents, police officers and Cité Soleil leaders who refused Andy Apaid’s overtures to switch loyalties, stated that Apaid ‘bought’ Labanyè with [U.S.]\$30,000.... Multiple sources stated...that Labanyè has a large United States flag draped in front of his headquarters under which he forces victims to kneel and beg for their lives before killing them.”³⁷

In December 2004, Labanyè’s gang members conducted one of their numerous massacres of Aristide supporters in Cité Soleil. This precipitated an attack by UN forces who killed even more Aristide allies. As one Cité Soleil witness said

“Labanyè, controlled by André Apaid and Reginald Boulos, began a heavy attack...and many people were killed. The UN then used this as a pretext to invade our neighbourhood and end our calls for Aristide’s return. It is clear they are working together to exterminate us.”³⁸

International Troops

Less than two weeks before Labanyè’s gang violence triggered a deadly UN raid against Lavalas supporters, the UN’s top General in Haiti, Augusto Ribeiro Pereira, said he would not bow to the “extreme pressure” he was receiving from the U.S., Canadian and French governments to step up violent incursions into Haiti’s poorest districts.³⁹ However, UN raids



Juan Gabriel Valdès

Apaid...who made strident calls in the media for a new UN crackdown on Cité Soleil.⁴²

Early the next morning, January 7, 2006, Bacellar was found “shot in the head,” in what many newspapers called an “apparent suicide.” However, the country’s largest weekly paper, *Haiti Progrès*, noted that

“many observers doubt the suicide theory.... Some question whether

During the coup regime, the G184—and its government mentors in Canada, the U.S., France and Haiti—put intense pressure on the UN to step up violent raids into impoverished neighbourhoods where residents support Aristide’s return.

Juan Gabriel Valdès, the UN’s civilian chief in Haiti, agreed to their plan saying: “I think there’ll be collateral damage but we have to impose our force, there is no other way.”

did not cease and on September 1, 2005—two months after UN troops killed dozens of innocent civilians while storming an impoverished neighbourhood in the capital—Pereira finally resigned as the UN’s top military commander in Haiti.⁴⁰ He was replaced by another Brazilian general, Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar, who was also pushed to increase the violence against Aristide’s poor supporters.

The G184’s pressure on Bacellar reached a head on January 6, 2006. That night, Bacellar had a “tense meeting with the president of Haiti’s Chamber of Commerce, Reginald Boulos, and Group 184 leader Andy Apaid.”⁴¹ Along with these representatives of “the right-wing business elite,” Bacellar’s “tense meeting” included representatives of the UN and “coup-regime officials.” Together, they

“put ‘intense pressure’ on the general ‘demanding that he intervene brutally in Cité Soleil.’...This coincided with a pressure campaign by Chamber of Commerce head Reginald Boulos and sweatshop kingpin Andy

some sectors could have wanted to kill Bacellar [sic] for his reluctance to crackdown on Cité Soleil, the rebellious shanty town that U.N. troops have been unable to pacify. In recent weeks, the Haitian bourgeoisie had been heavily pressuring the MINUSTAH commander to carry out aggressive actions there.”⁴³

There was however dissent within the UN leadership in Haiti. On the day before Bacellar’s death, Chilean-born diplomat Juan Gabriel Valdès, the UN civilian chief in Haiti, said that UN troops would go ahead with the strategy of increased violence. He announced UN readiness to “occupy” the “already militarily-surrounded” Cité Soleil, saying: “We are going to intervene in the coming days. I think there’ll be collateral damage but we have to impose our force, there is no other way.”⁴⁴ Some UN officials said Bacellar “had opposed Valdes’ plan.”⁴⁵ But, thanks to Bacellar’s untimely death, the Valdes plan—as vigorously demanded by the G184, occupying governments and the coup regime—finally won out.



The G184 demanded that the RCMP-trained Haitian National Police get automatic weapons to help them take better aim at violence caused by poor street youth.

Private Militias

G184 leaders had also tried other violent means to achieve their corporate-sector goals. At a May 2005 meeting between Haitian business leaders and the illegal, coup regime's Chief of Police, Léon Charles:

"Boulos demanded the U.S.-installed government...allow the business community to form...private security firms and arm them with automatic weapons. This was clearly a demand to legalize the business community's own private militia's to kill what Boulos, and others in his circle, have referred to as 'Lavalas bandits.'"⁴⁶

Commenting on this HIP report, *Haiti Progrès* said that "This, in fact, is already the bourgeoisie's current, albeit unofficial, practice."⁴⁷

While G184 leaders demanded better weapons for Haiti's corporate-funded militias, human rights activists pushed for

"the disarmament of all untrained and unauthorized armed groups—including the former soldiers and all private security forces funded by businessmen to protect their interests."⁴⁸

However, the dividing line between "former soldiers" and "private security forces" was difficult to determine, as an article on the eve of the 2004 coup points out:

"Haiti's business elite already has at its disposal a vast number of private security forces, many of whose personnel were formerly part of the Haitian army."⁴⁹

Haitian National Police

After the 2004 coup, Haiti's illegal regime quickly began to integrate "former soldiers" into the Haitian National Police (HNP). By November of that year, some

"200 soldiers from the disbanded army had been officially integrated into the Haitian National Police since Aristide's ouster, taking posts throughout the country...[and] former soldiers have taken the highest HNP command positions throughout Haiti. 'Many more,' [said Philippe Vixamar, the coup regime's CIDA-paid, Deputy Minister of Justice] 'are currently training at the Haitian Police Academy.'"⁵⁰

It is also worth noting here that:

(1) the integration of former military personnel into the HNP was vetted by the National Coalition for Haitian Rights—Haiti, a thoroughly discredited group which received generous funding from CIDA and USAID (see pp.3-32) and

(2) the HNP itself benefited from at least \$27 million in CIDA funding for RCMP efforts, including training and crowd control.⁵¹

During the 2004 coup regime's reign of terror against Aristide supporters, the HNP worked in tandem with UN troops, as well as with death-squad "attachés," to exterminate opponents of the coup regime. For example, during numerous pro-democracy rallies, unarmed Lavalas supporters were shot and killed by police and attachés, un-

der the protective gaze of the UN's so-called "peacekeepers."⁵²

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs report in early 2006 said this of the coup-regime's chief of police:

"One of the island's major human rights offenders is Léon Charles, current police/military attaché at the Haitian Embassy in Washington and the HNP's former Director General. It was an act of sheer effrontery that [coup-regime Prime Minister] Latortue appointed him to that [diplomatic] post.... As Haiti's police chief; he oversaw the gunning down of unarmed pro-Aristide Lavalas demonstrators by his own men, even...planting weapons on the innocent victims' corpses. Yet, the U.S. has raised no objections to his deplorable record, and the UN mission to Haiti has done nothing to follow up on allegations of gross abuses.

Through the outright support of uniformed thugs like Charles, the UN force has backed up the ill-trained and violence-prone HNP... even though that force is particularly renowned for its heinous human rights violations, such as arbitrary arrests and detentions, and extrajudicial killings."⁵³

However, even this shocking level of police violence was not enough to satisfy Haiti's elite. "The anti-Aristide Group of 184 spokesperson Charles Baker," a wealthy, white Haitian sweatshop owner and tobacco farmer,⁵⁴ "called for more guns and ammunition for the HNP to 'fulfil their duty.'"⁵⁵

Soon after the coup, during a meeting with HNP chief Léon Charles, another G184 leader, Reginald Boulos, "suggested the Latortue [coup-installed] regime allow businesses to withhold taxes...to buy more powerful weapons for the police. 'If they don't allow us to do this then we'll take on own initiative and do it anyway,' Boulos stated."⁵⁶

Sure enough, the coup regime did give its business allies a massive, three-year tax break,⁵⁷ but they didn't have to pay for the HNP's new weapons. Thanks to the U.S. lifting its arms embargo on Haiti, the HNP soon received at least 5,435 new, "military-style weapons...and some 1 million rounds of ammunition."⁵⁸

G184-spokesmen Boulos and Baker were not the only HNP advocates pushing to get deadlier weapons for the illegal regime's murderous police force. Another was the RCMP's Dan Moskaluk, the spokesman for the UN's CIVPOL force in Haiti. This Canadian "defended the arms transfer as a means of standardizing and keeping track of the [Haitian] police force's weapons."⁵⁹

Conclusion

Evidence that the G184 gave crucial support for the pre-coup terror tactics of Philippe's well-armed rebels and Labanyè's gang, flies in the face of this

"civil society" group's publicly declared Gandhian approach to promoting peace and reconciliation within Haitian society. It was equally contradictory for the supposedly nonviolent G184 to exert such tremendous post-coup pressure on two other violent institutions at play in postcoup Haiti, namely, UN occupation troops (from the U.S., Canada, France and Brazil) and the coup-regime's paramilitary police force.

Some may think it unfair to compare the violence of Philippe's death-squad rebels and Labanyè's urban thugs with the highly disciplined work

of international troops, or with Haiti's National Police—trained and vetted by the RCMP with CIDA funding. Such reservations may, in fact, be justified. Given their ready access to vastly superior weapons, training, logistical support and financial resources, the "legitimate" institutions of state violence certainly have a much greater ability to inflict violence to suppress Haiti's pro-democracy supporters than do small, paramilitary groups of Haitian criminals. Therefore, because Haiti's relatively ill-equipped rebels and gangs are more-or-less mere amateurs in the business of inflicting violence, it really *isn't* fair

Projects Funded by CIDA ¹ Run by or benefitting G-184 Member Groups ²			CIDA-Funded G-184 Member Groups			
Project Budget		Notes	Group	Funding from CIDA (Cdn \$)	Notes	
Total	Coup Period (Apr.04-Mar.06)					
A	\$10,000,000	\$5 million	"OAS 'Special Mission' Project"	CARLI	Amt. unreported	A beneficiary of Project A ¹
B	\$5,000,000	\$1,437,796	"Kore Fanm Fund" (Run by Haiti's coup regime and various foreign gov't-funded "NGOs")	CRESFED	54,000	Social action centre for human rights ³
C	\$213,556	\$152,398	"Civil Society Participation in the Governance of Haiti"	Fanm Yo La	10,781	Public awareness, re: political parties ³
					150,000	Public awareness, re: political parties ^{1,3}
D	\$334,643	\$248,159	"New Social Contract Development" (Run by G-184 and FNH)		Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project B ¹
E	\$6,925,802	\$3,000,570	"Educational Opportunities and Governance of the Education System" (Run by Haiti's coup regime, the Haitian Economists' Assoc., several right-wing private education foundations and the Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches)	FNH	220,000	Judicial Reform project (JRAP) ³
F	\$492,984	\$315,937	"Organization Building and Electoral Observation Project"		Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project C ¹
					Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project D ¹
\$22,966,985		\$9,906,701		FONHEP	264,550	Urgent program in Arbonite ³
					Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project E ¹
				ISC	Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project C ¹
					Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project F ¹
				JILAP	23,440	Human Rights training ³
					Amt. unreported	A beneficiary of Project A ¹
				MOUFHED	Amt. unreported	A beneficiary of Project A ¹
				MPP	218,001	Action re: Women's rights ³
					Amt. unreported	A "Key Haitian Partner" running Project B ¹
					Amt. unreported	A beneficiary of FNH's JRAP project ¹
				SOFA	198,549	Violence against women ³

Sources:

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Glossary of Acronyms

CARLI	Lawyers' Committee for the Respect of Individual Freedoms	JILAP	National Episcopal Commission on Justice and Peace
CRESFED	Center of Social Research and Economic Training for Development	MOUFHED	Haitian Women's Movement for Education and Development
Fanm Yo La	Haitian Feminist Collective Against Exclusion of Women	MPP	Papaye Farmers' Movement
FNH	New Haiti Foundation	OAS	Organization of American States
FONHEP	Haitian Foundation for Private Education	SOFA	Solidarité Fanm Ayisyen
ISC	Civil Society Initiative Group		

to compare the scale and intensity of their violence with that inflicted by the full-time, professional soldiers sent to Haiti by major military powers like the U.S., Canada and France.

Although the G184's supposed opposition to violence was an obvious contrivance, it was not questioned by the corporate media. On the contrary, mainstream news—mimicking the blatant bias of the coup's mentors—presented the G184 as a heroic movement devoted to peacefully resolving Haiti's crisis. The media has also toed the line by generally blaming Haiti's violence on the so-called *chimère*—an epithet for Aristide supporters living in impoverished urban areas. (See “‘*Chimère*’: The ‘N’ word of Haiti,” p.50.)

The media's constant repetition of such black-and-white myths was used to justify not only the G184's efforts to overthrow Aristide's democratically elected government but also to rationalize the post-coup witch hunt that killed, imprisoned and exiled many thousands of innocent supporters of Haiti's democratic system.

Despite all the lies spread by such elite organizations as the G184—and its member groups that own and control much of Haiti's media—most Haitians were not fooled into believing that the G184 stood for nonviolence. Neither did Haiti's majority fall for the fairy tale that the G184 represented Haiti's broadbased, grassroots, “civil society.” The fact that the G184 is “dominated by one specific sector with very particular interests—private sector business associations,”⁶⁰ has been noted by many observers. For instance, the Haiti Support Group (HSG), a UK-based solidarity group, remarked that although the G184 is “little more than a vehicle for a narrow, elite sector”

“[it] successfully portrayed itself—particularly to foreign journalists and donor countries—as THE representative organisation of Haitian civil society as a whole.”⁶¹

This false image of the G184 has had a number of serious repercussions. For example,

the HSG noted that during the coup-installed regime of 2004-2006, the “very limited amount of consultation with Haitian civil society organisations” was “monopolised by the Group of 184.”⁶²

Through the G184, Haiti's business elite—in collaboration with foreign government agencies such as USAID and CIDA—wielded tremendous influence over the coup regime that it had helped to install. As a result, according to the HSG, a “vast array” of “vibrant and inclusive organisations from Haiti's civil society” were “ignored.”⁶³

Unfortunately however, the G184 did far worse than merely monopolize dialogue with the coup regime or cause some of Haiti's “civil society” to be unjustly “ignored.” More than any other Haitian organization, the G184 was responsible for leading, coordinating and manipulating that country's anti-Aristide forces in a concerted effort to provoke the illegal, 2004 regime change. Their leadership not only invited international military troops to kidnap the country's president and invade the country, they helped facilitate the installation of a repressive regime

and then spurred on military and police violence to keep it in power.

As if destroying Haiti's democracy was not enough, the G184 aided and abetted a reign of terror that sought to eliminate the country's most popular political party. Scheming from the shadows, the G184's leaders manipulated every conceivable force of violence available in the vain hope that they could rid Haiti of those who still stubbornly supported Aristide and his duly elected Lavalas party.

However, in reviewing the violent and antidemocratic functions of the G184, it is important to remember that this shrill voice of Haiti's rich and powerful elite was really just a creature of outside forces from the U.S., Canada and Europe. It was after all, birthed and nurtured by foreign agencies that employed it as a fifth column to cater to their corporate and political interests.

As we examine the horrors that resulted from the G184's devious antidemocratic work, we can only hope that our politicians—and their allies in government-funded, “nongovernment organizations” (NGOs)—will someday be held accountable for their roles in destabilizing Aristide's government, and then turning a blind eye to the human rights catastrophe that followed.

And, as taxpayers who funded Canada's nefarious role in Haiti, we must be aware that our hands too are stained. This was not the first time that Canadians were fiscally conscripted into complicity with a violent travesty of justice. And, of course, it will not be the last.

We must therefore be exceedingly wary whenever our government, or the “NGOs” on its payroll, beseech us to support a war or regime change that supposedly promotes peace, democracy and human rights, or fixes a “failed state.” When the media then conveys heart-rending pretext incidents from the targetted country, we must be alert to the possibility that they were perhaps conjured up with CIDA funding in order to hoodwink us into supporting our government's bellicose plans.

CSIG Members: At the Core of the G184

The G184 was an extension of the Civil Society Initiative Group (CSIG) whose membership list (see below) represented the most affluent members of Haiti's society. Both the G184 and the CSIG received CIDA funding for projects that destabilized Aristide's elected government, thus paving the way for the 2004 coup.

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Haiti
- Franco-Haitian Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Center for Free Enterprise and Democracy
- Protestant Federation of Haiti
- New Foundation of Haiti
- National Haitian Foundation for Private Education
- Committee for Patriotic Initiatives
- National Association of Distributors and Importers of Petroleum Products
- Democratic Initiatives
- National Haitian Teachers' Confederation
- Haitian Tourist and Hoteliers' Association
- Friends of Nature Federation
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Lower Artibonite
- Chamber of Commerce & Industry of the Southeast
- General Independent Organisations of Workers of Haiti
- Artibonite Entrepreneurs' Association

Source: This membership list is from “Haiti's civil society: So much more than the 184,” Haiti Support Group media release, July 6, 2004. <haiti.support.gn.apc.org/july06.htm>



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Archived copies of the now-defunct G184 website

Although the G184 is now defunct, saved copies of its website (from December 8, 2003, to April 5, 2005), are still available in the "Web Archive":
 <web.archive.org/web/*http://group184.org>