

A “Fiercely Partisan” Network

By Kevin Skerrett, researcher, Canadian Union of Public Employees and activist, Canada Haiti Action Network

The Montréal-based Concertation pour Haiti (CPH)—or Roundtable on Haiti—is an informal network including development, human rights and religious organizations that adopted a fiercely partisan anti-Lavalas/anti-Aristide position.

When U.S.-backed paramilitary groups launched violent attacks in the Haitian cities of Gonaives and St. Marc in early February 2004, CPH joined the attack against President Aristide and his government. The CPH went beyond their previous appeals for economic sanctions against Haiti’s elected government and issued an eight-page document which actually demanded that Canada’s government call for Aristide’s resignation and encourage the international community to do likewise.¹

In this document, the CPH recounts a litany of accusations against Aristide’s government, many of which are similar to those levelled by the [CIDA-funded] National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR). [See p.37.] In some cases, the NCHR is explicitly cited.² This CPH document even includes such strident language as accusing Aristide of engaging in “terror and corruption” and of having “Duvalier as his model.” [Editor’s note: It also uses an anti-Aristide epithet, “chimère,” no less than eight times. This slur is often used by Haiti’s right-wing media and corporate elite to slander all poor, black supporters of Aristide as violent thugs.]

Most interestingly, the CPH endorsed a proposal for “resolving” Haiti’s crisis that was proposed by Aristide’s political opposition on December 31, 2003. Their solution included establishing a Council of the Wise to bring together representatives from various social sectors and the creation of a “transition” government presided over by a member of the Supreme Court [See pp.34, 49.] This unconstitutional process of regime change is precisely what was imposed on Haiti following the

kidnapping and exile of President Aristide by U.S. Marines on February 29, 2004.

The CPH had previously used the kind of extreme language to describe Aristide and his government that is normally reserved for a Haitian audience. For instance, they described Aristide as a “tyrant” who ruled a “dictatorship” and called his government a “regime of terror.” The CPH’s mid-February-2004 call for outright regime change was a remarkably partisan position for a coalition of supposedly independent and non-partisan Canadian aid agencies. A report about the CPH’s support for regime change in Haiti reached the public thanks to the *Canadian Press* news wire that feeds stories to newspapers, radio, TV, websites and magazines.³

Interestingly, although Foreign Minister Bill Graham seemed to initially reject the CPH’s call,⁴ he soon appeared to abruptly change his mind. On February 26, 2004, Graham joined the U.S. and France in their demands for Aristide’s resignation. Graham’s abrupt change of heart came within 24 hours of these demands from the U.S. and French governments.⁵

References

1. “Pourquoi Aristide Doit-il Partir? Recommendations de la CPH au gouvernement canadien,” Feb. 16, 2004. www.medialternatif.org/alterpresse/spip.php?article1166
2. Op cit. p.2
3. “Canada must pressure Aristide to resign, human rights group urges,” *Canadian Press*, February 16, 2004.
4. “Ottawa de defend de manquer de fermeté à l’endroit du president Aristide,” *CP*, February 17, 2004.
5. Bruce Campion-Smith, “Graham wants Aristide to consider resigning,” *Toronto Star*, February 27, 2004.

Source: Excerpt, “Faking Genocide in Haiti: Canada’s Role in the Persecution of Yvon Neptune,” *ZNet*, June 23, 2005.

Roundtable on Haiti

This network of organizations does not have its own office or mailing address. However, the contact information used for all its news releases, letters and events consistently included the CIDA-funded **Development and Peace**. (See pp.17-23).

CPH members

These groups belonged to the CPH before and during Haiti’s coup regime. Almost all have received funding from CIDA. An asterisks indicates groups that were not signatories of the CPH’s most recent missive and may no longer be CPH members.

Amnesty International-Francophone
6250 boul Monk
Montréal QC H4E 3H7
www.amnistie.qc.ca

* **Centrale des syndicats du Québec**
9405, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal QC H1L 6P3
www.csq.qc.net

* **Centre d’étude et de coopération internationale**
(See pp.13-15)

Centre international de solidarité ouvrière
565, Crémazie Est, Suite 3500
Montréal QC H2M 2V6
www.ciso.qc.ca

Development and Peace
(See pp.19-25)

* **International Legal Resources Centre** (now defunct)
(See pp.37-41)

L’Entraide missionnaire
15 rue de Castelnau Ouest
Montréal QC H2R 2W3
www.web.net/~emi
(See p.42.)

* **Fédération des travailleurs du Québec**
565, bld. Crémazie Est, 12100
Montréal QC H2M 2W3
www.ftq.qc.ca

Québec Association of International Cooperation Organizations
(See p.42-43.)

Regroupement des organismes canado-haïtiens pour le développement
411 - 7400 boul. Saint-Laurent
Montréal QC H2R 2Y1
www3.sympatico.ca/rocahd

* **Solidarité Comité - Trois-Rivières**
942, rue Sainte-Geneviève,
Trois-Rivières QC G9A 3X6
www.cs3r.org

Solidarité - Union - Coopération
210 - 1453, rue Beaubien Est,
Montréal QC H2G 3C6
www.suco.org

* **United Church of Canada**
300 - 3250 Bloor Street West
Toronto ON M8X 2Y4
www.united-church.ca

Pro-Coup Haitians on Tour in Canada



Haitian Proverb:

“Je wè, bouch pe.”

“Eyes see, mouth shut.”

By Yves Engler, co-author *Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority* (2005) and activist, Haiti Action Montréal.

In October 2004 and in April 2005, the Roundtable on Haiti (CPH) organized the visits to Canada of two particularly anti-Aristide activists from Haiti.

Danielle Magloire

At a CPH news conference during the 2005 tour, Magloire made the absurd claim that it was Aristide’s party, Lavalas, that had administered the transition or regime change from President Aristide to Prime Minister Gerard Latortue.

Magloire was a member of the Haiti’s “Council of the Wise” that appointed Latortue as interim prime minister of Haiti after the coup ousted the elected president.

In mid-July 2005, Magloire’s seven-member “Council of the Wise” demonstrated their commitment to democracy by asserting that Lavalas (which enjoyed more popular support than any other political movement in Haiti) should be banned from participation in the next set of elections.

It also stated that any Haitian media giving voice to “bandits” (code for Lavalas supporters) should be shut down.

Magloire’s status as a “wise” person came largely from her positions within two CIDA-funded women’s groups in Haiti, ENFOFANM and CONAP. They would never have grown to prominence without strong, foreign-government support. CONAP is virulently anti-Lavalas and has shunned the language of class struggle although a tiny percentage of Haiti’s population owns nearly everything. Remarkably, it expressed little concern about the dramatic rise in rapes that targeted Lavalas sympathizers after the 2004 coup.

[Editor’s Note: Magloire now heads Rights and Democracy’s office in Haiti, see pp.44-47.]

Yolène Gilles

Gilles was the coordinator of “human rights” monitoring at the CIDA-funded National Network for the Defense of Human Rights (RNDDH), formerly known as NCHR-Haiti. This group changed its name in March 2005, after its U.S. parent group, condemned its blatantly-partisan work regarding the illegal imprisonment of Haiti’s constitutional Prime Minister, Yvon Neptune.

Immediately after the 2004 coup, when members of Aristide’s Lavalas government were being attacked, murdered and driven into hiding and foreign exile, Gilles went on Haiti’s elite-owned radio to name supposed Lavalas “bandits.” This contributed to the climate of anti-Lavalas terror in Haiti.

During her CPH-sponsored visit to Canada in April 2005, Gilles denied the

existence of state-sponsored repression directed at Lavalas. This contradicts reports from Amnesty International, the University of Miami’s Law School, Harvard University, the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and many other legitimate sources. Gilles’ close ties to the de facto government, the UN and Canadian government funding are as well documented as the political repression she denied.

Sources: Excerpts, “The Politics of Money: Haiti and the Left,” *Canadian Dimension*, November/December 2005 and “NGOs and Haiti,” *ZNet*, January 7, 2006.

Gilles and NCHR-Haiti

By Richard Sanders

Gilles’ organization, the RNDDH (formerly NCHR-Haiti), was one of the most influential of all the extremely biased and partisan Haitian groups funded by CIDA. NCHR exaggerated and sometimes completely fabricated stories that were then spread by governments, journalists and “NGOs” in Haiti and abroad. It also played a key role in aiding, abetting and covering up the coup regime’s brutal persecution of pro-democracy activists who supported the return of President Aristide and his elected government.

As a senior staff person at NCHR-Haiti and then RNDDH, Gilles’ role was particularly odious. At least three Lavalas political prisoners have testified that she took part in their interrogations. After being illegally arrested, beaten, tortured, threatened with death and subjected to mock executions, Gilles was brought in. She offered freedom, security and other bribes to these political prisoners if they would furnish testimony against top Lavalas politicians. They did not bow to this pressure and remained in jail for years.

For more info., see *Press for Conversion!*, Sept. 2007, pp.3-32. coat.ncf.ca/our_magazine/links/61/61-TOC.htm