

Fuelling the War of Words against Aristide

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

Haiti's most famous Catholic priest—a liberation theologian named President Jean-Bertrand Aristide—had many institutional opponents at home and abroad. Of all his CIDA-funded adversaries in Canada, one of the most strident was the influential Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. Development and Peace (D&P) is “the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada.”¹ It has been at the forefront of Canadian opposition to Aristide's Lavalas government and its supporters.

Strewn along the electronic “paper trail” of news releases, articles, reports and media interviews left by Canada's CIDA-funded agencies, are many examples of D&P's role in cheerleading the Canadian government's foreign policies in Haiti. Aibly led its Québec branch, D&P played a pivotal role in helping to destabilize Aristide's government, promoting the legitimacy of the regime change and covering up post-coup atrocities.

One might be excused for thinking that this leadership from D&P-Québec is the logical result of some deep religious and linguistic connections with Haiti's population. But, in reality, these ties are not as strong as one might think. For one thing, French is *not* Haiti's common language, it is in fact the colonial language of Haiti's ruling elite. Kreyole is the language of most Haitians, especially that 80% of the population living in abject poverty. Similarly, although Catholicism was, in effect, the official state religion of Haiti, the predominant religion is actually Vodoun—which was brought from Africa by slaves and has been suppressed for centuries.



Haitian Proverb:
“*Lé yo vle touye chen yo di'l fou.*”

“When people want to kill a dog, they say it's rabid.”

Government Financing and Close Collaboration

Although D&P raises millions from Catholic parishes across Canada, about 70% of its annual overseas budget, comes from CIDA.² As one of CIDA's most important and long-standing collaborators, D&P has long served the Canadian government's foreign policy interests. Over the past four decades, through some 15,000 projects,³ D&P has implemented “more than \$500 million worth of development programs” as part of its “partnership collaboration with CIDA.”⁴

D&P's budget in FY 2004-2005 alone was over \$24 million⁵ and on average, in Latin America, it “distributes around \$5 million every year to some 138 partners in 11 priority intervention countries.”⁶

In its most recent long-range program, Haiti is listed first among this hemisphere's “priority coun-

tries.”⁷ In total, D&P's partners in Haiti have recently been receiving between \$360,000 and \$400,000 per year.⁸

In late 2003, D&P reported that it had “collaborated closely” with CIDA for 35 years and that there is “a large degree of mutual trust” between “the two organizations” which have “carried out many development and humanitarian aid projects...as well as projects to educate both the Canadian public and policy discussions. Given this solid basis, D&P's collaboration has extended to other Canadian government departments and programs: Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Finance, etc.”⁹

D&P's collaboration with the Canadian government showed no signs of strain even when collaborating with U.S. and French agencies to help set the stage for Haiti's 2004 coup and lend support to the vicious dictatorship that followed. In fact, as that coup neared, CIDA *insisted* on even “closer” collaboration with D&P. As the latter explained, “One of the main observations of CIDA's recent institutional evaluation” of D&P, “was the *insistence* that



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still closer cooperation would be in both organizations' interest."¹⁰ (Emphasis added.)

D&P certainly came through for CIDA, helping to lead an information war against Aristide and his elected government that took place on three main fronts:

- Working within global organizations,
- Funding anti-Lavalas "partners" in Haiti, and
- Conducting propaganda in Canada.

On the International Front

A CIDA evaluation¹¹ of D&P's efforts noted the importance of its "networking activities." For instance, D&P works with the following global Catholic organizations:

- International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, an alliance of "Catholic development organisations from Europe and North America"¹²
- Caritas Internationalis, "a Vatican-headquartered umbrella organization"¹³ of "Catholic relief, development and social service organisations working...in over 200 countries."¹⁴
- Pax Christi International,¹⁵ "a non-profit, non-governmental Catholic peace movement" in "30 countries and 5 continents with over 60 thousand members."¹⁶

D&P also works with major international fora outside Catholicism:

- World March of Women
- Continental Social Alliance
- Asia Partnership for Human Development
- Africa Forum
- World Social Forum (WSF)¹⁷

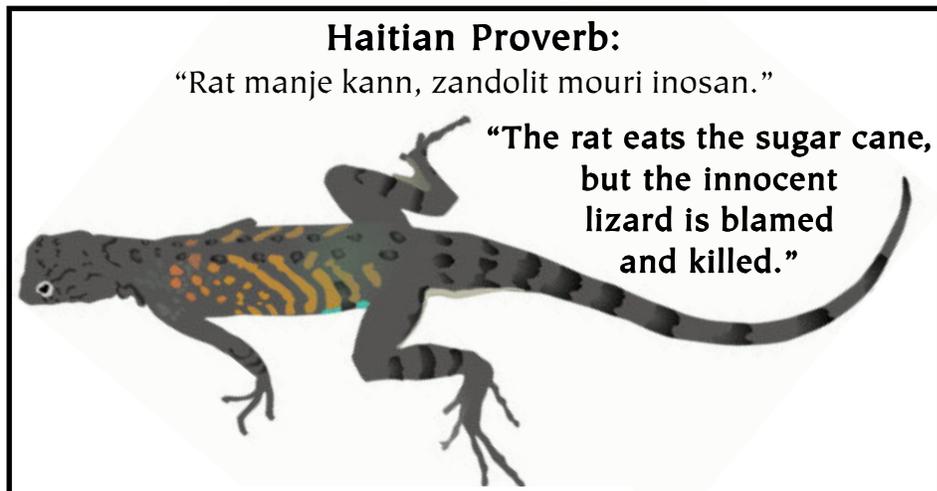
Such involvement is important to D&P which says these

"networks and relationships enable us to work in close partnership with other organizations and leverage our resources to expand our reach and effectiveness in achieving our development goals."¹⁸

For example, D&P delegates have been active in all WSF gatherings, including its "regional and continental discussion forums."¹⁹ At the January-2006 WSF in Caracas, the Canada Haiti Action Network (CHAN)—which strenuously opposed the 2004 coup and obviously does not receive CIDA funding—organized events with Haitian speakers including:

- Euvonie Georges -Auguste, a women's rights and political leader...living in exile in St. Lucia
- Paul Loulou Chery, Sec. Gen., Confederation of Haitian Workers
- Mario Joseph, lawyer and defender

Democracy [and the Comité Solidarité Trois-Rivières²²] argued forcefully that the 2004 coup against President Aristide and his government is of no consequence for the Haitian people."²³



Haitian Proverb:

"Rat manje kann, zandolit mouri inosan."

"The rat eats the sugar cane, but the innocent lizard is blamed and killed."

of political prisoners

- Gladice DeLouis-Simon, co-organizer, youth organization MOJESHA ...living in exile in St. Vincent
- Lovinsky Pierre Antoine, leader of the political rights organization September 30 Foundation...living in exile in Washington, DC.²⁰

These speakers, representing a few of the hundreds of Haitian pro-democracy groups that would never receive CIDA funding, discussed "the foreign occupation,...the ongoing repression and...the hundreds of political prisoners"²¹ in Haiti whose existence was denied by Canada's government and its coopted supporters in the "NGO" community.

D&P delegates and partners from Haiti were present at this CHAN session and demonstrated their commitment to another vision of development. Here is how the CHAN report describes what happened:

"During the discussion period, several apologists for the 2004 coup from non-governmental organizations [NGOs] criticized the views of the panelists. A representative from [the] Canadian government-funded NGO Development and Peace defended the work of NGOs working in Haiti, but did not answer to the charge that such organizations have not spoken out against the coup and the thousands that have perished in its wake. Yolette Jeanty of Kay Fanm (funded by D&P and Rights and

Building anti-Aristide Partnerships in Haiti

Kay Fanm is only one of 17 Haitian groups to which D&P funnelled CIDA money. All of D&P's partner groups were politically aligned with the anti-Aristide movement. Thanks to D&P assistance, these groups were better able to carry out the foreign-funded, elite-backed destabilization campaign that helped oust Haiti's elected government. Even after the coup, D&P and its Haitian partners continued their unrelenting assaults against Aristide's government while studiously ignoring the fact that thousands of Lavalas supporters were being hunted down, imprisoned, exiled or massacred.

Most Canadians probably imagine that CIDA programs provide for basic human needs, especially in the world's poorest countries. Although D&P did do much-needed hurricane-disaster relief work in Haiti, its primary and ongoing focus there has been of a very political nature. What the recipients of D&P's largesse all have in common was not a shared interest in working with Haiti's poorest of the poor, but rather a desire to stir up a political storm of hatred against Aristide. In effect, D&P seeded this storm against the impoverished masses that constituted Aristide's most avid supporters.

D&P's partner groups in Haiti have included:

- Fanm Deside (Decided Women)

- Institute of Research & Technical Support in Environmental Planning
- Technology and Leadership Institute
- Youth in action for change
- Kay Famn (What Women)
- Peasant Movement of Papaye
- Program for Justice Alternatives
- Southeastern Women's Network
- Platform for Haitian Human Rights Organizations
- Social Communication Leadership Society
- Coordination for Advocacy on Women's Rights
- National Coalition for Haitian Rights²⁴
- Regional Education Project for Development
- Solidarity with Haitian Women
- Karl Lévesque Cultural Institute²⁵
- Movement of Haitian Women for Education²⁶
- Haitian Collective for Environmental Protection and Alternative Development.²⁷

D&P is unfettered by the diplomatic niceties that often reign in government discourse. As such, the partisan perspectives of Canadian politicians and bureaucrats can be more directly expressed by CIDA's contracted agents, like D&P. In this way, the Canadian government's anti-Aristide bias rang through, especially loud and stridently clear, during D&P's testimony to Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT). At that March-2004 session, during the most brutal, early period of the coup, D&P's top organizer and spokesperson on Haiti, Marthe Lapierre, shamelessly let loose—no less than eight times—with the Haitian elite's derogatory epithet, "*chimère*," to create an image of Aristide supporters as mere gangs of violent criminal thugs. She also pretended that Haiti's "entire population was mobilized" against President Aristide:

"We're not talking about a situation where a rebel group suddenly orchestrated Aristide's departure.... [T]he Aristide government, since 2000, had gradually lost *all legitimacy*.... Gradually *the people of Haiti* began to react.... and as early as December 2002, partners of D&P. All these organizations took a posi-

tion as early as December 2002 in support of Aristide's departure; they were demanding he leave.... *The entire population was mobilized*.... People went down in the streets and for two months, there were practically daily demonstrations ...in every major city..., where people were demanding that Aristide leave.... What happened is that *the entire population turned against him*. This was a movement for which there *was unanimous support in Haiti*, except in those areas armed by Aristide himself."²⁸ (Emphasis added.)

By saying that "the Aristide government" had "lost *all legitimacy*," that the "*entire population was mobilized*" against Aristide and that "the *entire population turned against him*," D&P conjures up an totally deceptive image of "*unanimous support*" for massive near-daily, panHaitian protests against the Lavalas government. This central myth runs through the propaganda of CIDA-funded "NGOs." In her diatribe, D&P's representative hid the reality that most Haitians supported Aristide. This massive, widespread peaceful movement—viciously libelled by D&P as mere "*chimères*" "armed by Aristide himself"—held frequent peaceful rallies that were consistently larger than anything CIDA's anti-Aristide forces could ever muster. This is especially telling because these enormous pro-Aristide events were planned by poverty-stricken activists with no financial backing from U.S., Canadian or European government agencies. Meanwhile, as their anti-Aristide compatriots collected millions of dollars annually from foreign government benefactors, they were also generously aided by wealthy Haitian patrons who put the country's powerful mass media at their disposal. This free publicity from corporate radio, newspapers and TV gave D&P's anti-Aristide partners a significant advantage in drawing people to their events. (See pp.26-37.) However, despite this support, they always remained relatively miniscule when compared to pro-Aristide rallies, which by D&P and other CIDA accounts never occurred.

One of the many huge pro-Aristide rallies that D&P blindsided took place just three months before Ms. Lapierre's hyperbolic speech to MPs.

As the *Miami Herald* reported:

"Hundreds of thousands of jubilant Haitians swarmed the National Palace on New Year's Day [2004] as they...embraced their embattled president's vision of an improved and united Haiti."²⁹

But even after the 2004 coup there were other protests attended by tens of thousands of Aristide supporters. This is especially remarkable because following the regime change, the coup-installed government's newly-militarized police force was inclined to shoot and kill such peaceful prodemocracy protesters, while UN peacekeepers—and CIDA-funded groups in Haiti and Canada—stood blithely by.

There are two curious, but unexplained, references in Ms. Lapierre's speech to what she characterises as a turning point in Haitian social history after which "[t]he entire population was mobilized....[and] the entire population turned against" Aristide. She twice identifies that revolutionary moment as "December 2002." What happened at that pivotal time is recounted by the *Haiti Progrès* newsweekly:

"Opposition leaders had predicted that tens of thousands would follow them on a march...on Dec. 3 [2002] to call for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's resignation. Instead, they had to beat a hasty retreat when faced with an angry multitude of counter-demonstrators which dwarfed their show of force....

"Furious at this setback, the ad hoc opposition...an alliance of politicians, businessmen and former Duvalierists [i.e., supporters of the 29-year Duvalier dictatorship], called for a general strike on Dec. 4. Haiti's business associations, led by the Association of Haiti's Industries and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Haiti, also issued a call for a Dec. 4 'warning strike.' ...

"[They] issued a declaration denouncing Aristide's government: 'The employer associations ask the international community to take note ...that the democratic process is seriously in danger.' Ironically, Haiti's bourgeoisie proposes saving the 'democratic process' by dispensing with it; they want Aristide to step down.

“Despite the joint call and massive radio play, the general strike was a failure. Only large stores, gas stations and banks closed.”³⁰

On the heels of these failures, leaders of the anti-Aristide movement “went back to the drawing board” in meetings “for three days in mid-December in the Dominican Republic” with the International Republican Institute, a pillar of the U.S. government’s National Endowment for Democracy. (See p.47.) What they drew up was the Group of 184. (See pp.50-53.)

“On Dec. 26 [2002], a new enlarged front was unveiled, claiming to have 184 institutions representing 12 key sectors of Haitian society... [including] dozens of obscure popular organizations whose authenticity merits investigation.”³¹

Ms. Lapierre’s tirade also exposed D&P’s positive view of the coup-empowered dictatorship. This view was shared by D&P’s Haitian partners and the Canadian government. In contrasting Aristide’s elected government with the “appointed” coup-regime, Lapierre stated that:

“what characterized President Aristide’s government was its inability to govern, which is not necessarily the case now. It seems to me the transitional government that has been appointed does have some ability to do that. Also, *it is creating hope among the Haitian population, based on what we’ve observed.*”³² (Emphasis added.)

This “hope” that D&P reportedly “observed” “among the Haitian population” was certainly *not* a feeling that the majority of Haitians were experiencing in those early weeks of the bloody coup regime. This sense of “hope”—no doubt felt by D&P’s partners following their success in deposing Aristide’s government—exemplifies just how out of touch D&P and its partners are from that country’s population, even as they profess their “preferential option for the poor.”³³

D&P’s vision of how best to aid Haiti’s poor is amply illustrated in its reports during the pre-coup campaign to forcefully oust Haiti’s legitimate government. Although D&P’s clear goal was to depose the elected government, this CIDA-funded group was

always careful to couch its efforts in terms of promoting democracy. To understand how D&P could rationalize this Orwellian contradiction, it is helpful to read their statement on the “notion” of electoral democracy:

“While Development and Peace supports the notion of the legitimacy of an elected president, it also believes that democracy cannot be restricted to coming to power in a democratic manner, but is also about the democratic exercise of power.”³⁴

By this logic D&P tried to explain away its concerted efforts to *overthrow* Haiti’s democracy, as if they were *promoting* democracy. D&P’s doublethink came through in its program for 2003-2006. Ironically called “Support for the Democratization of Development,” this document lays out D&P’s political analysis and dictates a plan of action for its Haitian partners:

“In the past, Haitian civil society has demonstrated tremendous vitality and resolve in *putting an end to dictatorships*.... These organizations *must now gain strength* so that they can become a *pressure group* capable of protecting and sustaining the country’s democratization process. The February 2002 conference of grassroots organizations held by ...[D&P], in association with numerous partners, *presents some hope for a revival of mobilization in this sector.*”³⁵ (Emphasis added.)

Clearly then, D&P’s efforts in 2002 and 2003 to build “stronger grassroots organizations,”³⁶ were deliberately undertaken to “strengthen” its partners’ influence over Haitian “civil society” so that it would once again demonstrate their “resolve in putting an end to dictatorships.” D&P’s CIDA-funded goal of promoting a democracy by overthrowing it, hinged on its view of Aristide’s elected government as a “dictatorship.” As Ms. Lapierre unabashedly explained to MPs:

“Was the Aristide regime a democracy or a dictatorship? For me, the answer is clear: it was a dictatorship.... Indeed, that is how all of our partners in Haiti describe the regime.”

D&P’s CIDA-backed prayers for “a revival of mobilization” to depose the so-called Aristide “dictatorship,”

were answered in “the last months of 2003” when, supposedly,

“people mobilized massively throughout Haiti for the departure of President Aristide.... Even after Aristide’s departure in February 2004, conditions did not significantly improve.”³⁷

This reveals D&P’s impression that “conditions” actually *did* “improve,” though not “significantly,” after what they euphemistically call Aristide’s “departure,” i.e., after his kidnapping, exile and the 2004 coup d’état.

Propaganda and Influence in Canada

D&P was well positioned to play a key role in selling the government’s policies and actions to various target audiences in Canada. Besides having national offices in Montréal and Toronto, this highly respected organization has 14 regional staff operating in eight provinces.³⁸ D&P spreads the word to Catholic audiences across Canada by reaching out to thousands of individual members in hundreds of local parishes.

One way D&P accomplishes this is to fly its Haitian partners to Canada for speaking engagements. In 2005, midway through the coup regime, D&P chose Jesi Chancy Manigat to educate Canadians on Haiti’s political crisis. Manigat—who “visited the dioceses of Gatineau-Hull, Ottawa, Rouyn-Noranda, Amos, Mont-Laurier and Saint Boniface”³⁹—is closely tied to some of Haiti’s most virulently anti-Aristide groups. She has served as editor of CRESFED’s journal, and serves on the board of ENFOFANM⁴⁰ and with the coordinating committee of CONAP.⁴¹ (See p.49.) Manigat is also the D&P “liaison agent” at their “local support” office in Port-au-Prince, which opened in June 2004.⁴²

Manigat’s anti-Lavalas credentials go back at least a dozen years to when she was at the centre of “a smouldering crisis” at the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP).⁴³ As *Haiti Info* reported in 1996, “[s]ix of the CEP’s eight members attempted to resign...after they tried and failed to eject member Jesi Chancy Manigat.” When President René Préval then dissolved the CEP, five small opposition parties “banded together as ‘the democratic opposition’

(even though most of them supported the [1991] coup and *de facto* [military] regimes), and attacked Lavalas.”⁴⁴

D&P’s influence is also felt outside the Catholic church through its “active participation in many partnerships, alliances, networks and coordinating institutions and committees”⁴⁵ within Canada’s peace, development and human rights movements. In fact, a D&P report in 2003 notes that “the last two institutional evaluations by CIDA have portrayed it [D&P] as a leader in the Canadian NGO community.”⁴⁶ Because of this role as an NGO “leader,” D&P is in a position to persuade and influence various alliances and their members. For instance, D&P works within the following networks and coalitions:

- International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, a coalition of about “30 civil society organizations concerned about the impact of new anti-terrorism legislation.”⁴⁷
- Roundtable on Haiti (CPH), a coalition of largely CIDA-funded groups that promoted Canadian foreign policy objectives in Haiti. (See pp.47-48.)
- Québec Network on Continental Integration, “a coalition of research teams and of grassroots, union, community, environmental and international-cooperation organizations.”⁴⁸
- Kairos, a CIDA-funded “ecumenical partnership...promoting human rights, justice, peace, viable human development & ecological justice.”⁴⁹
- Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), a CIDA-funded “coalition of Canadian voluntary sector organizations working globally to achieve sustainable human development.”⁵⁰ D&P chapter groups are also involved in CCIC’s provincial coordinating bodies in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Atlantic region.⁵¹
- Québec Association of International Development Organizations (AQOCI). (See pp.42-43.)
- Collectif Échec à la guerre (CEG), Montréal’s anti-war coalition, pro-



Gustav Doré

Haitian Proverb:

“Konstitisyon se papie, bayonet se fe.”

“The constitution is paper, bayonets are steel.”

Meaning: While constitutional laws exist on paper, they are meaningless in the face of brute military force.

duced a statement opposing the Canadian government’s complicity in Haiti’s 2004 coup. However, CEG’s statement did not receive support from two of its member organizations—AQOCI and D&P. These two CEG members (which also both belong to the virulently anti-Aristide CPH network—forced the Collective to completely withdraw its principled statement. (See p.43.)

The importance that D&P places on such collaborative efforts within broader networks and coalitions is exemplified in a description of its efforts to “raise awareness in Canada” about Haiti. D&P’s *Report on Results* (2004-2005) lists five D&P activities during the early coup-regime period:

1. “Tour of a Haitian guest to two regions of Canada (Manitoba and the Outaouais region) during the 2004 Share Lent campaign.”
2. “Participation of a [D&P] ...partner from Haiti in the opening of the Journées québécoises de solidarité

internationale, organized by the AQOCI.”

3. “Active participation with CPH ...in organizing study days on Haiti. Some 20 groups from Québec and Canada and representatives from a European coordinating committee took part.”
4. “Participation in two press conferences and publication of at least four news releases on the situation in Haiti, in collaboration with CPH ...[and] participation in several radio and TV interviews.”
5. “Organization of a tour around Canada with two representatives of Haitian civil society (Conseil des Sages and a human rights group [NCHR-Haiti]). The tour included meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CIDA, opposition ...parties and CCIC.”⁵² (See p.49.)

D&P noted that three of the above activities were organized by, or in collaboration with, other CIDA-funded organizations—primarily the Roundtable on Haiti (CPH). However, the last event was also reported

elsewhere to have been a CPH event.⁵³ It was clearly designed to influence and persuade “NGOs” and political actors in government and the opposition.

There is perhaps no better example of the leading role played by D&P in influencing Canadian politicians regarding CIDA’s partisan perspective on Haiti, than the SCFAIT session of March 25, 2004. Canadian law makers summoned those who they deemed to be their country’s most informed experts on Haiti. Five representatives of CIDA-paid “NGOs” were thus invited to bring MPs up-to-date analysis on Haiti’s then-raging crisis:

- Marthe Lapierre, D&P
- Catherine Duhamel, International Centre for Legal Resources (See pp.38-41.)
- Jean-Louis Roy, Rights & Democracy (See pp.44-47.)
- Michel Verret & Carlos Arancibia, Oxfam-Québec

And then there was Joe Clark. Though not a SCFAIT member, he was

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present, not so much—it seems—to ask questions of the experts, but to act as if he too represented an “NGO.” Retiring from politics a few months later, he did indeed soon join the board of the CIDA-funded Canadian Foundation for the Americas.⁵⁴ (See pp.8-12.)

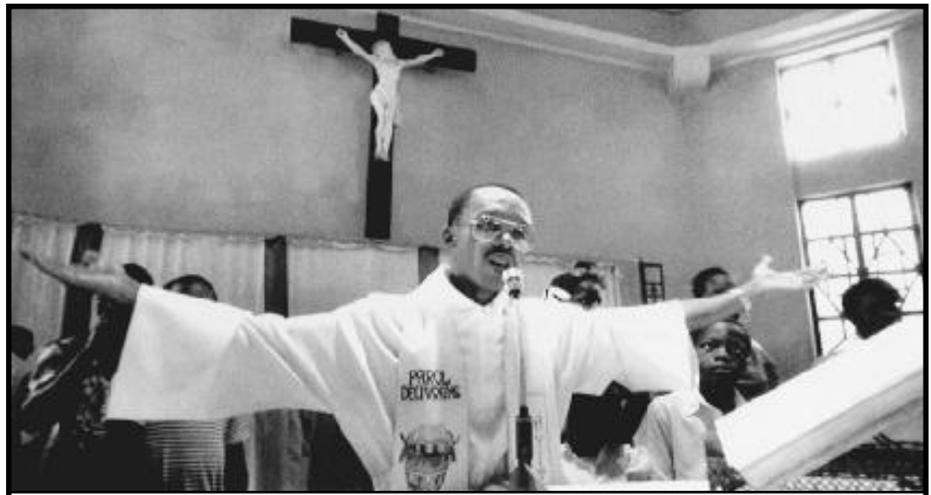
It was late March 2004, one of the most horrific months in Haitian history, at least for the terrorized majority who had elected Aristide in 2000. Their president had been forced into exile by U.S. threats of mass murder. An illegal regime—handpicked by Haiti’s elite and their patrons in the U.S., Canadian and French governments—had just been sworn in. Paramilitary death squads, foreign troops and newly-militarized police were hunting down Lavalas supporters and disposing of them with impunity. (See pp.14-15.) But, remarkably, none of this was reported to MPs. Instead, while thousands of Aristide’s supporters were murdered, jailed or sent into hiding, CIDA’s “experts” continued to blame his government for all that ailed Haiti. Such was the momentum of their rhetoric that it continued to bulldoze forward, even as Canadian-backed efforts were underway to annihilate the Lavalas movement.

Throughout the SCFAIT hearing, D&P’s representative, Marthe Lapierre, held court. She was asked to speak first and made introductory remarks on behalf of the other CIDA experts. The chair and MPs, repeatedly came back to her comments and directed questions to her. Other presenters made a point of saying how much they agreed with her statements. As a result, Ms. Lapierre spoke more often and for longer than the others. Finally, the chair gave her the last word. (Lapierre’s leadership role on Haiti, among CIDA-funded groups in Canada, was also reflected in her omnipresence as a speaker and contact person for the stridently anti-Aristide Roundtable on Haiti. See pp.48-49.)

Not only did D&P’s representative not acknowledge that a coup had occurred, she scoffed at the idea:

“We certainly can’t prevent Mr. Aristide from now alleging that he was the victim of a coup d’État. But I ask you: if there really was a coup d’État, who seized power?”

And, rather than condemning the un-



Haitian Proverb:

“Kreyon pep
pa gen gonm”

“The people’s pencil
has no eraser.”

Meaning: This revision of a Kreyole proverb about “God’s pencil,” signifies that such great progress was made by President Aristide, that the people’s collective memory of his government cannot be erased, even by a coup regime’s horrific violence and terror.

democratic imposition of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue (a World Bank consultant and long-time Florida resident) and his clique of wealthy, business-friendly Haitians who were quickly handed power after Haiti’s coup, Lapierre once again turned against the diminutive priest, saying “the Aristide regime...was a dictatorship.”⁵⁵

In contrast, D&P’s expert on Haiti never refers to Latortue’s coup-empowered regime as a dictatorship. Instead, she expressed her faith in this unelected government saying with optimistic repetition: “I think there is now a foundation on which to rebuild in Haiti,” and “We’re starting to have the necessary foundation to begin to rebuild.”⁵⁶ But, she warned, building on Latortue’s success was contingent on whether the Canadian government would “provide ongoing support to this government in transition.”⁵⁷

“The Aristide Paradox”

In describing the attitudes of D&P partners towards Aristide, Ms. Lapierre opined that “The time is long gone when we should be expressing *blind faith in a supposed messiah*. That is all over and done with.”⁵⁸ (Emphasis added.) However, two years later as the coup regime was ejected by elections, many thousands of Haitian groups—without benefit of CIDA funding—had not “done with” expressing their demands for Aristide’s return. And, this Catholic organization was *still* con-

cerned that Haitian’s supposed “blind faith” in Aristide had built him up as a false or “supposed messiah.” So, in response to the deposed president’s continuing popularity, a D&P report in 2006 concluded with a section called “The Aristide Paradox.”⁵⁹ In it, D&P tried to explain away the Haitian multitude’s undying support for their duly elected but deposed leader by saying:

“Despite the violence and corruption of Aristide’s government, it is true that many ordinary and non organized Haitians still support him, seeing him as a mythical—and almost mystical—saviour figure. Many still believe that Aristide has supernatural powers.

“In a country where the majority of the population live on less than 1US\$ per day, [and] are illiterate,.... the image of a lone priest struggling against the Catholic hierarchy and powerful structures of injustice lingers on.”⁶⁰

So, D&P’s explanation of “The Aristide Paradox” comes down to this: Aristide supporters are a simple, “ordinary” “non organized” people who—lacking education and being “illiterate”—suffer from a delusory “blind faith” that Aristide is a “mythical—and almost mystical—saviour figure,” indeed even a false “messiah,” imbued with “supernatural powers.”

Such paternalistic views are reminiscent of the notorious “Anti-Superstition Campaign” of the late 1930s-

early 1940s when the repressive Haitian state collaborated with the Catholic Church in an effort to completely exterminate Haiti's Vodoun religion.

D&P did not explain how a supposedly "non organized" population had in fact organized themselves quite successfully through the Lavalas Party to empower Aristide in two elections. Instead, D&P concludes "The Aristide Paradox" with one final stab at his body politic by saying that in the 2006 presidential elections, "the sector that has glorified the memory of Jean Bertrand Aristide into a myth did not vote for the Lavalas Family candidate."⁶¹

D&P neglects to mention that

the most popular Lavalas leader, besides Aristide, is likely Father Gérard Jean-Juste—another radical Catholic priest. He would have run for president in 2006 but was unable to do so because the Latortue dictatorship had illegally imprisoned him, without charge, for the two years preceding those elections. But not only was D&P's Lapierre silent about Jean-Juste's existence, his name does not even appear once in any of D&P's online documents.⁶²

However, this is not to say that this other radical "priest struggling against the Catholic hierarchy and powerful structures of injustice"⁶³ would have had an easy time winning yet an-

other presidency for the Lavalas party. The harsh reality that is never revealed in D&P's documents or speeches is that Jean-Juste was only one of many Lavalas leaders, grassroots organizers, political campaigners, activists and volunteers who were persecuted during the two years leading up to the 2006 elections. Thousands of others in the Lavalas movement were also jailed, assassinated, intimidated, driven into internal hiding or foreign exile by the Canadian-backed coup regime that D&P and its Haitian partners had so faithfully and loyally helped to empower, in their quest for democracy, human rights, development and peace.

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