Joegodson often frames his critique of modern-day imperialism in terms of the national hero, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a central figure of the revolution and first ruler of an independent Haiti in 1804. As we will see, Joegodson is not alone among Haitians in calling upon the spirit of Dessalines, who is both an historical and a mythical figure. Scholars work to understand the historical Dessalines, both the person and his actions. However, the mythical Dessalines fulfils an important role in present-day Haiti. It is that Dessalines that Joegodson invokes.

The mythical and historical Dessalines are not distinct phenomena that can be definitively separated. In the first place, there is more than one mythical Dessalines. The imperialist, slave-owning countries created their own mythical Dessalines who was as ignoble as the mythical Dessalines of Haiti’s struggling classes is noble. The hero of the successful Haitian Revolution was the villain of its opponents. American and French leaders defamed Dessalines as an illiterate savage. Contemporary documents prove otherwise. As there is no such thing as an unmediated fact, we should see that evidence comes to us through agents already embedded in systems of power. How we receive “facts” tells us about our own relationship with those systems.

I leave it to readers to determine what Dessalines means to Joegodson; however, he is often explicit. And, in those cases, the mythical and historical Dessalines are consistent. Dessalines fought bravely and, as general, inspired the ex-slave soldiers. As the first ruler of Haiti, Dessalines tabled a constitution that prohibited foreigners from owning Haitian land. He ordered the execution of the French colonists. He fought with great determination and secured the avowal of the revolutionary generals to fight to the death all attempts to recolonize Haiti. Like many

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Haitians, Joegodson believes that he was assassinated by mulatto generals whose ambitions as landowners he obstructed.

Do these references to Dessalines — whether mythical or historical — imply that Joegodson accepts the Great Man theory of history? Or that he worships Dessalines who, alone among the revolutionary figures, found a place among the pantheon of Vodou lwas? Precisely the opposite is true. For Joegodson, Dessalines represents a standard of behaviour in the face of imperialists to which all Haitians are subject. Joegodson is concerned with (and judges) his fellow Haitians. He is looking for neither leaders nor followers. Similarly, we can tell the story of the revolution from the perspective of the ex-slaves who fought throughout Haiti in small formations of which Dessalines was surely unaware. Historian Carolyn Fick argues that those ex-slaves understood liberation to mean the freedom to cultivate plots of land free from the slaveholders. They largely succeeded. However, the revolution could not make the world outside of Haiti go away. And it was there that the landowners and merchants could make their fortunes, from what they appropriated from the peasants. The ex-slaves became tenant farmers, giving rise to a semi-feudal system in which they grew their own food but also cultivated cash crops that they owed to their landowner. If they could grow a surplus of coffee, sisal, or cacao, they could sell it to a speculator, thus earning a small amount of money to buy items that they could not produce. The speculator, in turn, sold his cash crops to the merchants for export to the United States, Europe, and Canada. That culture still persisted until the period when Joegodson’s story begins. However, in Saut d’Eau, no landowners imposed obligations on the peasants who cultivated the land much as the ex-slaves intended.

In discussing Haitian symbols, we risk assuming that we — who are putting Haiti under a microscope — do not mythologize the past. Many scholars ask why Haiti was unable to integrate into the capitalist world system on more favourable terms. Some blame Haitians for their supposed failure; others blame the Western powers. In either case, the failure of Haitians to join the Western liberal democracies needs to be explained. In reality, neither the United States, France, nor Canada attains the ideal of democracy as rule by the people. The philosophers and founding fathers of modern nation-states rejected democracy in
favour of representative government, whereby citizens choose professional politicians to govern them. Democracy means, literally, that the people govern themselves. In other words, our modern languages give the place of democracy to something that is not democracy and leave us no term to describe what they have taken away. That is a remarkable achievement of the ruling class.

Political scientist Bernard Manin shows how key figures among the founders of representative government in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were aware of the historical precedents of democratic government. In Athens, for example, citizens were chosen by lot to serve terms on key institutions. (Similarly, our jury system calls upon citizens at random. It is accepted that all qualified citizens have the capacity to judge once they are informed of the issues involved.) Consequently, the system nurtured a sense of accountability among the citizenry. Athenian democracy was inherently proportional of the society it served. (The exclusion of women and slaves from the *demos* was a self-imposed constraint on Athenian democracy. The *demos* can be as inclusive as we choose.) In contrast, representative governments have resulted in cultures of powerlessness and frustration throughout the world. The founding fathers assumed that citizens would elect an elite, which they called the “natural aristocracy.” The subsequent changes to the system — the rise of political parties, the struggles for universal suffrage, the current cult of celebrity leadership — have consolidated the power of the “natural aristocracy” over the people, all the while laying the responsibility on the electors. If you do not like the state of the world, it is your own fault for voting wrong.¹

In what follows, we will break from the custom of confusing democracy with representative government. When “democracy” is used to mean representative government, it will appear in quotation marks, as in this sentence. Athenian democracy describes only one system in which people govern themselves. Anthropologists have documented countless traditional cultures that achieve that end without a state or elections. While the United States claimed to be spreading “democracy” during the Cold War, it was doing precisely the opposite: destroying all traditional systems in which people governed themselves. Article twenty-one, section three of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights imposes representative government on the entire world: “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

Citizens in “democracies” are responsible for electing politicians to represent them in the international system. However, production proceeds on a transnational basis. Each nation assumes a part of the process that culminates in a product for sale in the global marketplace, from which the poor are excluded. The system has been constructed, and is maintained, by a transnational capitalist class. Politicians become a part of that class when they sign trade agreements and pass domestic legislation. The nations that constitute the transnational system are unequal in the economic, diplomatic, and military pressure they can bring to the negotiating table. Since World War Two, the United States has pursued a strategy of ensuring that no other nation can challenge its role as the centre of the capitalist world system. What, then, are citizens outside of the core capitalist countries authorizing with their votes? Why would Haitians ever vote their approval of the system that relegates them to the economic role described in Joegodson’s story?

It is unsurprising that Haitian elections are at the centre of the history reviewed in the following pages.

**Undoing the Revolution**

The first American invasion of Haiti occurred in the context of American expansionism at the turn of the twentieth century. An American named James P. McDonald initially secured the concession from the Haitian government to build a railroad from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien under the charter of the National Railways of Haiti. City Bank of New York (which would become Citibank) issued bonds in France, guaranteed by the Haitian government at 6 percent. Roger L. Farnham, vice-president of the City Bank, became the president of the National Railways of Haiti, which proceeded to construct only those sections that passed across flat ground, ignoring the difficult mountainous passages.3 Even the work completed was shoddy. Nevertheless, Farnham demanded that the Haitian government pay in full for the contract. When it refused, he sought to force the Haitian government into receivership and to take over the customs revenue, citing the debts allegedly owed to the National Railways. By 1914, Farnham was the adviser on Haiti to the American Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan.

When the Haitians refused to give up their economic sovereignty to the American bank, in 1914 President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State Bryan sent the Marines to steal $500,000 in gold from the Banque Nationale in Port-au-Prince and transfer it to the vault of City Bank in New York.4 The Americans invaded Haiti in 1915 and imposed their laws and a constitution, all illegal and against the will of Haitians of all classes. A key provision of the new constitution was the right of foreigners to own Haitian land, undoing the central achievement of the revolution. This would ultimately weaken the Haitian landowning class that depended on the peasant surpluses; that power would be transferred not to the peasants, but rather to American

4 Ibid., 60–61.
corporations. In 1922, Louis Borno, Washington’s choice, was inaugurated as president of Haiti and days later the National City Bank of New York was awarded the contract to refinance the Haitian debt. It sold thirty-year Haitian government bonds on the American market. The bonds were backed by Haitian government revenue, ensuring that very little capital would be available for domestic development, but that whatever surplus Haitian peasants might produce should go to profit the National City Bank and its bondholders. Consequently, Americans playing the market had a reason to demand that Washington protect “American interests” in Haiti. The proceeds of the peasants’ work had been appropriated twice: once by the Haitian bourgeoisie and then by the Americans for Citibank. The occupation collected all revenues and decided how to disperse them. Not only did the Americans order all Haitian newspapers to refrain from criticizing the occupation and the government but they were prohibited from printing the fact that they were prohibited from criticizing. Many Haitians joined an armed resistance movement under the leadership of Charlemagne Peralte who was betrayed, captured, tortured, and killed to dissuade potential resisters. American Marines killed thousands of Haitian peasants who fought with the resistance. This occupation lasted until 1934.


7 The occupation altered domestic class relations. The Haitian landowning class was weakened when the United States rewrote the constitution allowing foreigners to own land. Americans established HASCO, a large-scale sugar manufacturing plant, and other capitalist ventures that exploited Haiti’s fertile soils and cheap labour. The Haitian landowning class and merchants depended on the peasants cultivating small plots. The capitalist penetration under Jean-Claude Duvalier spawned a new bourgeoisie that subcontracted assembly work. Their interests were fundamentally different from the landowning class, except insofar as both groups exploited — in their own way — poor Haitians. The comprador bourgeoisie that controls the import-export business in Haiti is described by Fred Doura, Économie d’Haiti (Montréal: Les Éditions Dami, 2002), 78–82.
“Democracy” as a Strategy of Control

Wall Street conspired to control Haiti through debt. It then used Washington and the Marines when force was required to take over the state and subdue the population. Forcing Haiti into debt was especially offensive. Haiti was coming to the end of paying the odious debt imposed by France in 1825, compensation for the loss of its plantations and slaves as a result of the Haitian revolution.

To protect their investment in Haiti, the Americans established and trained the Gendarmerie d’Haïti. Replacing American Marines with Haitian soldiers allowed Washington to conceal its role in Haiti’s affairs. As long as Washington had the allegiance of key officers, it could manipulate Haitian politics when necessary. Moreover, it could leave the impression that military violence and political instability were endemic to Latin America. Stability appeared to belong to the rich liberal “democracies” of the North. However, the racism and chauvinism inherent to the occupation spawned a movement of pride in Haiti’s African heritage aligned with the international movement called Nègritude. A key contributor to the movement was François Duvalier, who established his credentials as a defender of black peasants, the Creole language, and the Vodou religion.  

In the 1957 elections, Washington supported François Duvalier (later known as Papa Doc) for president, not because of his strengths, but rather his apparent weakness. It appeared he would be easily manipulated. However, to outfox the Americans, Papa Doc created a new security force that operated at a local level. All over the country, he authorized otherwise uneducated and unqualified men and women to act on his behalf locally. The tontons macoutes owed their power and loyalty to Papa Doc. Often tyrants in their dealings with the local


inhabitants of both rural and urban parts of Haiti, they sidelined the Army as the main instrument of coercion. They were drawn from the very parts of Haitian culture that had been oppressed historically and that the ethnographic movement had tried to validate: black, Vodouist, and Creole-speaking. Through them, Papa Doc had consolidated his power by 1963.10

Papa Doc legitimated his hold on power by staging celebrations in his own honour. From the early 1960s, local authorities were responsible for rounding up some peasants in their sections and busing them into Port-au-Prince every year on 22 May. There, they were the backdrop for a public display of their supposed devotion to Papa Doc. After they had served their purpose as a mass of devoted subjects, Papa Doc lost interest in them. Many remained stranded in the capital that was foreign to them. Papa Doc’s wife, Simone Duvalier, convinced François to clear the peasants out of sight. They were displaced to the north of the city on swampy, mosquito-infested land. The neighbourhood was christened Cité Simone. The state took no interest, but the Salesian Brothers attempted to bring rudimentary services to the displaced peasants. The tontons macoutes called it Cité Interdite, meaning the Forbidden City. After the fall of Duvalier, the macoutes were replaced by petty criminals and their gangs. But there was also a religious authority that grew in importance. Evidence of this transition can be seen in the renaming of Cité Simone as Cité Soleil, after the Catholic radio station that broadcast there.11

By the late 1960s, resistance to Papa Doc’s repressive regime was growing. He agreed to the terms offered by the Nixon administration for America’s support in protecting his regime. He would have to accept American investment, against the interests of his main allies, Haiti’s big landowners. American investment in agribusiness and assembly plants would mean the end of the semi-feudal system. Before his death in 1971, Papa Doc arranged for his son, nineteen-year-old Jean-Claude, or Baby Doc, to succeed him as president-for-life.

The State in the Transnational Economy

By moving production offshore, American industrial capitalists reduced their labour costs substantially. That required changes in both the core and the peripheral countries. Capitalists assured consumers in the core countries that their objective was to lower the price of goods. Instead, they eliminated jobs and increased profits. By 1980, multinational corporations had opened 200 assembly plants next to Cité Soleil to take advantage of the poorest people in Haiti.\(^\text{12}\)

Until the 1980s, Haiti was almost entirely self-sufficient in rice production. The domestic industry employed 20 percent of the population. After the fall of Baby Doc in 1986, the Haitian military government under General Namphy lowered the tariffs on imported American rice from 35 to 3 percent. Meanwhile, Washington subsidized American rice production throughout the 1980s and 1990s at a rate between 35 and 100 percent. The World Food Program calculated that Haiti’s food self-sufficiency ratio deteriorated from 85 percent in 1980 to 50 percent by 1995. By 1996, an American monopoly named The Rice Corporation of Haiti controlled the importation of 2,100 metric tons of American rice into Haiti every week. Haitian cultivators lost $23 million a year, at precisely the moment that they needed money to buy imported rice. The policy was justified on the grounds that Haitian farmers could not feed the nation. Augustin Antoine Agustin, a Haitian-born professor at Tulane University with business interests in Haiti, helpfully penned a report to justify the policy, arguing that, without imported American rice, Haiti faced increasing malnutrition. In fact, his report was fabricated out of whole cloth. At that time, no one had monitored food production in the remote areas of Haiti. In 1994, USAID would

establish the Interim Food Security Information System precisely to “collect, analyze and monitor food security indicators.” They spoke of the need to “begin to address this critical area of agricultural data collection.” Years later, they were still talking about beginning the research. The goal of USAID was to make Haitians dependent on American rice. First, they had to present Haitians as victims of their own incompetence as cultivators. In reality, by destroying Haitian agriculture and manipulating Haitians into dependence, USAID created the situation they claimed to be resolving.\textsuperscript{13}

The Resilience of Class Structures

Duvalier had been forced out of the country as a result of the growing pressure from the popular classes. The world revolution that crested in 1968 also left its mark on Haiti. Slowly, inspired by liberation theology imported by local priests into every corner of the country, peasants reconsidered their place in society. In the urban slums and in the countryside, they became increasingly conscious of the oppressions they lived daily. They called the process of learning about the economy and politics \textit{lave je} — cleaning the eyes. By the 1980s, such local consciousness-raising groups had evolved into the Ti Legliz (Little Church) movement. All over Haiti, small local churches and peristyles, or Vodou temples, were the centres of communities. Local people spoke of their place in heaven and earth in a new way. Many leaders arose in the face of the backlash from the Duvalier regime. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide spoke eloquently about the inherent equality of all human beings. That proposition was radical and powerful in the context of Haiti’s class relations. At the same time, Aristide fiercely condemned the capitalist world order under which poor Haitians suffered. His interpretation of Christ’s message inspired the poor, but disturbed and insulted the oligarchy.

The notion that the poor had dignity, let alone rights, was offensive to the rich. They armed groups to violently put down all attempts to alter existing power relations.

The military maintained control of government for five years after the flight of Duvalier, protecting corporate America and the Haitian oligarchy against the interests of poor Haitians. In 1990, former President Jimmy Carter summarized their approach to “democracy” in these words: “As recently as Nov. 29, 1987, an election was called to fulfill promises made in their post-Duvalier constitution. Citizens who lined up to vote were mowed down by fusillades of terrorists’ bullets. Military leaders, who had either orchestrated or condoned the murders, moved in to cancel the election and retain control of the Government.” In 1987, Father Aristide was preaching fiery sermons at Saint Jean Bosco Church in one of the slums of Port-au-Prince. On 11 September 1988, his parishioners filled the church despite the threat of violence. When the *macoutes* attacked, many were massacred. Aristide survived.

Haiti’s first free and fair elections were scheduled to be held in 1990. Washington was confident that its candidate, Marc Bazin, a World Bank official, would be elected president and oversee the continued integration of Haiti into its plan for a world system of American-led transnational capitalism. But, at the last minute, Aristide was persuaded to run for president as the representative of the Lavalas movement. Lavalas was the successor of the Ti Legliz movement. *Lavalas* means flood. Each person is a drop of water. As they all come together to achieve a common goal, they become an unstoppable force of nature, like the flash floods that carry everything along with them during Haiti’s torrential rains. When Aristide agreed to run for the presidency, Washington’s plans were swept away with the tide. Candidates identifying with Lavalas and Aristide were virtually assured of victory. Many senators and deputies saw Aristide as a convenient stepping stone to government, one of the few sources of income in Haiti. By the constitution of 1987, political power was shared

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among the three levels of government: the presidency, the senate, and the legislature. Haitians had long lived with the reality of a president with total control, however. They assumed, as have analysts and casual observers, that Aristide had that power. In reality, Haitian presidents must work with the other two bodies of government, not to mention the external sources of power. The minister who had overseen the *tontons macoutes* under Duvalier, Roger Lafontant, attempted a coup on 17 January 1991, a couple of weeks before Aristide’s inauguration. Thousands of people left the poorest neighbourhoods to place themselves between the guns of Lafontant’s thugs and their president-elect. This time, they were victorious.

Aristide proceeded cautiously to soften the harshness of life among the poor without challenging the system. Nevertheless, USAID criticized his policies on labour and foreign-exchange controls as inhibiting growth. While USAID funneled $26.7 million to the business sector in 1991, it opposed both a rise in the minimum wage from thirty-three to fifty cents an hour as well as the government’s attempt to stabilize food prices.\(^{16}\) USAID was a branch of the State Department whose mission is to support American business internationally. Even a modest rise in the minimum wage could mean that transnational corporations would locate their assembly plants in countries where the state could better control the workforce and assure business a supply of cheap electricity. For that segment of the oligarchy whose revenue depended on sub-contracting work from transnational corporations, the poor were Haiti’s most attractive resource. Policies that improved the conditions of the poor threatened their interests.

General Cédras took power on 30 September 1991 in a military coup. This time, the Army was prepared when the poor came to protect Aristide. They opened fire; many were killed. Thousands would be slaughtered by the reactionary forces in the months that followed. Aristide escaped assassination. For the next three years, Aristide would search for allies in the United States to help lobby the administration on behalf of his, and the Haitian people’s, presidency. Meanwhile, the CIA worked with the coup to destroy Lavalas. CIA assets were paid to

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organize death squads, weapons were funnelled into Haiti from Miami, and Washington protected the assassins from prosecution when the coup ended in November 1994.\textsuperscript{17} Those in the slums who could not escape or go into hiding formed themselves into gangs to defend themselves against the death squads.\textsuperscript{18}

For three years, Presidents George H. W. Bush and Clinton negotiated with Aristide in Washington while they supported the Army that gunned down his supporters in Haiti, especially Cité Soleil. Aristide would be allowed back into Haiti only when Washington was convinced that he no longer posed a threat to its interests. Clinton attempted to manipulate Aristide into implementing a neoliberal program upon his return. But Aristide negotiated cleverly. He agreed to drastically reduce tariffs on rice, but only if accompanied by investment in that sector. Bush and Clinton insisted that Aristide grant amnesty for the authors of the coup. When Aristide insisted on holding the assassins accountable, President Bush called him “vindictive.” Finally, Aristide did agree to the condition, but framed it in terms of the actual coup of 30 September. In that way, all of the crimes that preceded or followed the coup would be open for prosecution. (In fact, when he returned to Haiti, Aristide established the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, which, along with colleagues from the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, helped to successfully prosecute members of the death squads for a massacre in Raboteau during the coup.) Washington also required that Aristide sell state assets. Clinton wanted to force Aristide to betray himself and the Haitian people who had elected him. Aristide finally agreed to this demand on the condition that part of the money from the sale be put in trust and used for housing, education, and health.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{18} Ken Bresler, “If You Are Not Corrupt, Arrest the Criminals: Prosecuting Human Rights Violators in Haiti,” Project on Justice in Times of Transition, Harvard University, Spring 2003. Bresler’s summary of the process of defending the victims of the Raboteau massacre will help readers understand conditions in Haiti and shed light on both parts of this book.

\textsuperscript{19} Hallward, \textit{Damming the Flood}, 56–58.
The most extraordinary thing about this agreement — the Paris Plan — is that it existed at all. Washington first sponsored a coup, then negotiated the conditions under which it would allow the elected president to serve out what remained of his term. Washington assigned a number of technocrats to accompany Aristide back to Haiti and to “help” him implement the Paris Plan, which Lavalas supporters called the Plan of Death, meant to control every aspect of the transition from military dictatorship (for which Washington was responsible) to “democracy” (which it would not allow). In 2009, the United Nations would name the man responsible, Bill Clinton, its special envoy for Haiti. After the earthquake of 2010, he would attempt to implement the same policies.

At the time, in the mid-1990s, there was a campaign in North America to sensitize the public to the working conditions in the peripheral countries where transnational corporations were transferring manufacturing jobs. The Clinton administration was aggressively pursuing a global restructuring of class relations in favour of transnational capitalists. Workers in the core countries like Canada and the United States discovered that they were in direct competition with the poorest peoples in the world for their jobs. However, the sweatshop campaign addressed North Americans not as workers, but as consumers. The campaign asked them to petition certain corporations to improve the conditions of Haitian workers. Corporations like Disney and Nike responded by transferring production to China. In response, the Clinton administration, together with the biggest corporations, established a monitoring agency controlled by the garment industry. Many student organizations in North America uncritically accepted the “solution.”


A more astute World Bank official advised the industry not to worry about Aristide’s attempt to increase the minimum wage because “in a country like Haiti the government’s enforcement capacity is nil.”

In the parliamentary elections of June 1995, Aristide’s group, the Plateforme Politique Lavalas, won seventeen of twenty-seven Senate seats and sixty-seven of eighty-three seats in the Chamber of Deputies. However, inside the Plateforme, the largest group was the Organisation Politique Lavalas, led by Gerard Pierre-Charles, an economist who had returned from exile after the fall of Duvalier. He now represented the interests of the oligarchy. Since the Chamber of Deputies has as much power as the president, the government was deadlocked. In 1996, the confusion inside of Lavalas was resolved. Those like Aristide who were fighting for the poor founded the political party Fanmi Lavalas, which drew its support from local groups all across Haiti called the Organisations populaires (Popular Organizations). The OPL of Pierre-Charles renamed itself Organisation du peuple en lutte. By suggesting a people in struggle, it attempted to retain the allegiance of the same constituency as Fanmi Lavalas; however, the people it was struggling for already owned Haiti. Once the electorate knew who was who, they voted overwhelmingly for Aristide’s Fanmi Lavalas in the legislative elections of 1997. After the first round of voting, the OPL could see the writing on the wall and refused to participate in the second round so that the legislature would not be swamped with FL deputies. They persuaded the UN to validate their boycott. Their terms expired in January 1999, but they delayed organizing elections until May 2000. As long as they sat in the Assembly, they could block the FL program that President Préval supported.

After disbanding the Army (that had carried out the coup) on his return to Haiti, Aristide established the Haitian National Police (PNH) in July 1995. To run the PNH, Aristide trusted an ex-Army officer, Dany Toussaint, who had been loyal to him on a number of occasions, even refusing orders to assassinate Aristide in 1988. However, Washington clandestinely took control of the new police force. It sent a dozen soldiers from the disbanded Haitian Army and the coup death squads, including Guy Philippe, to its base in Ecuador for paramilitary training.

23 Hallward, Damming the Flood, 63.
It sent police recruits to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri for training. Any officer who supported Aristide was systematically denounced by the US as untrustworthy, a drug dealer, and a human rights abuser. Since American officials refused to disarm the members of the death squads and Army responsible for atrocities under the coup, the most disloyal paramilitaries were well armed. In 1996, Bob Manuel, the chief of security under President Préval, uncovered coup and assassination plots among the Presidential Guard. Both Préval and Aristide were targeted for assassination. When Manuel began a purge of the Guard, the American State Department sent forty security agents to oversee the changes.24

The core capitalist countries, under the direction of Washington, worked to control Haiti’s economy through political and military interventions. What role, then, did non-governmental humanitarian and developmental organizations play? When the American organization CARE wanted to expand its aid programs in 1999, it contracted anthropologist Timothy Schwartz to evaluate its existing distribution process. Schwartz discovered that the massive amounts of food aid that CARE sent to Haiti each year were being embezzled and sold on the market. CARE had no idea what had been happening to its food aid. The promotional material describing its school feeding programs was simply cooked up by public relations personnel. Meanwhile, food aid arrived at times when it did the most harm to Haitian cultivators. Schwartz compiled data to discover that, in periods of bountiful harvests, NGOs distributed more food than during droughts. When Schwartz reported his research to CARE, the assistant director told him candidly that they were aware that their aid was in fact subverting Haitian agriculture. However, they had no money to buy local Haitian products for their food aid programs. Their funding from USAID comes in the form of subsidized American food to be sold on the Haitian market. That aid further weakens the local cultivators. Whether imports entered Haiti as humanitarian aid and were then embezzled and sold for profit, or were sold on the market by the NGOs to fund their programs, the effect was the same: the subversion of Haitian agriculture. The system that finances humanitarian organizations, in other words, sets up a dilemma. They are structurally

24 Ibid., 64–72.
compelled to fail in the stated goal of helping the poor. In fact, they are part of a system that creates the poor, which then justifies their presence as humanitarian workers. Their employees are left to their own devices to resolve the moral issue, if they can see it.  

“Democracy” in a Transnational Economy

By 2000, the divisions within Lavalas were more clear than a decade earlier. The opportunists — Dany Toussaint, Serge Gilles, Evans Paul, Gerard Pierre-Charles — appealed to the poor who, in every election that followed, showed that they did not believe them. The overwhelming majority of the poor continued to trust Aristide, whose party, Fanmi Lavalas, tabled a program of egalitarian development. Aristide represented, both to the rich and to the poor, a pole in the Haitian class struggle. The oligarchy could never hope to win power in an electoral contest. Aristide would be in the way. The oligarchy and their transnationalist allies in the core capitalist countries could govern Haiti only by manipulating elections. The subsequent history of chaos and terror in Haiti is the details of that manipulation.

The May 2000 parliamentary elections would loom large in the struggle between “democracy” and class rule. The Organization of American States observed and sanctioned the elections as free, fair, and peaceful.  

25 Schwartz, Travesty in Haiti, 103–6. When Schwartz tabled his report that demonstrated the devastating effects that food aid has had on Haitian agriculture and society, some experienced executives in the development industry privately acknowledged his findings. Others went on the attack, threatened both professionally and personally by his claims that aid actually harms Haitians. A German nutritionist who had just arrived in Haiti was outraged at his survey report. She had invested a doctorate and her identity in the prospect of making a difference in the world. If the development industry was misguided, then so was her career.

26 The OAS press release issued on 21 May reads: “The Mission has noted that Haitian voters showed their strong desire to go to the polls by the relatively high participation in the elections. The EOM congratulates the voters, the Government, the police and the political parties for having worked together to create the climate necessary for the vote.” http://www.oas.org/oaspage/press2002/en/Press98/Press2000/haitielections.htm.

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Sixty-five percent of eligible Haitians voted, an impressive turnout in the context of intimidation and violence that had marked each election since Duvalier’s departure. For many people, casting a ballot was an act of defiance and courage. Fanmi Lavalas won 72 of 83 seats in the House of Deputies and 16 of 17 seats in the Senate. Around the country, Fanmi Lavalas won 89 of 115 mayoralty positions. The people had unequivocally chosen Fanmi Lavalas, which was now in a position to implement its program to redress the huge inequalities and to establish a viable system of justice. The state would have to belong to the people who elected this government. The oligarchy would have to step aside.

Meanwhile, the American Deputy Secretary of State Roger Noriega called the elections a farce. Noriega was Washington’s most accomplished saboteur of Latin American democracy. On 2 June 2000, he enlisted the help of the OAS, which suddenly questioned the methodology that the Electoral Council used to calculate the vote percentages for Senate candidates. In fact, the Electoral Council had followed traditional practices. While all Fanmi Lavalas candidates had won handily, an alternative method would have forced run-off elections in two of the Senate races. Even in those two cases, the Lavalas candidates received twice the votes of their closest rivals. This belated challenge to the calculation methodology by OAS was first rejected by the head of the Electoral Council, Léon Manus. However, after he was flown to Washington on 21 June 2000, he returned to Haiti claiming that Aristide and Préval had pressured him to overlook “massive electoral fraud” and that they had threatened to engulf...
the capital and departments in “fire and blood” unless he approved their fraud.\textsuperscript{31}

Washington used the OAS claim of fraudulent elections to impose an embargo on all foreign aid to Haiti. Haiti, like all countries heavily indebted in a foreign currency, faced a dilemma. It was dependent on the international financial institutions to meet its basic operating expenses. The structural adjustment programs that the Clinton administration had attempted to force on Aristide as a condition of his return to Haiti stripped the state of its meagre domestic sources of revenue. So it needed to take out more loans. These loans drive countries deeper into debt and dependence. But to not take the loans means that governments cannot operate. The people will revolt. And if they are ignorant of how the system operates, they will blame their domestic governments for incompetence. The role of Washington and the international financial institutions is obscured.

Since the fall of Duvalier, no opposition had formed to challenge Lavalas. There were two poles in Haitian politics: representative government or authoritarian rule. The politicians who lost the May 2000 elections banded together to create the Democratic Convergence, funded by Washington through the National Endowment for Democracy, established by President Reagan in 1983 to obscure Washington’s aggressive, anti-democratic foreign policy.\textsuperscript{32} The Democratic Convergence was composed of two separate groups: the upper class, who simply loathed the poor, and vindictive rivals jealous of Aristide’s stature among the people.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} Hallward, \textit{Damming the Flood}, 78–80. Manus appealed to newly appointed Secretary of State Colin Powell in December 2000, describing how “ballot boxes were stolen and replaced with stuffed substitute boxes,” all in favour of Aristide. If true, the logistics would have been impressive. A copy of Manus’s letter to Colin Powell is posted at http://www.corbetthaiti.org/archive/archive7/msg06504.html.


\textsuperscript{33} Fleurimond, \textit{Haïti de la crise à l’occupation}, 70.
Given that Fanmi Lavalas had swept the legislative elections in May, it was clear to all that Aristide would win the presidential election in November 2000. Since the Democratic Convergence was arguing that those elections had been rigged, they risked being discredited by an Aristide win. Their only option was to boycott the election and claim they had the support of the public. In fact, their support was located outside of Haiti, among the power elite of the core capitalist countries that mediated events in Haiti (and everywhere) for their domestic audiences. In fact, some elements within the diaspora initiated a campaign in Miami and New York in support of Jean-Claude Duvalier. Baby Doc, from France, took the opportunity to criticize Lavalas and to hint that he was still available to serve his country. Meanwhile, in October 2000, Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis uncovered a plot against the Préval government. The conspirators had sent their families to France months earlier. Their goal was not to take power, but to assassinate a number of Lavalas leaders. Then, an emergency government would be put in place. At the centre of the intrigue was a group of thirteen police commissioners, all of whom had worked under Duvalier or in the Army and had been trained at the American Military School in Ecuador.

During the week prior to the presidential election of 26 November 2000, bombs exploded throughout Port-au-Prince. While that may account in part for the low turnout in the capital, the provinces were equally unenthusiastic. With a turnout of between 10 and 15 percent, Aristide was elected with 92 percent of the vote. In response, the Democratic Convergence announced that Gérard Gourgues would act as a parallel president. He operated out of the offices of the Organisation du peuple en lutte that had lost the legislative elections of 1997, then denounced them as fraudulent and blocked the legislative process. The Democratic Convergence, in naming him the actual president of Haiti, demonstrated that there was nothing behind their posturing.

The US ambassador, Dean Curran, advised Aristide that the US would not normalize relations until the problems of the May 2000 elections were resolved. From 2000 to 2003, USAID continued to give an average of $68 million a year to American NGOs that helped to undermine

34 Ibid., 37–50.
Aristide and the authority and legitimacy of the government. Washington also blocked $145 million in loans from the Inter-American Development Bank that had already been approved. Although the loans were frozen, the Bank demanded that the Aristide government pay the interest. By 2003, the Aristide government had a budget of $300 million for the entire country, of which $60 million had to go to service the debt. Forty-five percent of that debt had been incurred by the Duvaliers and was now being squandered on the French Riviera while Joegodson was putting grains of salt on his tongue to ward off hunger pains. In November 2000, the IMF required that the government reduce subsidies on essential commodities such as fuel. Between 2002 and 2003, consumer prices rose by 40 percent. By 2004, Haiti’s GDP was about half of what it had been in 1980, measured in constant 2000 dollars. But this contraction of the economy, measured in dollars, was taking place as the percentage of Haitians dependent on money for their survival was increasing.

In summary, the actions of Washington and the international financial institutions undermined any chance that the Fanmi Lavalas government would be able to implement a meaningful program of governance at the same time that they increased the resources available to the Democratic Convergence and drove the poor deeper into poverty. They blamed everything on Aristide.

The Convergence refused to cooperate with Aristide, no matter how much he conceded. In fact, Aristide became undemocratic only insofar as he seriously negotiated with the Democratic Convergence over the will of the electorate that had given Fanmi Lavalas a huge majority at all levels of government. He asked them to join his government. They refused. He agreed in November 2002 to name them to a new Electoral Council. They refused. He offered them a majority of positions in the government. They refused. He proposed dates for new elections. They refused. For all of this, Aristide was consistently called intransigent in the Western media. He was said to be refusing to work with the opposition. This “opposition” was unelected and unpopular with the electorate. Aristide lost a number of key supporters when he bothered to talk to the Democratic Convergence at all. In the face of intense criticism at the OAS Assembly in Québec City, Aristide proposed organizing legislative

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36 Hallward, Damming the Flood, 82.
elections in November 2002, two years before the mandate. Not only did he not have the constitutional authority to dissolve the legislature, but the proposal gave credence to the idle claim that the May 2000 elections had been fraudulent. The only way that Aristide could prove his commitment to “democracy” was to become anti-constitutional. Journalists in both English and French Canada uncritically accepted the mantra that Aristide was corrupt and dictatorial and had stolen the elections.

The assault on Lavalas intensified when Aristide signed a number of bilateral agreements with Castro, all to Haiti’s benefit. Aristide’s visit to Cuba in July 2001 prompted American Congressman Peter Goss to call for the restoration of “democracy” in Haiti. American Ambassador Curran became a spokesman for the Democratic Convergence.

In late 2001, Haitians protested the Lavalas government to do something about the deteriorating living conditions. The Democratic Convergence took advantage of the protests to foment as much discontent as possible. But when CIA asset Guy Philippe led an armed attack on the Presidential Palace on 17 December 2001, people from the poor neighbourhoods, including armed gangs, came to aid the National Police in retaking the Palace. The poor supporters of Aristide attacked the headquarters of the Organisation des peuples en lutte in retaliation, remembering that it was there that the farcical parallel government of Gérard Gourgues had been installed by the Democratic Convergence at the investiture of Aristide as president in February 2001. Throughout the country, people rose up in support of the elected government. The

37 Fleurimond, Haïti de la crise à l’occupation, 84.
38 Ibid., 113–14.
39 Kim Ives, “’Mafia boss . . . Drug dealer . . . Poster-boy for political corruption’: WikiLeaked U.S. Embassy Cables Portray Senator Youri Latortue,” Haïti Liberté, vol. 4, no. 50, (29 June 2011). Ives reports that, according to a high-level government security source, Youri Latortue used his contacts in Palace security to ensure that Philippe was admitted to the grounds. Latortue would play an important part in the coming coup, helping to coordinate the paramilitaries led by Philippe and Chamblain. The focus of Roger Noriega’s OAS inquiry into the events of 17 December 2001 is the reaction that the attempted coup d’état provoked among the poor. Nowhere in the report is the connection drawn between the OPL’s attempt to install a parallel government in February 2001 and the retaliation against the OPL offices, which the people naturally understood to be at the centre of the attack on their elected government.
Democratic Convergence consistently signalled its intentions by giving pride of place to the collaborators of Haiti’s past dictators. The people understood.\footnote{Fleurimond, \textit{Haïti de la crise à l’occupation}, 95–100, 1313.}

Through the Democracy and Governance Program, USAID funded any Haitian journalist who criticized Aristide. The professed interest of the American State Department in a critical, independent media in Haiti would come to an abrupt end when Aristide was forced out of the country and Fanmi Lavalas violently repressed.\footnote{Dan Whitman, \textit{A Haiti Chronicle: The Undoing of a Latent Democracy}, available at http://www.scribd.com/doc/117997669/A-Haiti-Chronicle-the-Undoing-of-a-Latent-Democracy-Dan-Whitman. Whitman discusses his role with the American embassy in implementing the program. He sees himself as a defender of the goodwill of the American State Department in helping Haitians to advance.} USAID also funded the International Foundation for Electoral Systems that organized lawyers, magistrates, and human rights groups to protest Aristide’s supposed abuses and corruption. In reality, Washington frustrated every attempt by Préval and Aristide to reform the corrupt judicial system.\footnote{Hallward, \textit{Dammimg the Flood}, 92–94. The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux document their approach, which seeks justice and attempts to empower victims of human rights abuses in Haiti. Their legal work exposes the collaboration between Washington and the Haitian oligarchy: http://www.ijdh.org/about/#.UvzVw2Jdws0. They successfully helped to convict fifty-seven defendants, including the leaders of the Cédras coup, the subject of a Harvard University case study: see Bresler, “If You Are Not Corrupt, Arrest the Criminals.”} Nevertheless, in Haiti, where few opportunities exist to earn money, such programs were received with enthusiasm. The money was contingent on protesting the government. Washington funded protest groups of all kinds and blocked money that would have helped Fanmi Lavalas to implement the programs the protesters were calling for.\footnote{Hallward, \textit{Dammimg the Flood}, 98; Max Blumenthal, “The Other Regime Change: Did the Bush Administration Allow a Network of Right-Wing Republicans to Foment a Violent Coup in Haiti?” \textit{Salon}, 16 July 2004.}

The International Republican Institute and the Haitian oligarchy funded the Haiti Democracy Project through which money was made available to women’s and students’ groups who would protest Lavalas. One of
the avowed concerns of the Haiti Democracy Project was an enquiry into the assassination of the investigative journalist Jean Dominique, a champion of the Haitian poor who relentlessly exposed the corruption of Haiti’s richest families. Now, those families promoted the project called “Justice for Jean,” committed to finding his killers. When Aristide was removed from power, the “Justice for Jean” project died a quiet death. The oligarchy lost interest in exposing Dominique’s killers the moment that it took control of the justice ministry.44

The Haitian oligarchy was speaking primarily to the populations of France, Canada, and the United States, not the Haitian poor who already knew them. Their goal was to convince those peoples of the core capitalist countries that opposition to Aristide was broad and progressive. In December 2002, the Group of 184 was created to coordinate that opposition. The Group of 184 was supported by almost all of the groups getting CIDA, USAID, or IRI money. All were outspoken in their opposition to Aristide. Middle-class Haitians, funded by Washington and the Haitian oligarchy whose fortunes derived from the exploitation of the poor, would be the public face of Haiti abroad. The main spokesman for the Group of 184 in North America was Andy Apaid, whose father had established sweatshops under the name of Alpha Industries during the regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier. The overthrow of Aristide and Fanmi Lavalas would have to appear to come from within Haiti. The conspirators were also finding and motivating young men to carry out the military arm of the coup. Paul Arcelin, a professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal), together with Guy Philippe and Louis-Jodel Chamblain, two death squad leaders during the Cédras dictatorship, would lead the paramilitary forces.

When Fanmi Lavalas supporters fought back, their opponents condemned what they characterized as unprovoked attacks on the helpless victims of the Aristide dictatorship. One of the leaders of the Democratic Convergence, Gerard Pierre-Charles, said in March 2003 that the Aristide government was behind the so-called rebel incursions “to justify its permanent and institutionalized violence against the Haitian people.” In Washington, Roger Noriega blamed Aristide for

44 Jonathan Demme, The Agronomist (Jonathan Demme, 2004); Hallward, Damming the Flood, 157–58.

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not “healing the wounds” caused by the attack of Guy Philippe on the Presidential Palace of 17 December 2001. There was nothing that could not be blamed on Aristide. Every shot they fired at him was evidence that he had been unable to stop the violence. It was a bold strategy whose success rested on the conviction, if not the certainty, that the media would report the story exactly as it was framed by Washington.

Throughout his presidency, Aristide had to deal with the fact that all of his enemies had power while his supporters were poor. That was true inside Haiti and globally. Lavalas opponents had the arms and connections to mount constant paramilitary attacks from the Dominican Republic, while starving his government of operating funds. They disseminated venomous propaganda. They made life as difficult as possible for Lavalas activists. Both in Haiti and abroad, Lavalas supporters were forced to react to attacks, to deny accusations, to plead for funds, and to defend a counter-hegemonic perspective. Nevertheless, the Fanmi Lavalas government managed to advance its program as much as possible, build public schools and hospitals, institute a school lunch program, double the minimum wage in 2003, implement extensive adult literacy programs, create public spaces and low-cost housing projects, and raise taxes on the rich. All would be lost after the coup d’état.

In July 2003, Andy Apaid, the head of the Group of 184, met with a number of gang leaders in Cité Soleil, offering them financial support if they would agree to take up arms inside the poor neighbourhoods against the defenders of the democratically elected government. Only Labanye, a gang leader in the Boston neighbourhood, accepted the offer. In response, gangs in the other neighbourhoods of Cité Soleil joined together to fight Labanye. Between Boston and the rest of Cité Soleil was Simon, where Joegodson’s family lived. It would become a battleground. Since the poorest neighbourhoods were also the most passionate supporters of representative government, the oligarchy needed to neutralize them. Apaid and Reginald Boulos (who owned many sweatshops located at the edge of Simon) chose to bribe the criminal element to support their political and economic interests. They blamed the ensuing violence on Aristide.¹⁴

As a result of the infiltration by the Democratic Convergence, the CIA, DEA, and State Department, Aristide could not depend on the Haitian National Police to protect the elected government. In fact, Andy Apaid, an unelected businessman, acknowledged that he gave direct orders to the Haitian National Police to not arrest Labanye, but to “work with him.” At the same time, the police were targeting other gang leaders and killing civilians at will in Cité Soleil, Bel Air, and the other slums. The poor would never be able to compete with the firepower of the rich. Nevertheless, controlling the airwaves, the Democratic Convergence made much of the fact that Aristide’s “regime” rested on the violence of criminal gangs. This propaganda did much to discredit Aristide and Lavalas in the foreign media.

President Aristide accepted the continuation of imported American rice and the extension of the assembly plant system into a new “free trade zone” in Ouanaminthe, next to the Dominican border in the north of Haiti. These compromises earned Aristide the enmity of some Lavalas supporters who charged him with compromising with the imperialist, neoliberal enemy. But Aristide’s compromises were irrelevant to the transnational capitalist class. Their goal was to establish as fact that Aristide was a dictator and a tyrant. Once that proposition was accepted among the “informed” public in the core capitalist countries — those who took the time to keep up with world events through the corporate mainstream media — the groundwork would be laid for the “liberation” of the Haitian people. Anyone challenging that truth would be dismissed as having entered the dark, dodgy world of conspiracy theory.

Throughout the fall of 2003 and into 2004, the Democratic Convergence merged with the protest groups that it was funding. Now called the Democratic Platform, they maintained that they were living in a dictatorship. This was a dictatorship in which the political opponents of the government controlled the airwaves, were given full access to the streets to protest, and were never jailed as political prisoners even as they openly called for the overthrow of the government voted into office with a huge majority. The Democratic Convergence used the crisis it had manufactured to break off, once again, negotiations over elections. The United States scaled back its diplomatic presence. CARICOM also withdrew from

46 Ibid., 51.
negotiations, but it cited the lack of will of the Democratic Convergence, not Aristide. The Inter Development Bank withheld $200 million promised to the Aristide government. Throughout all this, huge rallies continued in support of the government throughout January and February 2004.  

On 21 February 2004, American Deputy Secretary of State Roger Noriega arrived in Haiti to give the appearance of an attempt to negotiate with Aristide. He laid down a number of outrageous propositions, designed to be rejected by any responsible politician. In fact, the conditions he presented to Aristide to assure American support for his government were beyond the constitutional authority of a Haitian president. Noriega insisted that Aristide accept a cabinet filled with unelected representatives chosen by the Democratic Convergence. But, according to the constitution, Aristide’s nomination for prime minister would require the confirmation of the two other chambers, overwhelmingly Lavalas. Remarkably, Aristide accepted all of Washington’s demands. In response, the Democratic Convergence refused anything short of Aristide’s resignation. They argued, in effect, that Aristide’s complete capitulation to the unconstitutional demands of a foreign power was further evidence of his dictatorial methods. Noriega would later argue that it was Aristide’s refusal to compromise in any way that caused his downfall.  

Canadian and French politicians followed the same line, as though it had been decided at a board meeting.  

As the paramilitaries ravaged the north of Haiti, killing Lavalas supporters and over two hundred police officers loyal to the government, the Security Council of the United Nations issued a statement on 26 February 2004. In view of the increasing tensions, and in the interests of creating “a secure environment in Haiti and the region that enables respect for human rights, including the well-being of civilians, and supports the mission of humanitarian workers,” the Security Council called upon the Government and all other parties to respect human rights and

47 Hallward, Damming the Flood, 192–223.
48 Ibid., 224.
49 Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton, Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority (Vancouver: Red Publishing, 2005), 41–45, discuss the Ottawa Initiative, in which officials from Canada, France, and the United States appear to have planned their collaboration in the overthrow of the Aristide government a year prior to Aristide’s removal.
to cease the use of violence to advance political goals. Those responsible for human rights violations will be held accountable.” In other words, the Security Council seemed to take the time to call upon Aristide to refrain from doing something he was not doing: using violence to advance political goals. In fact, he had used the electoral process to advance political goals and the defenders of “democracy” were refusing to cooperate. (The convoluted grammatical formulation suggests the authors understood the need for ambiguity.) The Secretary General warned that Haiti could destabilize the region, which laid the groundwork for intervention.50

When Aristide was finally abducted on 29 February 2004 and flown out of the country, the people who identified with Lavalas were left completely undefended. The Democratic Convergence claimed that “freedom fighters” were liberating the people and ridding the country of criminals. Spokespeople in Washington, Paris, and Ottawa claimed that Aristide freely resigned and that the United States kindly flew him to the safety of a repressive French client state, the Central African Republic.51

The Proprietors of the World Take Haiti, Once Again

Within hours of the abduction of President Aristide, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1529. The phrasing of the resolution was ambiguous, “Taking note of the resignation of Jean-Bertrand Aristide as President of Haiti and the swearing-in of President Boniface Alexandre as the acting President of Haiti in accordance with the Constitution of Haiti.” In fact, only if Aristide had resigned voluntarily would the swearing-in of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Haiti have been constitutional. If, however, the American government had threatened Aristide that, if he did not sign a letter of resignation, they would kill him and his family and then launch a bloodbath against his supporters — as Aristide and his American security guards avow was the case — then all subsequent actions of the Security Council would

be in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Remarkably, the Security Council did not consult President Aristide in any way before validating the change in government. (This is great news for aspiring putschists the world over.) In order to justify intervention in Haitian affairs, the Security Council needed to show that Haiti represented “a threat to international peace and security,” a phrase that was included in precisely those words, with no explanation as to how international peace and security were at risk from a tiny impoverished country that did not possess an army. Under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Security Council authorized the deployment of a Multinational Interim Force for a period of three months, after which it would be ready to establish a stabilization force “to support continuation of a peaceful and constitutional political process and the maintenance of a secure and stable environment.” In violation of the constitutions of both the United Nations and Haiti, the Security Council called for the respect of the constitutional process. Canadian and American forces were already on the ground in Haiti. Canada would contribute 450 troops to the Multinational Interim Force.52

At the moment that Aristide was being flown to central Africa, a number of countries sympathetic to Lavalas were considering their support, exposing the division of the world into core and peripheral nations. The heads of the Caribbean countries held an emergency session, claiming their “dismay and alarm over the events leading to the departure from office by President Aristide and the ongoing political upheaval and violence in Haiti. They called for the immediate return to democratic rule and respect for the Constitution of Haiti.”53 The African Union Commission, representing fifty-three states, issued a similar statement: “The African Union expresses the view that the unconstitutional way by which President Aristide was removed set a dangerous precedent for a duly elected person and wishes that no action be taken to legitimize the rebel forces.”54 Venezuela refused to

53 Statement issued by CARICOM heads of government at the conclusion of an emergency session on the situation in Haiti, 2–3 March 2004, Kingston, Jamaica.
recognize the replacement government, which President Hugo Chavez qualified as “illegitimate” and the result of a “coup d’état.” Chavez said, “The President of Haiti is called Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and he was elected by the people.” Military aid had been shipped from South Africa that would have arrived within days to arm the government supporters. Cuba, Jamaica, and Venezuela could have been drawn into an armed conflict. Washington’s recent covert interventions in those countries, using “democracy” as a code for class rule, might have prompted some people to reconsider its intentions in Haiti. At best, it would have been a diplomatic disaster for Washington and NATO, already overextended in wars of expansion in Iraq and Afghanistan, based on equally fraudulent claims. So it was urgent to get Aristide out of the country before a real military confrontation clarified who was behind the paramilitaries. Instead of receiving weapons to fight their enemies, those who wanted to defend their elected government confronted paramilitaries, backed by American and Canadian troops. In case the popular classes responded by fleeing the coming terror, three American Coast Guard cutters were stationed off Port-au-Prince. As if anticipating the need, the Security Council added a clause validating their presence: “To facilitate the provision of international assistance to the Haitian police and the Haitian Coast Guard in order to establish

and maintain public safety and law and order and to promote and protect human rights.” Up to 1,000 Lavalas supporters were killed in the first few days after Aristide’s abduction.

Once president, Boniface Alexandre named economist Gérard Latortue, managing director at the United Nations Development Organization, as prime minister. A cousin of Youri Latortue, he had lived in Miami for the previous twenty years. No member of Fanmi Lavalas or any organization connected with Aristide was included in Latortue’s government that, instead, succeeded in buying off several FL politicians who, in the process, destroyed their credibility with the electorate.

While $1,200,000,000 in conditional aid finally arrived, all of the social programs, job creation, and public works projects that Fanmi Lavalas had intended to use it for were shelved. Latortue unconstitutionally fired five justices from the Cour de Cassation and named five replacement justices. That meant that Haiti’s ultimate appellate court would not undermine the new Interim Government of Haiti.\(^57\) Latortue fired several thousand public service employees and published their names on lists of *chimères* which, in the circumstances, was a death sentence. (*Chimère* is a loaded term, used by the Haitian oligarchy and their transnational allies to smear active supporters of Aristide and Lavalas. It accomplishes the same objective as did “communist” during the Cold War, “terrorist” in relation to the Middle East, and “democrat” in eighteenth-century France, England, and United States.)

Many of those dismissed had worked as policemen or in security and they retained their firearms to defend themselves. Meanwhile, the National Police, now fully under the control of the oligarchy, staged raids into the poor neighbourhoods where the strongest support for Lavalas was located.\(^58\) A reign of terror descended throughout Haiti. Local Lavalas leaders were assassinated or forced into hiding once their opponents realized that the oligarchy and their *blan* allies had finally


\(^58\) Interview with Samba Boukman, Haiti Analysis, http://haitianalysis.blogspot.ca/2012/03/samba-boukman-on-his-life-and-necessity.html,

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**Paul Jackson**

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eliminated Aristide. Those who had public profiles and could inspire poor Haitians were silenced rather than killed.\textsuperscript{59}

While it imprisoned people guilty of supporting Lavalas, the Latortue government overturned the convictions of those who had carried out the massacre in Raboteau in 1994, during the Cédras regime. The trials that led to those convictions had been based on painstaking investigations and courageous testimony. They represented a watershed in Haitian history. Moreover, the convictions rested on the judgment and intelligence of ordinary Haitians who sat on the jury: the core concept of Athenian democracy.\textsuperscript{60} They were a triumph of Préval’s government and had shown that Haiti could have a functional justice system. The capricious decision to release the convicts told poor Haitians — in the words of Joegodson — that they were as vulnerable as cockroaches in the face of hens.\textsuperscript{61}

\textbf{MINUSTAH}


\textsuperscript{60} Bresler, “If You Are Not Corrupt, Arrest the Criminals,” 22. In the Haitian justice system, jurors can ask questions of the defendants. The lawyer for the victims, Mario Joseph and Brian Concannon, reported that the jurors’ questions showed that they had followed the details and implications of the testimony, even where the prosecutors had been lax in their presentation of the case.

\textsuperscript{61} Hallward, \textit{Damming the Flood}, 275. \textit{Ravet pa gen jistis devan poul} — the cockroach is never in the right before the hen.
MINUSTAH. It was initially established to serve for six months, but with the explicit intention of being renewed indefinitely, as has been the case. MINUSTAH included both civilian (up to 1,622 police) and military (up to 6,700 troops) components. The Security Council, while affirming its “strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Haiti,” endowed MINUSTAH with extraordinary powers divided into three separate areas: to establish a secure and stable environment; to support the political process; and to monitor, protect, and report on human rights. It was specifically mandated to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, to monitor, restructure, and reform the Haitian National Police, and to assist the transitional government in bringing about elections at all levels at the earliest possible date. On 9 July 2004, Prime Minister Latortue, representing Haiti, signed the agreement legalizing the existence of MINUSTAH. The agreement included an immunity clause that released MINUSTAH from legal accountability for its actions in Haiti. However, as prime minister, Latortue did not have the constitutional authority to sign an international treaty on behalf of Haiti. Consequently, the MINUSTAH presence violates both international law and Haitian sovereignty.

During the first year of its mandate, researchers from the University of Miami, Harvard University, and the Centro de Justiça Global from Brazil all found that the United Nations forces were instead contributing to the deterioration of conditions for the majority of Haitians. The latter two institutions reported in March 2005,

These violations span a gory spectrum, from arbitrary arrest and detention, to disappearances and summary executions, to killing of scores of hospitalized patients and the subsequent disposal of their bodies at mass graves. As this report details, MINUSTAH has effectively provided cover for

63 This argument is advanced by Ricardo Seitenfus, the special representative of the secretary general of the Organization of American States in Haiti from 2008 to 2011. See Dan Beeton and Georgianne Nienaber, “Haiti’s Doctored Elections, Seen from the Inside: An Interview with Ricardo Seitenfus,” Dissent, 24 February 2014.
the police to wage a campaign of terror in Port-au-Prince’s slums. Even more distressing than MINUSTAH’s complicity in HNP abuses are credible allegations of human rights abuses perpetrated by MINUSTAH itself, as documented in this report. MINUSTAH, however, has virtually ignored these allegations as well, relegating them to obscurity and thus guaranteeing that abuses go uncorrected. In short, instead of following the specific prescription of its mandate by putting an end to impunity in Haiti, MINUSTAH’s failures have ensured its continuation.64

All subsequent critical analyses of MINUSTAH would confirm and elaborate on that judgment. If MINUSTAH were to actually fulfil its mission responsibly, it would need to investigate and report on the illegal activities of those who brought it into existence and who profit from its continuation. Spokespeople from Haiti’s poor neighbourhoods explicitly and vocally denounce MINUSTAH as a continuation of the coup d’état and an assault on Haitian democracy.

The people from the poorest neighbourhoods organized a march on 30 September 2004, to mark the anniversary of the first coup against Aristide in 1991. They demanded the return of Aristide and their elected government. The Haitian Police opened fire on the huge crowd, killing a number of people. Then, along with Labanye’s gang, the police attacked the centres of Fanmi Lavalas support, killing eighty people over the next couple of weeks and imprisoning influential radio personalities on spurious charges of complicity in attacks on the police. Prime Minister Latortue ordered the United Nations forces to mount operations against the poor whom he classified as terrorists. The terror was most pronounced in slums like Bel Air and Cité Soleil. In one instance, the Haitian Police forced eleven young men to lay on the ground and then shot them each in the head. They burned homes. MINUSTAH troops looked on. In December 2004, the interim government of Prime Minister Latortue paid former members of the armed forces the first of three instalments in compensation for Aristide’s disbandment of the Army in

The indemnities amounted to $29 million and were intended to reach between 5,000 and 8,000 ex-soldiers, who would not be required to hand in the arms they kept when Aristide disbanded the army in 1995. The targets of these ex-military and death squad agents were the poor who were supposed to be protected by MINUSTAH.65

In December 2004, the oligarchy’s paramilitaries, the National Police, MINUSTAH, and Labanye’s gang fought to demoralize those loyal to Aristide and Lavalas. Finally, in March 2005, Dred Wilme’s gang defeated Labanye, who was killed. Labanye’s gang dispersed. The people of Cité Soleil rejoiced at the defeat of Labanye. Interim Prime Minister Gérard Latortue publicly mourned his death.

Upon the death of Labanye, the oligarchy directly armed the police to defend their interests. Reginald Boulos asked Washington to support their vision of a private police force. Fritz Mevs, a member of one of Haiti’s wealthiest families, told the American ambassador that he worried “that funneling the arms secretly would only serve to reinforce [accurate] rumors that the elite were creating private armies.” Instead of supporting that initiative for a police force directly and explicitly under the authority of the oligarchy, Juan Gabriel Valdes, the United Nations mission chief, committed MINUSTAH to taking over the role that the Labanye gang had fulfilled on behalf of the business class. The American embassy in Port-au-Prince cabled Washington that, “In response to embassy and private sector prodding, MINUSTAH is now formulating a plan to protect the area.” The American ambassador praised MINUSTAH for showing “backbone” by incursions into the slums that killed and wounded large numbers of men, women, and children.66 By shifting the responsibility for repression onto MINUSTAH, the Haitian oligarchy and their Washington allies obscured their role. Brazil accepted the offer to act as the lead nation of the MINUSTAH


mission in the interests of realizing its geopolitical ambitions. Brazil wanted to be recognized as a regional power in Latin America and, more specifically, to secure a permanent seat on the Security Council. At home, Brazil’s leaders appealed to Brazilian nationalism. Leading the stabilization mission in Haiti was proof of their increasing prestige on the world stage. Brazilians should be proud of their country as it joined the ranks of the United States, France, Canada, the Vatican, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Together, they formed the “core group” that controlled Haitian “democracy” on behalf of the transnational capitalist class.  

New Elections: Préval

Haiti’s interim government had to organize elections. For years, the Democratic Convergence had claimed that Aristide was a dictator held in place by criminal gangs. According to that logic, the “resignation” of Aristide should have set the stage for immediate elections. But it would take two years to organize those elections. The oligarchy and their transnational allies were well aware that Fanmi Lavalas would have, once again, won any election by a large majority. Consequently, they needed first to demoralize the poor, to imprison Lavalas candidates who could take the place of Aristide, and, finally, to manipulate the elections.

In 2005, as a result of the widespread attacks, repression, and imprisonment of political leaders, Fanmi Lavalas supporters declared their intention to boycott the coming elections. The oligarchy and Washington appeared to have won. By their standards, and for propaganda purposes, there would be “democratic” elections and their candidates would control the government and the presidency. However, a wild card appeared that changed the complexion of the elections for the poor classes. Since leaving the presidency in 2001, René Préval had dedicated himself to the development of his hometown of Marmelade and

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had not been involved in national politics. The Democratic Convergence and the coup leaders had largely ignored him, and he them. Now, as the elections approached, he presented himself as a candidate for his new party, called Lespwa, meaning Hope. His candidature was accepted by the Interim Government. But then the popular classes claimed him as their candidate. In Haitian culture, twins are thought to have a spiritual significance. It was believed that Aristide and Préval were twins: two people who shared one soul. A vote for Préval was, therefore, a vote for Aristide. Moreover, Préval promised the people that, if he was elected, he would allow Aristide to return to Haiti. The people saw their chance to prevail over their enemies who had stolen Aristide and destroyed their government. By the time the oligarchy understood what was happening, it was too late. In the death sport of Haitian politics, the people had scored a short-handed goal.

As the elections approached, relations between MINUSTAH and the police deteriorated. MINUSTAH officers understood that they were being used as a police force of repression in the service of the Haitian oligarchy. At one point, MINUSTAH troops blocked Haitian police from gaining access to a demonstration in Bel Air. The commander of MINUSTAH, General Ribeiro, resigned and a Brazilian general, Urano Teixa da Matta Bacellar, took his place. But the tensions remained. On 7 January 2006, Bacellar was found shot dead in his room at the Hotel Montana. The official explanation was that he had committed suicide. Many speculated that he had been murdered as a result of his unwillingness to use MINUSTAH to invade and pacify the poor neighbourhoods in advance of the elections. The Brazilian investigation and autopsy have never been released.

Boulos and Apaid favoured an invasion of the slums before the elections on the usual pretext of pacifying the bandits. But the assault was not authorized and, in its place, the residents of Cité Soleil and Bel Air organized massive nonviolent rallies in support of Préval. The armed gangs from the slums announced that they would protect voters. That exposed the fallacy at the heart of the oligarchy’s narrative; the gangs and the poor formed a block in opposition to the rich. However much they hated gang culture, the people from the poor neighbourhoods relied on the gangs to protect them from the oligarchy and their transnational blan allies in the exercise of “democracy.”
When Préval organized the last elections in November 2000, he had set up 10,000 voter registration centres throughout the country. In contrast, Latortue installed 500. Given the terrain and lack of infrastructure in Haiti, it is difficult to get around. In Cité Soleil, there were approximately 150,000 voters, but the Electoral Council sent only 52,000 voting cards. Even at that, only 30,000 votes from Cité Soleil were counted. In 2000, Préval had set up 12,000 polling stations. Latortue had 800. The poorest neighbourhoods had none. No polling station was located in Cité Soleil. When a number of polling stations did not open on the morning of the vote, the people began protesting loudly. When the foreign press began to cover the story, they eventually opened.  

Despite all of the obstacles, there was a 65 percent turnout. On 9 February, with a quarter of the votes counted, it was announced that Préval was leading with 62 percent. But on 11 February, the Electoral Council lowered his total to 49.6 percent, which would have necessitated a run-off election. Then, tens of thousands of charred ballots, cast mostly for Préval, were found in a garbage dump in Port-au-Prince. They apparently had been set alight, but a rainfall kept the fire from consuming them. The Electoral Council also found that 4.3 percent of the total ballots were blank. It was presumed they had been inserted in order to dilute Préval’s percentage to under 50 percent. By whom? American Deputy Secretary of State Roger Noriega encouraged the Electoral Council to resist the demands of the mobs that were clamouring for the declaration of Préval as president. 

The people erupted in controlled but passionate and menacing protests. They knew that the Interim Government was trying to cook the elections and steal the presidency from them. Huge protests consumed Port-au-Prince, literally threatening to lay waste to the country if the election was stolen from them.  

Sociologist Alex Dupuy describes the reaction of the transnational ruling class:

68 Hallward, Damming the Flood, 300.

69 We observed the huge protest marches. The people chanted “Pa gen Préval, pa gen Ayiti” which is ambiguous but can mean, “If we don’t get Préval, you don’t get Haiti.” Thousands of poor from Cité Soleil climbed the mountain to the luxurious Hotel Montana where they entered en masse, jumped in the pool, lounged on the chaises longues, and otherwise hobnobbed with the rich. When they left everything just as they had found it, the message was not lost on the oligarchy. The price for fixing the elections was going to be high.
At that point, ambassadors from the United States, Canada, and France who had initially insisted that the CEP [Provisional Electoral Council] continue to count the votes that would have forced a second round reluctantly agreed to join with their counterparts from Brazil and Chile and meet with UN, interim government, and CEP officials to come up with an acceptable legal solution that would grant Préval a first-round victory. The solution was found in the so-called Belgian Option suggested by the Brazilian and Chilean diplomats. According to Article 185 of the Haitian electoral decree, blank ballots must be included as part of the total votes cast, but the article does not stipulate how the votes are to be counted. The Belgian Option consisted of distributing the blank votes proportionally to each candidate rather than adding them to the total. While this solution raised everyone’s percentage, it also put Préval over the 50 percent plus one vote he needed to win in the first round. In the early morning hours of February 16, eight of the nine members of the CEP signed the agreement that declared Préval the winner.\textsuperscript{70}

American ambassador Tim Carney candidly said that the validity of the election would be judged according to Préval’s cooperation in office.

The people, said to have been held in terror by Aristide, overwhelming elected the man they called his twin who promised to allow Aristide to return to Haiti. And then they rejoiced. What happened to the candidates who had rid the country of Aristide and Lavalas? Manigat received 12.4 percent of the votes. Baker, widely trumpeted as Washington’s favourite, got 8.2 percent. The paramilitary leader, Guy Philippe, who fancied himself the liberator of Haiti, managed 1.9 percent; Evans Paul, 2.5 percent. Dany Toussaint, a key traitor of Aristide, polled

0.4 percent. Gérard Gourgues, whom the Democratic Convergence had named as the head of the parallel government in 2004, refusing to recognize Aristide, got 0.3 percent of the vote. Washington’s World Bank candidate Marc Bazin, claiming to represent Lavalas, got 0.7 percent. Remember that these results represent the totals after the Interim Government had done all in its power to undermine Préval and push the oligarchy’s candidates.

The Limits of Transnational, Capitalist “Democracy”

Upon taking office, Préval worked to strengthen Haiti’s relationship with Venezuela and Cuba. Venezuela offered Haiti a steady and reliable source of energy through PetroCaribe. To complement that policy, Cuba offered Préval its medical expertise. Short on money, Cuba was strong in human resources. Both Aristide and Préval had strengthened ties to Cuba in the past. Now, Préval deepened relations with an agreement that would see Cuban medical practitioners work with the Haitian state to improve health services in the most remote communities in Haiti. These initiatives, that brought Haiti into the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, directly threatened Washington’s regional political agenda. Préval attempted to assuage Washington’s concern at the same time that he worked to integrate Haiti into the Alliance that could benefit the Haitian poor over the interests of the transnational capitalists. This put Préval on a collision course with Exxon-Mobil and Chevron, which had control of the Haitian market. Under the deal, they would have to answer to the governments of both Haiti and Venezuela. Chevron appealed to Washington for help. President Bush warned Préval against aligning Haiti with Hugo Chavez. Finally, by agreeing to a complex agreement whereby Chevron would ship PetroCaribe oil from Venezuela to Haiti, Préval managed to conclude the deal.

71 See Georgetown University, Political Database of the Americas at http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/Haiti/06pres.html.

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Préval — like all political leaders in the current context of transnational capitalism — had to choose between two constituencies: on one side, the poor of Haiti who had elected him as president and, on the other, the transnational capitalist class represented by the Haitian oligarchy and their powerful allies in Washington, Paris, and Ottawa. (Betraying the electorate can make a “democratically”-elected politician unpopular; betraying the transnational capitalist class is often fatal.) Préval managed to negotiate deals, such as PetroCaribe with Hugo Chavez, that were favourable to the Haitian people. But, once in office, he reneged on his promise to allow Aristide to return to Haiti, until the very end of his mandate. Washington and its allies worked to keep Aristide in Africa; Préval could not have prevailed without opening himself to Aristide’s fate. But Préval further excluded Lavalas from the political process. In its place, he offered a new party, Inite (Unity). Since he could not run for a third term as president, Préval’s son-in-law Jude Célestin would be the Inite candidate for the country’s highest office. Practically, Préval needed to control the Provisional Electoral Council to assure the outcome. Whatever his motivations, the consequences of his authoritarian actions in breach of his promise earned him the lasting enmity of poor Haitians.

According to the Haitian constitution of 1987, elections are to be overseen by a Permanent Electoral Council composed of three representatives from each of Haiti’s nine departments. (A tenth department was added since the constitution was written.) The smallest geographical level of government — the communal section — chooses representatives to send to the larger geopolitical divisions. Finally, the Departmental Assemblies are supposed to nominate thirty candidates for the Permanent Electoral Council. From that list, the President, the Supreme Court, and the National Assembly each choose three members to form the actual Permanent Electoral Council. The Departmental Assembly has never been implemented as a level of government, however. Consequently, there has never been a Permanent Electoral Council. The Provisional Electoral Council, created after the flight of Duvalier to oversee the first elections based on the new constitution, remains in place. It has always had full independence to “organize and control” the complete electoral process in the absence of a permanent body. Instead of implementing a system of oversight consistent with the constitution insofar as that was possible in the absence of Departmental

In April 2009, Haiti held elections for twelve of the thirty Senate seats. The Provisional Electoral Council required that all candidates submit an original signature from the party leader. Knowing that Aristide was in South Africa and would not be able to send it in time, the \textit{ad hoc} requirement was clearly designed to exclude all Fanmi Lavalas candidates. Voters boycotted the elections in protest. Most observers estimated a turnout of approximately 5 percent of the electorate.\footnote{Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and Bureau des avocats internationaux, “The International Community Should Pressure the Haitian Government for Prompt and Fair Elections,” 30 June 2010, http://www.ijdh.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Elections-Process-6-30-10_final-1.pdf.}

Next, elections for all ninety-nine seats of the House of Deputies and ten Senate seats were rescheduled from November 2009 to February 2010. The Electoral Council again rejected the participation of Fanmi Lavalas candidates, but this time offered no coherent explanation. In fact, Fanmi Lavalas had met all the legal requirements, including authorization from Aristide, still in South Africa. When the earthquake struck on 12 January 2010, the elections were called off, leaving Haiti without a functioning parliament.

Préval called an election for 28 November 2010 to fill the positions of president, the entire House of Deputies, and one third of the Senate. Préval declared that the candidate list agreed upon for the November 2009 elections, postponed already once, would be carried over to 2010. That meant that Fanmi Lavalas would remain banned from participating, as a result of the earlier unconstitutional and capricious ban.

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The United States, Canada, the OAS, and the UN all made a show of cautioning Préval for this anti-democratic lapse. Meanwhile, Washington and its imperialist allies invested $30 million in the election; Canada contributed $5.8 million of that total. With Lavalas banned, no candidate posed a threat to the transnational capitalist class. They were ambiguous toward Préval, who had made enemies of Chevron and Exxon-Mobil while keeping the lid on Lavalas. Patrick Elie, a political scientist who had been the defence minister in Aristide’s second government, speculates that the elections were scheduled to take place in devastated, post-quake Haiti precisely to take advantage of the chaos and a traumatized electorate. The political arm of the transnational class would be able to claim success in bringing “democracy” to Haiti, while blaming the exclusion of Fanmi Lavalas on Préval.

**Electoral Shamming**

During the months preceding the November elections, large crowds protested the exclusion of the country’s largest political party, Fanmi Lavalas. According to its mandate, MINUSTAH was responsible for assuring lawful and orderly elections. The same protesters who promised to boycott the elections, however, also called for the expulsion of MINUSTAH from Haiti. An outbreak of cholera erupted and rumours spread that the Nepalese contingent of MINUSTAH had been dumping raw sewage into a tributary of the Artibonite River. The cholera bacteria thrived in the conditions of post-earthquake Haiti. Victims of the quake lived in close quarters with inadequate hygienic facilities. Water was untreated and most people could ill afford bottled water, itself not always reliable. Among the poor, rumours spread that MINUSTAH had introduced the bacteria on purpose to kill them off.

Then came election day, 28 November 2010. Many who tried to vote were simply turned away from the voting stations, if they could find them. Observers documented a level of incompetence on the part of the Electoral Council hard to explain were it not deliberate. Foreign news agencies filmed people stuffing handfuls of ballots into boxes while other ballots blew in the wind. At some voting stations, potential voters were turned away at gunpoint. People were directed to nonexistent voting

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stations. Between the boycott and logistical chaos, the participation rate was only 20 percent of registered voters. In any case, behind closed doors, the head of MINUSTAH was deciding the outcome of the elections long before the polls closed.

Early in the morning of election day, the head of the MINUSTAH mission to Haiti, Edmond Mulet, told the international press that he was impressed with the desire of Haitians to vote and that the day was “an electoral celebration.” Several hours later, Mulet convened a meeting of the representatives of the guardians of Haiti, including the United States, Brazil, Canada, France, Spain, the UN, the OAS, and the European Union. Mulet told the special representative of the OAS, Ricardo Seitenfus, that he had just informed President Préval that an aeroplane had been arranged for him to leave Haiti within forty-eight hours. He confided in Seitenfus that Jude Célestin appeared to be on track to win the elections and that was unacceptable. Mulet, apparently acting on behalf of the core countries that controlled Haiti — the United States, France, and Canada — had decided to repeat the same tactics that had forced Aristide out of the country in 2004. This time, Préval would appear to have left in response to the mounting protests against the undeniable electoral farce. However, the representatives from Latin America at the meeting refused to sanction the proposed coup d’état. Consequently, Canada, France, and the United States were forced to back down. Instead, they transformed the Observation Mission from the OAS-CARICOM into a Recounting Mission of nine persons, which they stacked with seven members from the United States, France, and Canada. It proceeded to capriciously tally the votes until Célestin was in third place, behind Myrlande Manigat and Michel Martelly. Consequently, he was eliminated from the second round to determine who would become president.

The run-off election between Myrlande Manigat and Michel Martelly took place in March 2011. Martelly, under the name of Sweet Mickey, had been known for his vulgar — sometimes obscene — musical performances, in the course of which he championed Haiti’s dictators: Jean-Claude Duvalier, General Cédras and his death squads, the tontons macoutes, and the oligarchy. He berated Lavalas and Jean-Bertrand Aristide. As the run-off election proceeded, Joegodson posted articles on our website describing the gangs of vakabons that marched through

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the streets of Port-au-Prince, threatening violence against those who
did not support their preferred candidate. Martelly had promised them
that, as president, he would reinstate the Haitian army. His followers
were called Têt Kale (Bald Heads) and stood for nothing more noble than
their own advancement. Although he won the presidency, the Electoral
Council refused to validate the results. Martelly’s presidency is not con-
stitutionally valid.75

The Transnational World and the Transnational State

Although Jean-Bertrand Aristide had returned to Haiti two days before
Martelly gained the presidency, he has withdrawn from public life. The
current leadership of the political party he founded, Fanmi Lavalas,
represents less and less the poor and oppressed of Haiti.76 But that
constituency — growing and increasingly desperate — continues to
call upon the spirit of Dessalines. The seventeenth of October 2013
marked the two hundred and seventh anniversary of the assassination
of Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Tens of thousands of people marched in
Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien to commemorate the man who sym-
bolizes the liberation of Haiti from both imperial domination and
Haitian sedition. As Dessalines had forced the imperialist countries
out of Haiti — and as his successors had expelled Jean-Claude Duvalier
in 1986 — the protesters demanded the unconditional departure of
both Martelly and MINUSTAH. The police opened fire on them. In
Port-au-Prince, the police blocked them from gaining access to Place
Dessalines, where MINUSTAH troops were holding a military parade.

75 Center for Economic and Policy Research, “Reconstructing Democracy:
Joint Report of Independent Electoral Monitors of Haiti’s November 28, 2010
Report on the 2nd Round of the Presidential and Partial Legislative Elections
of March 20th, 2011,” 23 March 2011; Lamp for Haiti, “The Right to Vote,”;
Center for Economic and Policy Research, “Haiti: From Original Sin to Electoral
Intervention — An Interview with Ricardo Seitenfus by Dan Beeton and

76 Kim Ives, “The Split in Fanmi Lavalas: How It Came About and What It

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Diverted to the Champs de Mars, they took up a variation on the chant that Joegodson had heard similar crowds shout as they forced Duvalier to flee to France: “Grenadye alaso, sa ki mouri zafè a yo. Si yo tire sou nou, n ap mete dife. Nou pa pè, nou pap jann pè, wè pa wè fòk Martelly jije pou krim li fè sou jij la, pou manti li bay pèp la.” Thus, they claimed that they were unafraid, but would bring Martelly to justice for both his crimes and his lies, some of which they enumerated: violating the constitution, destroying democratic institutions, manipulating the judiciary and the police, assassinating Judge Jean Serge Joseph, refusing to organize elections, refusing to support the legal claim brought forth by the victims of cholera against MINUSTAH, refusing to enact the Senate resolution demanding the departure of MINUSTAH by May 2014 at the latest, attempting to erect a totalitarian regime against the will of the people, manipulating the media, and persecuting critics.77

Inside of government, Senator Moïse Jean-Charles has accepted the role of denouncing the crimes, hypocrisy, and lies of the powerful in Haiti and in the international arena. He has appeared on Brazilian television to represent the will of the Haitian majority — and legislature — for the departure of MINUSTAH. Other deputies and senators have revealed to him the nature of the Martelly presidency and Jean-Charles has been sharing those confidences with the people of Haiti over the radio, much as Jean Dominique had done before his assassination. Jean-Charles is not the only voice. Kòdinasyon Desalin (Coordination Dessalines) comprises a number of articulate spokesmen and -women who defend the poor, the Haitian constitution, and international law against the transgressions of the transnational capitalist class. They argue that there can be no justice for imperialist crimes against them as long as Martelly, in collaboration with the bourgeoisie, neo-macoutes, and Duvalierists, holds onto the presidency. Not only does KOD call for his resignation, but also his arrest and trial for overt participation in the coup d’état of 2004. Likewise, FOPARK (Patriotic Force for Respect of the Constitution) has brought tens of thousands of Haitians into the streets to vigorously protest developments under

Martelly. On 29 November 2013, they organized a march from the slums of Bel Air and La Saline to the American embassy, under the slogan, “Dessalines is going to visit Uncle Sam.” Their goal was to protest American machinations that brought Martelly to power in 2011.78

These analysts, mostly from Haiti’s poorest neighbourhoods, describe how Martelly is capturing the Haitian state to impose a dictatorship. Martelly has refused to call elections since his unconstitutional entry into the presidency. Mayoralty terms expired in 2011. Instead of holding elections, Martelly replaced all elected mayors and county officials with personal appointments. Throughout Haiti, individuals loyal to Martelly now hold power locally, much as was the case under the Duvalier dictatorship. Thirteen Haitian congressmen have tabled a resolution enumerating Martelly’s offences against the constitution — grounds for his trial by a High Court. With no legal basis, he imposed taxes on both telephone calls to Haiti and money transfers from abroad. The fund has collected hundreds of millions of dollars and is under the exclusive control of Martelly and his prime minister, Laurent Lamothe. Martelly unconstitutionally designated his wife and son to manage hundreds of millions of dollars of public funds with no oversight. Two lawyers brought an extortion case against Martelly’s wife and son before Judge Jean Serge Joseph, who was in turn threatened by Martelly, Lamothe, and Minister of Justice Jean Renel Sanon. Two days later, Joseph died in suspicious circumstances. The lawyers who brought the case have subsequently been harassed by the police. Only by the intervention of the poor of Port-au-Prince did lawyer Michel André escape arrest. Meanwhile, the average time elapsed between arrest and charges being laid is almost two years. That time is spent in inhuman prison conditions. Martelly’s closest political allies in the Senate and legislature are accused of drug trading.


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arms dealing, the execution of political and criminal competitors, and other crimes.\textsuperscript{79}

Haiti is no longer a problem for the core capitalist countries. The president is operating blatantly outside of the constitution to consolidate power in his office; in other words, he is reconstructing a dictatorship that was defeated when the great majority of Haitians forced Jean-Claude Duvalier to flee the country. Electoral results are now assured by the arbitrary prohibition of parties that represent those Haitians

\textsuperscript{79} These claims are only a small summary of the accusations against the Martelly government. Many are repeated and elaborated independently in various human rights, Senate, and legislative reports. Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains, “Situation Générale des Droits Humains dans le pays au cours de la deuxième année de présidence de Michel Joseph Martelly,” 18 June 2013, 6–7; Statement of Senator Benoit to the American Congress, http://www.ijdh.org/2013/10/topics/politics-democracy/senator-benoit-statement-to-congress/; Kim Ives, “ Arrestation de Me André Michel!” 

Haïti Liberté vol. 7, no. 15 (October 2013), 4; Kim Ives, “Outspoken Senator Charges: Martelly Government, a ‘Cesspool’ of Corruption and Nepotism,” Haïti Liberté vol. 5, no. 25 (January 2012); United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013; Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains, “Trafic illicite de drogues: Le Gouvernement Martelly/Lamothe met tout en oeuvre pour protéger les narcotrafiquants proches du Pouvoir,” 18 September 2013. One of the most disturbing revelations is the testimony of Sherlson Sanon, who describes how Senator Joseph Lambert enrolled him into his criminal gang at age eleven. Lambert and Senator Edwin Zinny paid him to carry out executions of criminal and political competitors, run drugs, and frame political opponents, such as Senator Moïse Jean-Charles. See Emmanuel Saintus, “Affaire Lambert: Al Capone haïtien?” Haïti progrès, 11 July 2013. One of the most tenacious journalists in Haiti, Jean Monard Métellus, exposes the workings of the Martelly government. In October 2013, Justice Minister Jean Renel Sanon published a press release revealing that Métellus was the target of an assassination plot. He claimed that two motorcyclists had been engaged to kill the journalist in a drive-by shooting, a common tactic in Haiti. Jean Dominique had been assassinated in precisely that manner. Journalist Francklyn Geffrard questions the purpose of a press release announcing the assassination plot rather than a police investigation to find the conspirators based on whatever information the justice minister possesses. The announcement had the effect of communicating to journalists the price that accompanied criticism of the Martelly regime. Francklyn B. Geffrard, “La vie de Jean Monard Métellus en danger!” Haïti Liberté vol 7, no 15 (October 2013), 7.
who expelled Duvalier. The political elite are, once again, known to be deeply implicated in criminal activity. They use the state to ensure that Haitians do not, once again, interfere with the interests of the transnational capitalist class. The police and judicial systems are tools to silence critics. Washington accepts that the head of the Senate has personally murdered Haitians who tried to peacefully defend the rights of the poor. Washington knows that he is building a criminal network in the Gonaïves region, based on the drug trade. The president is personally tied to another drug ring, operating out of the south of Haiti, which has been credibly accused of a culture of murder, extortion, and terror. UNICEF does not express concern aroused by the testimony of children who claim that the current political leaders have recruited them to commit murder and other criminal actions. The judicial authorities who have attempted to bring charges for embezzlement and extortion against the family of the president have died in suspicious circumstances or been harassed by the police. When Mario Joseph, the lawyer who defends the victims of Duvalier and the current despotic regime, accuses the current mayor of Montréal of having facilitated the illegal abduction of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 in the capacity of his role as Minister of the Francophonie, Denis Coderre responds that Joseph is simply trying to bring Haitian domestic politics to Canada.  

Representative government — almost universally called democracy — is not compatible with the needs of transnational capitalism. The global division of paid labour and pauperism, in a system where everyone needs money to survive, means that majorities of people in peripheral countries — and increasing numbers in the core capitalist nations — are expected to vote for their own subjugation. The majority of Haitians see little choice but to fight those who present themselves as the political class. The transnational ruling class offers them Michel Martelly as their representative on the international stage. Those Haitians who fought and suffered to rid themselves of Duvalier only to witness a transnational class destroying their chosen governments, now see President Martelly working with those same putschists, with Jean-Claude Duvalier, with ex–death squad killers granted amnesty for having murdered their

80 “Un avocat haïtien réclame des excuses de la part de Coderre,” La Presse, 27 February 2014.
friends and relatives to protect Haiti from poor Haitians. Martelly’s job is to deliver Haiti to Washington, Paris, and Ottawa. Together, they represent the “natural aristocracy” that the founders of “democracy” assumed would take control of the world in the course of time. They were prescient, but there is nothing “natural” about the transnational aristocracy. It is a product of the imperialist, capitalist world system. It is as “natural” as the slavery against which Haitians revolted more than two centuries ago.