

# HAITI : POLITICAL PROCESS AND STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY SINCE 1986

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled, "HAITI : POLITICAL PROCESS AND STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY SINCE 1986" submitted by Seema Joglekar in partial fulfilment of the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Jawaharlal Nehru University, is a product of the student's own work, carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

It is hereby certified that this work has not been presented for the award of any other degree or diploma by any University in or outside India and may be forwarded to the examiners for evaluation.

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## PREFACE

The process of transition from authoritarian mostly from military coups to civilian rule since the late 1970s has been the focus of many scholarly writings on Latin America and the Caribbean. Most researchers have however, underlined the tenuous nature of the transition for, in the first place power to the elected civilian rulers in most countries has invariably been handed over on the terms and conditions of the armed forces and besides, nowhere such transition has entailed shift in the economic and political power of the dominant elites.

When the small Caribbean island country of Haiti organized its first free elections in December 1990 electing a radical priest Jean Bertrand Aristide as President, proponents hailed it as the culmination of the Hemispheric-wide process of democratization. However, only after seven months in office, Aristide was overthrown in a military coup underlining the tenuous hold of democracy in Haiti. Haiti military junta backtracked on its pledge to allow Aristide to return and assume presidency in October 1993 and continues to defy the proclaimed intentions of the regional hegemon viz., U.S. to restore Aristide to power, if necessary through

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harsher economic and military means. Since then military junta has withstood all domestic and more so international pressures including an OAS and UN oil and arms embargo. Is Haiti a pointer to the rest of the region, where the U.S. has served as an inspiration and a catalyst to their return to democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s in midst of a serious global economic crisis, the impact of which is most critical on countries of the region which in the preceding decades had sacrificed their economies to the dogmatic postulates of conflicting ideological persuasions.

The situation in Haiti not only speaks of the difficulties in transition but also of the sharp political polarization. While military refuses to accept Aristide back, Aristide has called for harsher economic and military measures even threatening a popular uprising against the military regime. Most analysts therefore, describe the current Haitian situation as a zero sum game. In this important respect, Haiti differs from rest of the region where the transition to the civilian rule has more often than not been negotiated and smooth.

Haiti in many respects is a peculiar country. Among the poorest on all economic indicators, the only Black, French/Creole-speaking country, and the second country to declare itself an independent republic in the Western Hemisphere after the U.S.,

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Haiti since its independence in the nineteenth century has evolved neither institutions nor traditions of democracy. Considered strategically important, it saw U.S. intervention in 1915 ostensibly to make it safe and stable. By 1934, U.S. troops had withdrawn without creating a nation or semblance of stability or democracy. Then followed the long personalist authoritarian rule of the Duvalier family, first Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc) from 1957 and then his son Jean Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) from 1971 until his deposition in a popular uprising in February 1986.

The present study attempts a survey of the movement that overthrew Jean Claude Duvalier and the struggle for a democratic rule since then. Amorphous and free of ideological and organizational constraints, the aims and impulses of the popular movement went beyond mere transition to a civilian rule. Is it because the movement originated in the impoverished slums and remote rural areas which had along been neglected and brutalized under the Duvaliers and are now demanding a fair share in the development process? During his election campaign, Aristide had promised only 'poverty with dignity' to Haiti's poor. Far from seeking a radical transformation, Aristide and his se lavale i.e. <sup>the</sup> 'cleansing' movement only campaigned against corruption, monopolization of economic resources by a tiny elite of Blacks and mulattos,

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terror of the National Security Volunteers (Vòddaniannasde la Securite Nationale) that is, the para-military guard Tontons macoutes (bogeymen) who have survived the Duvaliers.

The study highlights the constraints of a civilian rule in determining the socio-economic structures. Indirectly, the brief tenure of Aristide also highlights the limitations of the radical<sup>a</sup> theology. Important as these questions are, the aspect of military role seems to be equally significant.

Why the military in Haiti has failed to preside over a successful transition? Post-1986 period saw the expansion of both the ranks and the sources of enrichment-- both legal and illegal of the military. Initially committed to civilian rule by 1988, military or at least a part of it had changed its position from being an arbiter to a claimant of power, Lacking in cohesion, it was a divided military that under external pressures especially from U.S. had organised the 1990 elections. However, Aristide's victory was received both by military and the U.S. with a certain amount of apprehension due to his ability to draw support from the rural poor against the ruling urban-based elites. Is it the failure to find a moderate civilian who could smoothen the process of transition that explains the defiant position of the military and a dilatory or a non-committal position of the US.



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US perception and policies have a bearing on the domestic political process in Haiti. While supporting the transition to a civilian rule and committed to Aristide's restoration, US policy of providing economic and military aid, modernizing the military and its near insistence on effecting the transition through the medium of armed forces seems to have only emboldened the military and retarded the process of democratisation.

The present study attempts to describe the political process and the nature of democratic struggle in Haiti since 1986. To begin with, a brief introduction focuses on the bases of the rule of Duvaliers. Presidents-for-life, Duvaliers ruled the country with heavy handedness, pillaging the economy and monopolizing all wealth. Undergirding the rule of Duvaliers were the Tontons macoutes who terrorized the populace and counter-balanced the military. Moreover, by establishing state monopoly over procurement and export of coffee and other products, Duvaliers had eliminated all distinctions between state revenues and personal wealth. There also evolved a supporting economic elite and a small middle class both of Blacks and mulattos.

Such an apparently impregnable and elitist system however, failed when Jean Claude Duvalier was deposed in

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a popular uprising in February 1986. A separate chapter deals with the origin of the movement and the nature of support it enjoyed among the urban and rural poor as well as among sections of the middle class and the business. While delineating the thrust of the popular movement, the chapter also focuses on the emerging political parties and political configurations.

It is important to describe separately the interim rule of the military from 1986 until 1990, the rising tensions and fissures within its ranks expressed through coups and counter-coups in the midst of its failure to ensure a smooth transition to a popular civilian but sufficiently moderate leader. The 1987 Constitution though framed by a conservative body under the watchful eye of the military-dominated interim National Government Council (CNG) had to under popular pressure concede to demands such as an independent electoral Commission and debarring the pro-Duvalierist elements from contesting elections. Fearing the electoral victory of radical and populist elements in the elections promised in November 1987, the Duvalierist elements working through military and the Tonton macoutes returned to sabotage the electoral process, annulling the

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Constitution and smash the popular movement through violence and intimidation. The military organized elections of January 1988-- by and large admitted as farcical -- saw the conservative Leslie Manigat of the Christian Democratic Party ascend to the presidency though only briefly.

Massive US military and economic assistance after 1986 ostensibly to strengthen the democratic process in reality only strengthened the expanded and modernized armed forces which by 1988 had developed its own political ambitions. With Tontons macoutes allied to it, military had developed sources of its own enrichment such as through smuggling or reportedly through narco-trafficking which were earlier monopolized by the Duvaliers. Evidently the election of Aristide further polarized the situation. With Duvalierist elements, working through military and tontons macoutes unwilling to relax or concede their hold over sources of power and enrichment, the coup of September 1991 was staged since Aristide's policies and style of functioning both threatened the position of the military and Haiti's privileged few. These and other related issues are discussed in separate chapters.

No gainsaying, US perception and policies have an impact on the domestic political process and the future of democracy in Haiti. A separate chapter dealing with the subject seeks to highlight the consequences of US policy in the context of the overthrow of Aristide and the issues

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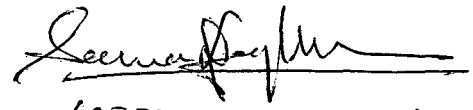
that have led to the present impasse. It details the long and tortuous process of negotiations under the aegis of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the UN. Neither negotiations nor sanctions have so far succeeded in persuading the military junta in giving up power and allow the return of Aristide. Even the threats of an armed multinational force have proved <sup>in</sup> fertile. The present impasse indicates the sharp polarization in the body politic. Indeed, Haitian policies has become a zero sum game. Which, perhaps, it has always seen.

Without mentioning of the inspiration, encouragement and guidance of Latin American Studies faculty of the School of International Studies this research work would be incomplete. Foremost, I am greatly indebted to my guardian and mentor Prof. Narayanan who not only helped in the selection of the research subject but also stood by me all through my course of study. My sincere thanks to Professor Jose Leal Ferreira who first of all is a wonderful person and whose advice inspired me in my weak moments. I owe Dr. Abdul Nafey my sincere gratitude for his attention and support all through the course of study especially in guiding me to a correct perception of the issues involved.

Amongst the people who have done their utmost in assisting this project are my uncle Mr. C.R. Nagraj, my

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(SEEMA JOGLEKAR)

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

The small Carribean island republic of Haiti has since its independence from France in 1801, had a turbulent political history. Ruled by Spain from 1492 to 1697 and thereafter by France, Haiti saw the first influx of the slaves from Africa at the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the emergence of large sugar estates owned by the white settlers.

However, the emancipation of the slaves in 1793 resulted in several isolated uprisings which devastated the countryside, destroyed the plantation system and created conditions of anarchy and authoritarianism. The massive naval invasion by France under Napoleon further contributed to prevailing anarchy and hastened the declaration of independence. Thus, what had begun as a slave rebellion ended in the destruction of sugar estates and thereby some redistribution of the land and the emergence of the first black republic in the Western Hemisphere. <sup>1</sup>

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1) Brain Weinstein and Aaron Segal, Haiti : Political Failures and Cultural Success ( New York: Praeger, 1990), p.2.

The period from 1804 until 1915--- when U.S. marines landed in Haiti -- was marked by continuous civil wars interspersed with brief periods of political stability imposed by ambitious regional strongmen. Occupation by US forces saw Haitis' return to, one may say, colonial status as the new constitution granted special privileges to US commercial and business interests and created a new professional army under U.S. tutelage. Besides, U.S. occupation sharpened racial division and hatred between the mulattoes invited a strong reaction from the majority comprising of blacks.<sup>2</sup> Situation snowballed into a direct confrontation when in 1941, President Elie Lescot launched a campaign of discrimination against blacks and elimination of the voodoo. U.S. forces withdraw in 1934 leaving behind sharper political divisions and bitter racial divisions and without creating conditions either of political stability or democracy.<sup>3</sup>

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2) Raymond Leslie Bueu, "The American Occupation of Haiti Information Service, New York, Foreign Policy Association, Vol.5 ( 27 November - 12 December, 1929) : 390.

3) James & Leyburn, The Haitian People ( New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966). p.p. 131 - 165.

Haitian society has for long remained divided into two distinct and mutually contradictory identities. On the one hand, are the urban based elites who have precipitated a stagnant economy and redundant political order. On the other side eighty per cent of the population that comprises of rural Haitians have had almost no improvement in their standard of living for over one hundred years.

Jean - Price - Mars, the foremost Haitian thinker articulated what many felt that the national elite have maintained control over 90 per cent of the people -- both rural and urban-- via custom, force and marriage. The masses follow their own customs and culture and want to be away from all political power.

The urban based elite is French - speaking, worships in catholic or Protestant churches has always prided itself on its ties with French and other European cultures and has done business with U.S. and Canada and sought to control and channel the country's contacts with the outside world. It has always relied on patronage and coercion for political control. It has despised democratic values and been manipulative and hier archial in which men are appointed on the basis of kinship friendship or proven loyalty. They comprise of the governmental ministries, the military and presidential guards the courts, church hierarchy, the best public and religions school systems, medium and large business and the



extra-official secret police, thugs and informers who lie centred around the capital city Port-au-Prince.

The rural masses have never participated alongside the urban-based elites. They have sorted out their local affairs so as to minimize government intervention. Following this trend a variety of self-help measures including the traditional shared-harvesting are relied upon rather than the pursuit of government help. Such sensitivity has made many retreat in some place into cultivation of subsistence crops away from cash crops which bring attention from Port-au-Prince. Even today, the Haitian peasant purely and simply ignores the government legislation and opposes it with an underground customary law which alone regulates intra-community relations. 4

The peasant world is Creole-speaking broadly participatory and based on rites and spectacles related with Voodoo. A material basis for the conservatism and relative stability characteristic of rural areas at least until recently is landownership especially attachment to ancestral land. Soon after independence large estates, particularly in the South, were broken up mainly for the benefit of army officers. Ordinarily, soldiers and

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4) As in Jean-Jacques Honorat, Enquete sur le développement (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Centrale, 1974), p. 219, as quoted by Brian Weinstein and Aaron Segal in Haiti: Political Failures and Cultural Success (New York: Praeger, 1990), p.3

former slaves settled on vacant lands claiming it for themselves and their descendants evolving a large de-facto land tenure system with little movement from department to department within Haiti. It is said that neither methods of cultivation nor the crops chosen have changed since 1790.<sup>5</sup>

The adult population is 80 per cent illiterate. With Haitian popular culture based on syncretic religion, race and a sense of identification with the land, it offers Haitians an alternative to pure subjugation. Such socio-cultural milieu no doubt, militates against all developmental efforts.

How politics has been conducted and what kind of a political process has evolved in such a society? Of particular interest in this context is the period since 1956 when first Francois Duvalier and after his death in 1971 his son Jean-Claude Duvalier ruled as presidents - for - life until 1986. When Jean-Claude Duvalier was deposed in a popular uprising.

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5) Jean - Price - Mars, La vocation de l' elite (Port- au - Prince : Imp rienerie Edmontl Chenel 1919) pp. 87-90 as quoted by Brian wanstein and Aaron Segal in Haiti : Political Failures and Cultural Success (New York Praeger,1990), p.7.

The present chapter makes an attempt to describe and discuss the rule of Duvalier family. Divided into four sections it discusses the major support bases of the Duvalier family rule.

The rise of Francois Duvalier was on account of the sharpening racial divisions between the politically and economically powerful mulatto and the poor and deprived majority of blacks. Duvalier exploited them to perpetuate his own personal - authoritarian rule. As the second section highlights, Duvalier accomplished this without bringing any meaningful economic development. Rather, as has been discussed, the entire economic and financial system worked to increase the personal wealth of the Duvaliers and the elite around them.

Beside monopolising all economic resources, Duvaliers ruled by controlling the armed forces and by building an alternate centre of coercive power viz. Tonton Macoutes. The third section highlights the significant differences between the armed forces and the Tonton/Macoutes and their political rule during the period of considerable interest in the prevalence of Voodoo cult in Haiti. Francois Duvalier, himself well-versed with its intricacies, effectively used voodoo to build an aura of nearly - divinal powers and thereby of legitimacy around his person.

PERSONALIST - AUTHORITARIAN RULE OF DUVALIERS:

In a marked recognition of the rising black consciousness the supreme legislative organ, the National Assembly of Haiti elected a moderate Dumarsais Estime as the new president of the country in August 1945 Estime government tried to bring a rapprochement between the mulattoes and the blacks by appointing many blacks in the government and the army. He also showed his respect for Haitian cultural tradition by respecting the voodoo cult. He included many blacks including his former student, Dr. Francois Duvalier as labour Minister in his Cabinet. Using his position as labour minister and also being Secretary-general of the Workers - Peasant Movement (MOP) party, Duvalier build his popularity including a network of loyalists especially among the poor blacks of Port - au - Prince. Thus, when Duvalier staked his claims for presidency in the election of 1956, he had considerable support among the blacks -- both rich and poor.

The elections approached, Duvalier and Louis Dejoie, a brown - skinned industrialist emerged as front-runners. Duvalier's support came from workers mostly black through the MOP, the leaders of the army. He enjoyed some but not complete U.S. support too. <sup>6</sup>

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6) Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., and Nancy Gordon Heinl, Written in Blood; The Story of Haitian People, 1492 - 1971, (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1978), p. 582.

As President Estime resigned in 1956, on account of opposition from members of the legislative assembly, Paul Maglorie took over as interim president. Maglorie was soon forced to resign as he faced popular demonstrations leading to violence and bombings reportedly by the supporters of Duvalier.<sup>6</sup> Maglorie's departure brought Colonel Antonio Kebrean, a friend of Duvalier as the military commander. During the voting itself soldiers were stationed at the polling stations and Duvalier's opponents claimed that the army influenced the results in 1956 elections.<sup>7</sup>

As President Duvalier represented and was backed by the new class of black professionals, civil servants and rural land holders. During the first half of his fourteen year rule, Duvalier eliminated competition and consolidated his power by destroying the army as an independent force and by creating his own militia nicknamed Tonton Macoutes (bogey men) in 1959 which brought a reign of terror and

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6) Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., and Nancy Gordon Heinl, Written in blood; The Story of Haitian People, 1492 - 1971, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), P. 582.

7) Lorimer Denis and Dr. Francois Duvalier, Probleme des classes a travers l'histoire el' Haiti ( Port - an-Prince: Collection (Les Griots, 1948 p.3 as quoted by Brian Weinstein and Aaron Segal - Haiti: Political Failures and Cultural Success p. 38-9.

bloodshed to all opposition. External isolation was another measure he used to keep away from international criticism.

After his father's death, the only son, Jean Claude Duvalier took power in 1971 and began to rule since Francois Duvalier had already manipulated the constitution introducing a hereditary presidency. Jean - Claude Duvalier began his first decade with visible political and economic liberalization as he brought in some new faces in upper echelons, invited Technocrats to return home to participate in the economic revolution called 'Jean - Claudisme' and started a reapproachment between the blacks and mulatto elites. He also began to reduce external isolation and explore new avenues of relationship with outside world.\* Decades of agricultural neglect were beginning to be redressed by foreign projects as well as efforts of private voluntary organizations. However, at the same time, occasional expulsion, arbitrary arrests and the uncovering of 'plots' by allegedly 'communists' and other opponents all occurred. Hit by world recession in the 1970s, the economy however, worsened and this augmented the migration of economic refugees in small boats to Florida. Like his father, Jean Claude Duvalier also found himself devoting much of his energies towards own survival.

Relations with Private Business:

Haitian economy and politics ran on the basis of what can be described as franchise rights granted by the Duvaliers. Predominantly an open, private enterprise economy, the dominant economic elites under Duvaliers could have only few sources of large independent income from the land, mining or industry.

With one of the highest population density (700 persons per square Kilometer ) in the world, and with nearly 40 per cent of the population below 14 years as per the 1971 census, the predominantly agrarian economy has over the decades experienced changing agricultural practises, growing landlessness and environmental change bringing in the process rising social discontent and political dissatisfaction. Under Duvaliers, the economy operated in such a way that 80 per cent of the rural population paid nearly 85 per cent of the internally generated revenue while receiving less than 20 per cent of the government expenditure.<sup>8</sup> Foreign aid and donations by foreign voluntary agencies contributed to nearly 80 per cent of the government budget.

Agriculture has been the most important sector in the

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8) James Allman and John May, "Fertility Mortality Migration and Family Planning in Haiti, Population Studies, vol. 33(1982).

national economy constituting in 1979 about 40 per cent of gross Domestic Product ( GDP ). Most Haitians, have, findings the borders with Dominican Republic encouragingly convenient taken to smuggling activities and settled down to raising commercial and staple food crops simultaneously. Rural black middle woman buy the surplus food production for cash and resell it to women retailers in the cities and towns. Women play a highly independent role in this and are responsible for almost all farm to market transport and actual marketing of both food and cash crops. It is estimated that there are 180,000/- coffee producers representing a family population of about 9,00,000 persons.<sup>9</sup>

It is estimated that nearly 40 per cent of all commercial and industrial firms are Haitian owned, one third are foreign owned and the rest are joint ventures. Most of these firms export base balls, clothing, electronics, souvenirs etc. The wholly or partially owned foreign enterprises dominate commercial mining and agricultural export sector. Major foreign investors include HAMPCO with its meat - packing export and Renolds who are engaged in mining bauxite.

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9) Anthony V. Catanese, "Haiti : Identifying Poor as a Targetted Population ; An Inductive Outcome from Rural Haiti, " Journal of Developing Areas, vol. 25, no. 4, July 1991, pp. 529 - 30.



Haitian craft industry caters mostly to the needs of the tourism which by itself is one of the least developed sector. Communication and transport sector especially road transport in extremely poor enabling in the process many of the outlying areas and towns enjoy a kind of autonomy and immunity from the dictates of Port-au-Prince.

External trade is highly imbalanced with external debt climbing to 227.3 million with interest payments annually of \$ 178 million in 1979. Public sector works badly though accounts for 10% of the GDP. The public sector serves particularly as an instrument of redistribution from the poor to rich by providing inferior services to the former. Another off-budget item is the national lottery which takes U.S. \$ 500,000 a year. An orderly monetary system operator with the Haitian gourde being fully convertible and tied to the U.S. dollar which circulates as legal tender. The National Bank which is one of the few Haitian institutions that remained intact with an elite consensus on the need for a conservative monetary policy and for giving the National Bank enough autonomy to carry it out.

Under Duvalier all power remained personalised between different government organs and between centre and provinces. At every level personalization was the key to power and resources.

The major source of wealth had been the control of government and bureaucracy which could extract resources from the producers, consumers and foreign investors. A wide range of indirect taxes, imposed in the form of export and import duties were paid by the peasant coffee producers and workers in baseball industry and other assembly plants and this ensured a steady distribution of income toward Port - au - Prince where the government spends most of the money received. Direct taxes are on incomes, corporate profits and property were very low and they were collected irregularly.

Francois Duvalier took to promoting the interests of rural based bilingual (and potential middle class) black middlemen purchasing coffee from the peasants and selling it to white mulatto owned export houses in Port - au - Prince. He protected the interests of the rural black middle woman Madan Saras and the women retailers purchasing rice and other food crops for sale in the capital. One way he did so was by forbidding the exporters to purchase coffee directly from peasant producers and by licensing middlemen.<sup>10</sup>

To circumvent the mulattoes, who controlled medium and large business and were opposed to Duvalier the president won

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10) Robert, Rotberg, Haiti's Past, Mortgages Its Future; Foreign Affairs ( New York), vol. 67. No. 1, Fall 1988; pp. 95-96.

the allegiance of smaller traders of Lebanese and Syrian origin who always felt insecure without political allies.

He appointed one of their member mayor of capital and even recruited some into Tonton Macoutes operating in Port - au - Prince where Asabs are concentrated.

All the business people regularly contributed funds for non-existent charities or projects launched by the head of the State, had begun to play significant role in Haitian politics and under Jean Claude Duvalier even had his wife. HASCO Reynolds, Aluminium and other companies reportedly paid their taxes in advance when government found itself short of cash. 11

Following another Haitian tradition excise, taxes paid on cement, tobacco, and several other basic items did not go to the treasury but rather to a parallel institution, the Regie du Tabac or Tobacco Office, used by Duvalier family as a personal treasury.

After the legislative elections of 1964 Duvalier so changed the constitution as to permit his continuation as President for

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11) Brian Wanstain and Aaron Segal, Haiti : Political Failures and Cultural Success, p. 99 - 100.

for life. Though he promised economic reforms he was afraid that any reforms would weaken his hold on the people. Instead he took to politicizing the educational system, expelled foreign clergy and secured their replacement by black Haitians acceptable to him. The threat of loss of funds, expulsion and harassment converted the churches after a brief struggle into grudging accomplices of the regime. With army, clergy and educational system under his control and isolation from the outside world Duvalier was set to rule for life with the help of Tonton Macoutes and the upwardly mobile black elites.

Thus, franchise type of political system in Haiti had knitted the interests of rural landholders, middlemen, security forces and urban business people and industrialists together with the interests of the ruling family. Each group had its methods of extracting wealth and exercising power under the Duvalier order. Despite the slogan of economic reforms it is doubtful if anyone took Jean - claudisme seriously for no reform even threatened the system. The black power ideology of Francoise Duvalier was weak, but both he and his son had maintained enough blacks in power and kept the franchise systems with the result that key groups remained loyal. However, notwithstanding their subservice position, the elites saw the Duvalier family rule in mainly instrumental terms; similarly, the presidents - for - life viewed the urban and rural elites as instruments for their own security and wealth.

Thus, there was always the possibility if the Presidents failed to control and manipulate the shifting alliances at the top, if they failed in the task of obtaining foreign assistance or if they upset the balance of economic and political interests by favouring one group over another without the proper precautions, the supporting business elite could always find someone else to lead the country.

ROLE OF MILITARY AND TONTON MACOUTES:

Even more significant in perpetuating the personalist authoritarian rule of the Duvaliers was the role of the military and the para - military Tonton Macoutes and the civilian bureaucracy. The Duvalier family ruled the country without attention to constitution or ideology, but with sharp attention to their 'franchise' relationships with administrators at all levels from department to rural sections. The President had three types of franchise to offer to supporters; military, civilian and militia. None had a well-articulated hierarchy or clear personnel policy. The essential rule was that many officials reported directly to the President or indirectly through the Department of the interior and National Defence which as the name indicates had charge of both civilian

and military administration. 12

The largest administrative units into which Haiti was divided were thus Military districts or departments. Prior to 1957 there were five and later increased to nine. A soldier at the rank of Colonel was usually Incharge of the Military Department. The department was further divided into military districts headed by a Captain, Districts were divided into sub - districts headed by a Lieutenant. Though, the Chief of staff was the head of the Military but even low level command units could accept direct orders from the President. 13

The largest civilian administrative unit corresponded more or less with the Military district but was smaller and called arroundissement. There were and still are 27 arroundissements each of which is headed by civilians prefect who is mainly supported to supervise the activities of the technical ministries such as education

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12) *ibid*, p. 55 - 56

13) *ibid*, p. 55

and agriculture. Civil and criminal courts were located in the main town of aroundissement. Duvalier reinstated the patterns of dependence and the importance of personalities between head of state and local officials. Each town had a council in addition to the mayor. Throughout the Duvalier period councillors and mayors were appointed by the President or with his approval.

A law passed in 1958 transferred funds controlled by towns to the Department of the Interior : the same law authorised the Secretary of the Interior to use all the money for the secret police contrary to the law of 1944 which divided this surplus in useful projects for the community.

The next largest unit was the commune in which were located a justice of peace, the main school, army barrack and a tax collect office. Attached to each of the 131 communes are Sections Rurales ( rural sections ) the heart of the country's Administration, both civilian and military.

The 555 Sections Rurales were the most important manifestation of the central government for over 4 million rural Haitians. The person in charge of the section was

officially called the Chief de Section. Peasants called him 'Commandant' or even "L' eta" (the state). He was the lowest ranking official of the civilian and military structure and without his loyalty the system would not operate. Although a rural code was supposed to govern the Chefs activities and responsibilities, the only important requirement was loyalty to the head of the state, maintenance of order and the extraction of resources.

The Chef controlled an area of about forty square kilometers with upto 20,000 inhabitants. He was supposed to keep current records of births and deaths. At least two assistants ran the Chef's Office from day to day. More assistants, responsible for the smaller zones called, "habitations" or "boquements" into which the section unofficially divided, reported to him. Each assistant controlled about ten police agents.<sup>14</sup> According to one study each Chef de section could choose about 100 persons to work under his command. They were

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14) Pnina Lahav, The Chef de Section: Structures and functions of Haiti's Basic Administrative Institution" in Working papers in Haitian Society and Culture ( ed. Sidney W. Mintz New Haven 1975). pp. 60 - 61.



all subject to military law and courts, not civilian courts. As a result the Officials at the level of section must extract their incomes from the local population by whatever means they can and the local popular has no protection in the courts. The head of a sub - section could imprison the chef de section without much pretext.

The third pillar of administration for the Duvalier was the VSN militia i.e. 'Volontaires de la Securite' Nationale. Popularly called the Tontons Macouler, they patrolled the countryside, maintained checkpoints on the roads and circulated quietly in towns in their blue uniforms and dark glasses. Of the three groups they were most likely to be illiterate except for the officers. Their sole raison d' etre was to protect the interests of the ruling family and for this reason they were even better equipped than the army.

They served to neutralise the army which Duvalier always perceived as a potential threat. Spying on civilians, the military and other administrators seemed to be their main function and they reported directly to the Office of the President. They also spied on each other.

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The VSN was internally more divided than the army and each unit jealously guarded the area under its command. A reason for the lack of coordination may be that when the VSN was first created, its leader eventually turned against Francoise Duvalier himself posing a serious threat to him. The president approved all members of VSN and selected some. Since the President could not know each individually, he relied on the judgement and recommendations of key VSN personnel, who generally recommended relatives and friends. This responsibility gave them a larger stake in the system.

The decrees establishing the VSN specified that being volunteers members were not to be paid although some observers reported that Company commanders were paid rregularly. In any case, VSN like other administrators extracted most of its remuneration from the populace. One source of income was a type of protection racket -- Individual tontons macoutes or units which earned their living by 'protecting' merchants against some imagined threat. The threat often came from the VSN itself but also from other sources such as section police or military who were also on the lookout for money.

As in the case of some chef de section, it appears that Jean Claude Duvalier wished to replace or even neutralise VSN with his own loyalists. This

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may be one reason why he created an elite presidential military unit of 500 or 600 men called the 'Leopards'. Internal Security became their primary task.

These military and quasi - military units fought among themselves, after hitting each other in significant numbers. Reports of shoot outs between Leopards and VSN in Port - au - Prince and between the military and the VSN provincial towns often circulated unconfirmed. The confrontations developed out of petty disputes and apparently worried the president. On the other hand such conflicts also deterred any serious military opposition from growing. The President could even play the role of mediator between feuding units and rival institutions.<sup>15</sup>

From the point of view of poorest peasants and workers, there was a little difference between the VSN, the military, the chef de Section and the businessman. Exploitation and intimidation of the people at the bottom were the norm. So long as they monopolise small arms, the Chefs de Section and VSN kept the system afloat. Any threat to Duvalier regime was a threat to them, their families and friends.

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15) P. Constable, Dateline Haiti : Caribbean Stalemate Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.), Vol. 89., Winter 1992 - 93, p.p. 178 -79.

About 30,000 civilian and military personnel were supposed to be paid directly by the state; they remained unpaid for a few months due to budgetary deficits. One fourth of state employees were military whose total strength approximated 6,500. In addition there were possibly 50,000 rural police who remained unpaid by the state plus the thousands of VSN. In short, these must be 90,000 men and women who acted and lived in the name of Duvaliers Haiti.

The ruling family took other measures for their physical security. In the capital itself they maintained a presidential guard of five companies ( a company in Haiti contains from 120 to 200 persons). These men lived in the presidential palace, where heavy weapons were also stored. 16 In case of a military attack on the palace, the guard could defend it with weapons not available to rebels anywhere in the country. There was a separate police force for Port - a - Prince and a Service Detectef operating out of the Dessalines.

Bareacs near the presidential palace composed of about 300 civilian detectives and under cover agents their job was to discover alleged traitors and plotters.

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16) Georges Fauriol, Duvaliers and Haiti: Orbis 32(4) Fall 88; p. 587 - 608.

The vast multitude of the poor peasants related themselves only indirectly with the government, and sought to avoid as far as possible all symbols of authority. They all had a separate culture based on creole language, an identity based on community living and sharing a belief system emanating from voodoo cult. 17

IMPORTANCE OF VOODOO CULT:

The peasants in Haiti have lived in a world of a deeply imbued religious faith and popular culture based on rites and spectacles associated with Voodoo to counter the male administrative society under the scourge of intimidating VSN. The paucity of catholic priests and the disrepute of the few meant that during 19th century Voodoo had no moral religious rival.

Voodoo is a practise common with male priests and female priestesses. It is open to all ages and social classes. The participants, including priests, priestesses and their helpers are one's neighbours and friends. The spirits are capscious but open to being propitiated. There is a wealth of ceremonies throughout the year involving dancing music, singing,

crafts, food and beverage offerings and other rituals.

The religious belief systems evolves according to the needs of its adherents and thus offers some emotional security to Haitians constantly menaced by hunger and illness. There are also the titler, prestige, small scale credit, folk medicine, the chance to witness or be possessed by a spirit and a plausible belief system.

It is a response that reaffirms their ties to their Haitian and African ancestors, it also gives rural society a conservative cast and has its own forms of exploitation. Voodoo priests and priestesses can also act to undermine efforts to change the society by using their spiritual authority to enforce political conformity. Some even work as police agents merchants and coffee middlemen, benefitting thereby. Duvalier had shown his respect for Voodoo and won over some of its priests and priestesses by threats, rewards and his own knowledge of the sacred.

In short, Duvaliers rule was devoid of any popular support, in fact, it did not need it either. Both economy and politics were controlled by the Duvalier and a tiny elite surrounding them in a mutually beneficial relationship. It drew support

from a larger circle of middlemen, business elite, military personnel, Tonton Macouler and others who all thrived on the exploitation and intimidation of the impoverished marginal population.

There are few institutions in Haiti such as the Section Rurale, security forces, central administration, maladministered education system, church which excommunicated Duvalier while their survival had been determined on Duvalier perception of a major threat of any form and the maladjusted economy.

However, under Jean - Claude Duvalier, unlike under Francois Duvalier, foreign journalists were extraordinarily free to investigate foreign aid projects emigration and local life. American lawyers denouncing human rights violations come and went; U.S. congressional delegations visited the prisons and give press conferences. Foreign scholars who have condemned the regime in articles and books were allowed in. This regime was much less concerned with foreign views of Haiti than with controlling the Haitian media.

Beneath a placid exterior and appearance of

orders are shifting alliances and tense relationships around the fount of legitimacy and power.

Like most of his predecessors President Duvalier ensures that the most effective organisations are those concerned with taxing and policing.

Order is the watchword; political stagnation and oppression are the results. Under pressure from outside, reforms are undertaken, as are steps towards political participation, but at the first sign of threat the reforms are reversed and nullified in some way which may not be immediately evident. A growing weakness in the system is the massive corruption at the center, nothing new, but dangerous in the context of a decline in agriculture which contributes to a disaggregation of the rural world. 18

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18) P. Constable, Dateline Haiti : Caribbean Stalemate, Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.), Vol. 89, Winter 1992 - 93, p. 189 - 90.



## CHAPTER II

### STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY

Sustaining the personalist - authoritarian rule of the François Duvalier (1957-71) and his son Jean Claude Duvalier (1971-86) were, the support of the Haitian businessmen, military, Tontons Macoutes and the priestly class especially those subscribing to the voodoo cult. The system lasted only as long as the Duvaliers were able to maintain the delicate balance among diverse sectors of the elite as well as between the elite and the masses. However, since there were no intermediary structure, no hierarchies of importance and no competing forces of institutional, loyalty, political system under Duvaliers had all the weaknesses of a personalist rule.

Described and discussed in the present chapter is the emergence of a popular though amorphous movement that overthrew the president for life, Jean-Claude Duvalier. Also, his promise of political liberalization that gave a sudden spurt to political action in the form of organisations and political parties. As the second section highlights, the popular uprising that deposed Duvalier in February 1986, which lacked clear programme and organisation. However, it aspired for democracy and, even more important, had the seeds of bringing change, in the socio-economic structure. Such a situation was unacceptable to the Duvalierist elements who, though without Duvalier, were still entrenched in power. As discussed in

the last section, the Duvalierist element now working through the armed forces smashed the electoral-political process and destroyed, at least for the time being, the popular movement.

Deposition of Jean Claude Duvalier

The dynastic succession was smooth as Jean Claude Duvalier, following the death of Francois Duvaliers, simply inherited the power bases created by his father. While this was an advantage in the short run, it subsequently proved to be a liability in the long run as the father's power base had been a personal one, centered exclusively on himself and his experiences, Jean Claude lacked the personal loyalties as well as political skills needed to manipulate his father's supporters. As a consequence he began to act more and more on his own initiative, gradually replacing the old duvalierists with men of his own choice -- most of them being his School-chums.\* 1

By doing so he shifted his base of support towards the business community and towards a young generation of technocrats who were given senior political positions in his government. They were also much more palatable to foreign

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1. P.Constable, Daleine Haiti: Caribbean Stalmmate, Foreign Policy (Washington D.C.) Vol.89, NOTES Winter 1992-93, p.175-90.

aids donors than had been the case with the old terror guard.\*2

Another highly accountable factor that weakened the Duvalier rule and eventually led to a massive popular outpouring of revulsion following facing Duvalier to the flee was the <sup>h</sup>stunting of soldiers aside. As the crisis started brewing it permitted the long ignored army to reclaim the powers, it had lost in Haiti in 1957 with the end of dictatorial regime of General Maglorie and the rise of Francois Duvalier. Haiti's army though had not been instrumental in Duvaliers departure, yet shake-up in the upper hierarchy upset the balance between different branches of the armed forces. Some of the most immediate factors that contributed to Duvaliers departure may be summed up as follows : the political unrest that sprung due to deaths of anti-government demonstrators in November 1985; the December 1985 government reshuffle that reflected a shift in the balance of power in the ruling groups around the President; the indefinite closure of Schools and Universities; restlessness in the armed forces, disbandment of branch of secret police and military appointments intensification of demonstrations and rioting;

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2. Quoted in Jean-Pierre U. Gangeas, Duvalier Caribbean Cyclone : History of Haiti and the Present Government, (New York: Exposition Press, 1967), pp. 105-106.

inaccurate announcement by USA of fall of President Jean-Claude Duvalier; imposition of state of seige by Jain Calude Duvalier; closure of church-run radio-stations and closure of boæder by Dominica<sup>n</sup>s Republic.

On the eve of fourteenth anniversary as President, Jean Claude Duvaliers announced a series of constitutional reform in April 1985. Though, subsequently approved by the National Assembly and a popular referendum, the reform nevertheless triggered mass protests. Opponents of the government condemned the referendum in advance as fraudulent and called for a boycott. Newspapers reports described the referendum turnout as low, with government supporters being ferried from one place to another to cast multiple votes. The referendum was not supervised by foreign observers, and it was noted that the ballot papers were in French the official language but one unfamiliar to most Haitians. The changes proposed by President Duvaliers affecting the 1983 constitution provided for establishment of political parties with elections to be held in 1987 and a Prime-Minister to be appointed from among the majority party by the President. The National Assembly was empowered to override executive orders by a simple majority and deputers had right to introduce motions. However, parties would need the approval of Interior Ministry and only those parties were to be permitted which acknowledged the

institution of the Presidency-for-life; had no foreign affiliations and could prove at least 15,000 members and advocated no "totalitarian, fascist, communist or Nazi" ideology.

The existing underground -- although intermittently tolerated --- parties such as the Christian Democratic Party (Partie dimocratechretien haitien, PDC) led by Mr. Sylvio Claude and the Social Christian Party (Partie Social Christien, PSC) led by Mr. Gregorie Eugene were both opposed to the ~~in~~ institution of the Presidency-for-life though had only small memberships, While the reforms apparently marked a tentative step towards a degree of democracy in Haiti, some critics dismissed them as so circumscribed and were worthless.

A wave of arrests mostly of government employed agronomists teachers and literacy instructors, followed the uncovering of an alleged communist-inspired plot-to assassinate the President his wife and his father-in-law at a religious ceremony. The alleged plot was seen in some quarters as having been concocted by the government in order to illustrate a threat of communist subversion and thereby to win some sympathetic consideration as notably in USA.\* 3

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3. Robert Rotberg, Haiti's Past, Mortager Its Future Foreign Affairs (New York) Vol. 67, no.1 Fall 1988. pp.93.

The US State Department feeble demands for human rights, followed by its agreement to provide the necessary certification of satisfactory progress in the observance of human rights to allow a further extension of aid by Congress for 1985, despite objections from civil liberties groups in USA was seen by some quarters as entirely a State Department engineered device to keep the regime in power against the opposition brewing over, its arbitrary arrests, tortures and disappearances.\* 4

Another rise employed by Duvalier to stay in the good looks of USA was the announcement of an amnesty for 36 prisoner following a visit by Mr. Watter. E. Fanntroy an influential Democratic members in the US Congress and the subsequent claims of Lafontant a Cabinet member of Duvalier's coterie known for his repressive approach, that there were no more political prisoners in Haiti and opponents of the government were allowed considerable latitude in the run-up to the referendum scheduled for 22 July 1985.

The fall of Lafontant, whose position had begin to weaker with readmission to the internal ruling coteri of his rival Theodore Achille in June 1985, was viewed as a consequence of conflict between Mr. Lafontant and other members of the super-cabinet<sup>bi</sup>. Following Lafontant's exile, widespread dismissals of his supporters in the

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4. Ibid; 94-95.

governments posts took place.

At the end of September 1985 Achille announced an extensive reorganisation of the judicial system, involving 80 percent of the judges and law officers, apparently in connection with an investigation which he had ordered into the situation of several hundred people detained without due legal processes. The death of Dr. Lionel Laire, the Secretary General of the US-based opposition, Parti National Democratique Progressiste in a military hospital following an exchange of fire with the trooper and police in Port-au-Prince further intensified the crisis and resulted in further alienating the masses from the ulterior motives of the regime.\*5

A very prominent issue that further augmented the popular anger against the Duvalier regime was the incident in which an 80 years old Belgian priest who had been active in anti-government protests was beaten to death by police following the July 1985 referendum. Three other priests including the director of the Church - run Radio Soleil, Father Hugo Triest were ordered to leave

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5. Gerard Pierre - Charles. The Democratic Revolution in Haiti, Latin American Perspective Issue 58, Vol. 15, No. 3, Summer 1988 p. 64-665.

the country. Thus there constituted a significant opposition from the Catholic priests which later on involved in the whole process of consciousness raising, organisations and political participation involving an important part of the population.

In a Cabinet reshuffle announced on 31 December 1985, Duvalier dismissed from his government four of the five super ministers' of his government. Some sources suggested that the changes reflected a shift in the balance of power in the ruling group around the President with influence shifting from his wife, Michele Duvalier to his mother Sumone Duvalier and his elder sister. It indicated a shift in favour of the old guard of Duvalier hardliness.

On 8 January 1986, the government announced several measures such as indefinite closure of all schools and universities in response to an extensive school boycott movement, and ~~cuts~~ in the price of rice, canned milk, cooking oil, flour and diesel fuel and measures to punish the demonstrators.

All the factors combined together to proper the military for an active political role. There were reports that senior army officers were ignoring orders from the President and considering action to depose him if the crisis did not ease immediately. Not only were armed forces were



feeling slighted in view of the transfers and purges of officers rank, they also feared that the evolving political crisis threatened their vital institutional interests. The biggest blow that brought down the Duvalier regime was however the inaccurate US announcement of the fall of the Haitian government which was followed by a pre-dawn meeting on 31 January 1986 between Jean Claude Duvalier and US ambassador McManaway at which the President expressed his willingness to step down. However, Duvaliers quickly retracted his decisions under pressure from his wife and his father-in-law. This confusion compelled imposition of a stage of seige by Duvalier.\* 6

But by that the Duvalier regime had virtually broken down and swept aside in a popular uprising on 7 February, 1986.

In short both immediate and long-term causes brought the regime down. More than any other, internal discussion within various segments of the ruling elite and Jean-Claude Duvalier's inability to balance off fending factions and competing groups brought the regime down. No less significant was the process of political identification that he provided and initiated but could

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6. Ibid; p. 66.

not keep under control. Opposition groups including moderate political parties and reformist church-element saw in the political reforms an opportunity to push for some meaningful change on democratic lines.

As has been discussed in the following section, the mass uprising to begin was amorphous and without clear objectives. Soon, however it developed goals of an open, democratic system. Several political parties came into being; radical elements in the Catholic church got involved with the process of political organisation and popular participation and no less significantly, armed forces assumed the role of an arbiter over-seeing the transition to an elected civilian government.

#### Popular Democratic Movement :

##### Nature and Aims

The complex economic and social crisis that affected the very foundations of Duvalier system constituted the context for the emergence of the socio-political movements which have had a great impact on the country even before 7 February, 1986 and have acquired even more vitality.

The major impulse behind the popular uprising that deposed Jean-Claude Duvalier in February 1986 was to put it briefly de-Duvalierization of the high levels of the

administration and the army. The assumption of power by a military junta under General Namphy ostensibly to oversee the passage to civilian government responded to popular aspirations by making the presence and power of the agents of the old order more discreet. In November 1986, the Duvalierists with the complicity of the National Government Council (CNG) wanted to organize themselves into a political party. The people came out in large demonstration of 30,0,000 persons, ever held in the capital- to say no to the Duvalierists.\* 7 The CNG, when it had to <sup>form</sup> favivi a Constituent Assembly to write a new constitution tried to appoint members and impose an authoritarian constitution. The people fought this project, leading the drafters of the constitution to throw out the official model and write a more liberal and democratic constitution.

Thus an obvious duality of power emerged between those who organised themselves to defend the Constitution and ensure truly honest elections and the old Duvalierist-military lique which wanted to establish Duvalierism without Duvaliers.

During the final stage of the popular struggle, the army understood how to pressure a certain neutrality,

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7. James Ferguson Haiti from Dictatorships to dictatorship. Race & Class 30 (2) 1988,

which enabled it to inherit governmental functions. The president of the CNG, General Henri Namphy, had a liberal image. All this conferred on the army a certain degree of legitimacy, even though it was obvious that its intervention is frustrating a more profound process of change that would have possibly been promoted by the popular sectors.\* 8

Thus, under army control, the legitimacy of the state was reinforced not only in political but also in the technical - military sense. In this regard, U.S support was decisive in that the broadening of the popular movement constituted a threat not only to the Duvalierist elements but apparently also carried the risk of future mobilization and a much greater danger of radicalization under populists or communists. Ostensibly to keep the military neutral and help the process of civilization, U.S began re-organisation of the armed forces and restructure the high command. These changes resulted in increasing the number of troops from 7500 to 25,000. The apparent objective was to convert the military into a professional force capable of assuring order in terms of controlling and occupying the country. This understanding also took place in the larger context of the geopolitical situation since Haiti is considered strategically important because of its location in the centre of the Caribbean -- 80 kms from Cuba.

At the constitutional level several provisions were introduced that had the offset of converting the armed forces a state within the state, totally independent of the executive branch. At the same time, new regulations were developed -- inspired by the experiences of Israeli armed forces to modernize the military on the basis of a new structure that created 18 positions for Generals as well as elaborated the functions of a commander-in-chief and an adjunct commander-in - Chief. Generals Namphy and Regala named themselves to the latter high positions for a period of three years.

These changes bolstered the strength of the military hierarchy which was now in a position to impose its law on the people, refused to recognise the constitution of situation so demanded and even put a halt to democratic operations.\* 9

The interim military government, in its eagerness to intervene in a decisive way in the electoral process, promulgated in June 1987 an anti-constitutional decree that United the functions of the independent electoral commission. This triggered another popular protest as people in a unanimous response forced the repudiation of the decree. A coalition of 57 organisations was formed immediately representing the democratic and popular sectors, which mobilized general strikes

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9. Bleaves, Earole, Learning to the Left-Haiti Takes a New Turn, New Leader. Vol. 74, no.1, in January 1991

and demonstrations throughout the country, demanding not only the withdrawal of the government decree limiting the independence of the proposed electoral commission but also the resignation of the CNG.

In short, popular pressure and protests deprived the Ministry of Interior, the Army, and therefore, the CNG of the possibility of legally intervening in the electoral mechanisms and foreclosed the chances of fraud and manipulation by the Duvalierist elements seeking to restore themselves to power.

On the other hand, popular movements began proving to be a transforming force and insisted on completely changing the functioning of the system. This reality was reflected in the energy of the social struggles by the peasants for land, by the workers for unionization and better salaries and by the subordinated classes in general against hunger. It also expressed itself in the popular struggle for democracy and human rights. The Constitution of 1987 was a product of various conflicting interests, the socio-political demands, and above all, the relation of forces between the diverse social and political sectors. It became a project of popular participation in creating a society with a new kind of relationship between the state and the people; in other words, a democracy. It

is important to recognize the great significance in this scenario of the dynamic of the social movements and of the organizing and protest efforts of diverse sectors that included the majority of the people.\* 10

The struggles of the peasants were felt through-out the country through their demands for and their taking over of lands that were stolen from them by the Tontons Mauoutes, as well as lands belonging to large land owners and the state. Also the peasants refused to pay taxes; they rebel against poverty and abandonment, and they demanded better living conditions. They rejected semi-feudal oppression and the actions of the state that had robbed and plundered them for long.

The provinces as geographical and sociological entities were shaken by the strong regional movements that protested the excessive centralization of economic power and state functions in Port-au-Prince and the minimal availability of fiscal resources for other areas requiring schools, doctors, hospitals and roads. The regional movements demand participation in public affairs and allocation of resources for developmental purposes. Wage labour both in urban and rural areas began organizing these efforts at

union organization and for better working conditions introduced the working class to a dynamic of dissent. In addition the agricultural workers began working towards autonomous organization of their own in alliance with the working class.

Public employers also sought a level of organization that could permit them to defend their interests in terms of salaries to minimize the effects of the high cost of living and to defend themselves from the authoritarian presence of the State. Sectors of the middle class—professionals, independent works, small business people — participated in this dynamic process with the goal of improving their standard of living, which had been eroded to the verge of poverty by price increases, the cost of rent and so forth. University and secondary school students also participated in the struggle for Human Rights, for de-Duvalierization, and for popular and social demands.

The participation of women in the social and political scene constituted a new phenomenon. It is significant that the largest demonstration of the year preceding the fall of Duvalier was that organized in April 1986 by women belonging to a diversity of organizations. From then on, both in poor neighbourhoods and in the progressive sectors of the middle-



class, women's demands were related to those of the movement in favour of democracy throughout the country.

Catholic sectors were particularly active in this whole process of consciousness - raising, organization and political participation involving an important part of the population. Radical catholic groups and the social and political thought that accompanies it prove to be catalyst for demanding much deeper changes. Certain sectors of Protestants also joined in the process, in contrast to those, who practised voodoo who strongly remained inductive at least in the early stages of the struggle.

It is necessary to emphasize the role of mass media and in particular the radio stations in this process of unification of the people against Duvalierist elements and in inculcating passions for democratic ideals. Despite the limited circulation of newspapers and news magazines the press played a crucially important role. And as mentioned earlier, the radio stations have since then become a powerful means of social communication and of political education and participation in an otherwise largely illiterate society. Through the actions of these social sectors, the poor and marginalized the popular sectors and the least-favoured middle-sectors all expressed that aspirations for democracy and a better social order.

The majority which questioned the system however still lacked a clear vision of what kind of state and society it wanted, but people were and are conscious of the fact that the satisfaction of their fundamental demands is impossible within the structure of the present order. Therefore for the times - being they were engaged in promoting the restructuring of civil society and creating neighbourhood committees in urban slum areas, peasant organisations, cooperatives, unions, professional association and so forth which would permit them to raise the most pressing issues of the community to question the state, to limit authoritarianism and perhaps to create a design of an alternative society. In the short term the struggle of these sectors focussed on the consolidation and strengthening of the victory of 7 February 1987.

In short, the movement that deposed Duvalier was amorphous and lacked clear goals. Nevertheless, it had sufficient militancy and grass-roots level organization to thwart the restoration of the Duvalierism without Duvaliers. In particular, armed forces emerged as a major force in the post. Duvalier Haiti. Maintaining a semblance of neutrality and a transitory arrangement, the military dominated CNG sought to check the process of change. However Duvalierist elements operating through the military were

forced to retreat and the constitution of 1987 -- though formed by a conservative body -- had to accommodate popular aspirations and demands. In response to the changing political scenario and impending elections, several political parties came into being. The next section discusses the major political parties and groups, their programmes and policies and their limitations in channeling the already mobilized masses. Such a situation was soon to give an opportunity to radical catholic elements to forge ahead and take a lead, leaving behind established political parties in stating claim for political power.

#### Emergence of Political Parties and Political Configuration

The basic structure of the popular movement was linked to the organization of the most advanced political sectors, although the formation of a true vanguard, took place much later. Prominent in this network of emerging forces was the militant sector of the Church among whom the notable was Father Bertrand Aristide of the heavily populated parish of Don Bosco in Port-au-Prince. At the same time, some organizations of the centre-left in particular the National Congress of Democratic Movements (KONACOM) the Popular Unity Block (BIP). The En Avant group and the IFOPADA sought to coordinate the actions of

the patriotic and radical petty bourgeoisie with the popular sectors. The demands and projects of the centre-left forces included the popular demands for democracy and better living conditions for the masses. Likewise, the United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH) was increasing its support with a political project that was opposed to the current system and supportive of popular power. Using ultra-Leftist language, the National Popular Assembly through its official organ Haiti Progress which is published weekly in New York and distributed in Haiti, participated in the diffusion of ideas of change.

The political panorama was being broadly defined in the electoral field in terms that favoured the anti-Duvalierist and democratic projects. On international level, this legitimacy of democratic forces was recognized unanimously by major outside powers in particular by the U.S which gave \$ 8 million to CNG and Canada which helped with logistics. In addition Venezuela gave considerable material and political support.\* 11

The principal personalities and forces that participated in the election of 1987 represented a wide political spectrum; the big business called the bourgeoisie

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11. Gerard Pierri - Charles The Democratic Revolution in Haiti Latin American Perspective Issue 58 Vol. 15 No.3, p.74.

was represented by Marc Bazni, an ex-official of the World Bank who it is said, had the support of U.S; Louis Dejoie, who had considerable popular support in some areas of the Central and Southern Haiti and Thomas Desulme, an industrialist. The petty bourgeoisie was represented by Gerard Gourgue who was nominated by the National Coalition Front, a wide coalition of democratic and popular forces organized around the KONA COM. Gourgue also had support of some grass-roots church elements and some ties with social, democratic forces, Leslic Manigat was supported by some professionals and ex-Duvalierist officials who subscribed to democratic ideals and by the Venezuelan, Dominican and international Christian Democratic parties. Hubert de Rancesay was backed by former middle-level Duvalierist officials who still enjoyed a certain amount of local power. Gerard Philippe Auguste represented the traditions of the Peasant-Workers Movement (MOP) of the 1950s and also enjoyed some support among the less affluent petty traders and low-level employees. Sylvio Claude had massive support of the marginalized and working class population of the metropolitan region and of some regions in the central part of the country. In general, these candidates, even though they lacked a popular following did represent

popular feelings. Invariably, all of them sought the support of the United States. In addition to these aspirants and Rene Theodore, the candidate of the Communist Party (PUCH); some others were put in the race by the CNG itself for its own purposes. There were all the "basons" of Duvalierism who had been repudiated by the people, but relied on local power structures (ex-prefects, ex-mayors, ex-judges) and on the remnants of the universe network of the Tonton Macouter. The most influential of them were Clavis Desinor a cabinet Minister for Francois Duvalier for 14 years, General Claude Raymond, ex-Chief of Staff and a staunch supporter of Duvalier; and Alhouse Lahnes, the architect since 1958-1959 of the formation of the Tonton Macouter. All these Duvalierist elements were prohibited from running under the restrictive provision of article 291 of the 1987 constitution.\* 12

This became the basis of confrontation between the strong Duvalierist clique entrenched in the military and the CNG and the democratic forces whose principal figures Gerard Gourgue and Sylvia Claude emerged as front-runners in the electoral race but obviously were not acceptable to the military. Pentagon had some reservations about any involvement in the election.

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12. Ibid; p.74-75.

Thus on 29 November 1987, while these forces and the people in general were trying to overcome the historic statement<sup>n</sup> by means of elections; the military obedient to its own project of authoritarianism topped the scales in favour of itself by throwing its weapons into the balance.\*13

Faced with this extreme violence the democratic forces towards change, had to retreat. Unprepared for violent configuration there was no choice for them but to go from an offensive to a defensive strategy; to learn the lessons of this stage of the struggle and to prepare for the next ones.

The U.S for its part, supported the electoral process but its favoured candidate Marc Bazin had no chance of winning the elections. Evidently, it showed little real enthusiasm for the elections, and when military cracked and smashed the entire electoral process, U.S protested only meekly and did nothing to put the electoral-democratic base on the trail.

In short, Haiti was a long way from democracy. It was easier to depose Duvalier but difficult to transit to a full-fledged democracy. Duvalier rule crumbled because of its own internal weaknesses. Some of the causes were immediate such as growing dissension within the armed forces and conflict and incoherence within the

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13. Barry B. Levine, Return to Innocence? The Social Construction of Geopolitical Climate of Post-Invasion Cariblean; Journal of Inter; American Studies and World Affairs (Univ. of Miami) Vol. 31, no.3, Fall 1989, pp.183-204

coterie of powerful individuals and interests surrounding Jean-Claude Duvalier. The popular movement that overthrew Duvalier was spontaneous, amorphous and lacking both a clear programme and organisation. Its operations were however modest and focussed as an open, accountable system that could respond to the socio-economic demands of the impoverished masses. Even moderate democratic elements were not acceptable to the military when it cracked on the day of elections and smashed the popular movement and political parties in a violent manner.\* 14

Haiti had become the zero-sum game. Either the Duvalierist elements will dominate, or the popular democratic movement above could survive. As has been discussed in the first chapter it became a struggle between two Haiti's; one dominated by the elite -- both mulatto and black -- whose own prosperity and survival depended on keeping the other Haiti of Creole - speaking, impoverished masses in a state of servitude and terror.

Between November 1987 until the victory of Jean Bertrand Aristide, in the elections held in December 1990, the Duvalierist elements had the upper hand; As discussed in the next chapter, military gave up its rule as an arbiter and staked its own claim of power. Tonton Macoutes returned now as an ally of the armed forces.

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14. T. D. Allman, Haiti: After Baby Doc. Parade June, 1989, pp.91-99.



With support from the Haitian business and other conservative elements, military organised fascial elections in January 1988 excluding even moderate democratic forces from the electoral fray and subsequently, even disbanded the 1987 Constitution. The period was marked by indiscriminate terror and intimidation of the people.

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## CHAPTER - III

### INTERIM RULE OF THE MILITARY

Deposition of Jean - Claude Duvalier had all of a sudden opened the possibilities for the people of Haiti to move towards democracy. The popular uprising that overthrew the personalist - authoritarian rule and successfully pressured the interim governing Junta into writing a more liberal democratic Constitution in 1987 was still, however amorphous and disorganized. Formation of various political parties of different ideological hues had as a minimum programme, establishment of a democratic order. Even such a solution was however, unacceptable to the Duvalierist elements that were still well - entrenched in power. Working through the armed forces and the dreaded Tonton Macoutes, proponents of the old order sought to limit the process of change. Military that had emerged as the safe repository of power capable of maintaining order cast off its role as a neutral and an arbiter on the eve of November 1987 elections and proceeded to organise the political process to its liking.

The present chapter deals with the period between 1987 and 1990, when the proponents of the old order and new forces for change were locked in a battle

of survival.

The constitution of 1987 had come to symbolize the democratic aspiration of the masses. As the previous chapter has indicated the leading contenders during the 1987 elections were democratic centrist at best centre - left political parties and politicians. Even such a moderate out come was evidently not acceptable to the armed forces who annulled the electoral process and unleashed a reign of terror and violence. The farcical elections of January 1988 brought to power a civilian government that was neither popular nor legitimate. With sharp polarization in body politic, armed forces decided to exercise the power directly abrogating the constitution and establishing a brutal military dictatorship.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE 1987 CONSTITUTION:

Parties of the centre left in particular the National Congress of Democratic Movements ( KONACOM ) the Popular Unity Block ( BIP ) the En Avant group and the IFOPADA, the United Party of Haitian Communists ( PUCH ) were capable of working together in the battle

for democracy. Their action, together with that of the radio stations, had a lot to do with the overwhelming approval of the new Constitution on 9 March, 1987.

The National Government Council ( CNG ) with the direction and support of the United States, was putting into action the only sure mechanism that could make up for its political impotence : containment or repression --- which only succeeds in undermining credibility and increasing the unpopularity of the junta. Therefore, in October 1986, when elections were called to elect a Constituent Assembly, less than 5 per cent of the population voted. The CNG installed this unrepresentative assembly, which, under popular pressure, threw out the officially proposed draft and wrote a Constitution that included the demands of the people.<sup>1</sup>

In effect it provided that from the date

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1) James Ferguson, "Haiti from Dictatorship to Dictatorship," Race and Class (London) vol. 30, no. 2, October - December 1990, pp. 4 - 6.

of the ratification of the Constitution until 7 February, 1988 ( when the next Government was supposed to take power ), the de facto provisional government would govern in accordance with the Constitution. Secondly, the constitution also forbade the holding of elective office for 10 years by all persons who were found responsible for crime, torture, theft of public funds or abuse of power during Duvalier era. Thirdly, it provided for the creation of an independent electoral commission composed of one government representative and eight prominent representatives of civil society from such important sectors as the Union of Journalists, the University Council, the Supreme Court, the Consultative Body, the Catholic Church, and the Protestant Churches. This Commission was to have complete responsibility for elections, from the development of electoral law to the counting of votes.

This last condition deprived the Ministry of the Interior, the Army and therefore, the CNG of the possibility of legally intervening in the electoral mechanisms, and was included under popular pressure.

The Constitution and the proposed electoral commission itself counted on the unlimited support of the democratic sectors and of the people in general

who understood clearly what is at stake in instituting and defending constitutional legality in the face of militarism and authoritarianism. Thus, an obvious duality of power developed between those who organised themselves to defend the Constitution and ensure truly honest election and those ( strong Duvalierist - military clique ) who defended conservatism and wanted to restore authoritarian model of government.

At the Constitutional level special provisions were introduced that made the armed forces totally independent of the executive branch. At the same time, new regulations were developed, inspired by the experiences of the Israeli army, to modernize the military on the basis of a new structure that created 18 positions for Generals as well as the functions of Commander - in - Chief and an Adjunct Commander in Chief. Generals Henri Namphy and William Regala named themselves to the latter high positions for a period of three years.

The development of greater co-ordination within

the opposition was in part due to the increasing likelihood that elections would be held during the course of 1987. The 61 - member Constituent Assembly which had been elected in October 1986, finished its final draft of a new Constitution on 10 March, 1987 and it was then presented for popular approval in a referendum on 29 March, 1987.

The Constituent Assembly had proved independent and conscientious in its examination and amendment of the draft Constitution which had been presented to it by the CNG in late 1986, with the result that the document which it finally approved was widely regarded as unexpectedly liberal.<sup>2</sup> It provided for a clear separation of powers between an elected President ( who was prohibited from serving two consecutive five - year terms in Office ), a bicameral legislature and an independent judiciary. The President would appoint a Prime Minister who could command majority support within the legislature. The new Constitution also provided for the devolution of power to local authorities; the separation of the police from the armed forces; the establishment of an independent civilian Provisional Electoral Council ( PEC ) to organise

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2) Times of India (New Delhi ) 3 December, 1987

and supervise all future elections; the recognition of Creole as an Official language in addition to French; freedom of worship for practitioners of Voodooism; the exclusion from Haiti of all foreign military bases; the abolition of death penalty for all crimes except treason; the provision of free education and other welfare services; and the exclusion from public office of prominent Duvalierists. 3

Between 50 and 70 per cent of the electorate participated in the referendum in which colour - coded ballot papers were used to overcome the problem of illiteracy. Over 99 per cent of votes cast were in favour of the Constitution which became operative in April 1987. Local elections to elect mayors, in the municipalities and rural communal districts were scheduled for July 1987 to be followed by legislative and presidential elections, so that the new president would take over on 7 February, 1987.

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3) P. Constable, "Dateline Haiti: Caribbean Stalemate," Foreign Policy ( Washington, D.C. ) Vol. 89, Winter 1992 - 93 p. 188 - 90.



ELECTIONS OF NOVEMBER 1987 AND JANUARY 1988 -

One highly dramatic outgrowth of the process known as bat teneb ((beating out darkness ), the people's symbolic exorcism of the military and death squads, was the Vigilante groups which had been set up in the poorest districts of the capital, and several times they lynched known Tontons Macoutes who were once again making their appearance during the nightly violence. These groups comprised mostly of teenagers, were the most militant expression of the people's determination to see elections go ahead and set up mainly in the poorest districts of the capital armed only with sticks and stones. The fact that they were loyal to no particular party or candidate but were trying to counter the intimidation and terror that threatened to sabotage the approaching elections, was an illustration of their determination to bring democracy to Haiti.

A very peculiar feature of the political process was that <sup>officially</sup> the military junta remained committed to the constitutional transfer of power, while in practice, they ignored and even encouraged the destabilisation of that increasingly fragile

process. The violence grew in intensity as 29 November elections day grew nearer. Every morning corpses were found in the streets of Port - au - Prince and arson attacks on homes and businesses of political figures had become common place, and members of the Provincial Electoral Committee (CEP ) set up to oversee the process, slept in 'safe houses' and the temporary headquarters of CEP were surrounded by sandbags and volunteer guards. In broad daylight gangs rampaged through the centre of the capital, smashing cars and beating by - standers; a crowd of fifty men surrounded the CEP office and the headquarters of Marc Bazin, one of the presidential candidates. 4 Prior to the day of polling, the CEP announced that 2.2. million voters, or 72 per cent of the estimated electorate, had been successfully registered. Against the background of mounting tension and what amounted to a government embargo, the CEP was defying wide - spread expectations that it would be unable to proceed with the elections. By now, four front runners had emerged in the presidential race. Gerard Gourgue, himself a cautious conservative, was supported by a wide range of left - of - centre groups and the influential trade

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4) Clara Germani, "Chilled by a Climate," <sup>16</sup>December 1987 Christian Science Monitor.

union, CATH, and enjoyed the implicit support of sections of the Church. Sylvio Claude, the candidate of the Haitian Christian Democratic Party (PDCH), had a significant following among the urban poor and was campaigning on his record of struggle against the Duvalier regime. Voici le martyr, that is, 'here is the martyr' announced his election posters. Marc Bazin, said to be favoured by US, had spent much money and energy in promoting his image as an efficient manager of the economy. And Louis Dejoie II, the patrician landowner from the South, was depending on his undoubted charisma and his father's reputation to overcome the handicap of being a mulatto millionaire. Other candidates - Leslie Manigat, Hubert de Ronceray, Gregoire Eugene and Rene Theodore of the Haitian Communist Party ( PUCH ) -- were considered to have fallen far behind the four leading contenders.

As for the politics of these four, they seemingly mattered less than their disparate personalities. All promised a mixed economy, renewed foreign investment and economic growth, while offering

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reforms to the advantage of the poor. All implicitly pledged a break with the political practices of the previous thirty years: yet significantly not one openly spoke of dechouka<sup>f</sup> or judicial measures against former Duvalier loyalists.<sup>5</sup> Instead the talk was chiefly of personal integrity and national reconciliation proving that they feared attacking openly the Duvalierists. Dejoie could claim a following in his native south and among some of the mulatto minority; Bazin, born in the north, identified his support in the Cap - Haitien area and among sections of the business elite; Gourgue was the favourite candidate of the middle-class democratic sector and peasant movement; and Claude, the former Baptist pastor, had assumed almost messianic proportions among the slum - dwellers of Port - au - Prince.

On 25 November 1987, the National Government Council broadcast a televised statement banning the Community vigilante groups. This was the first indication that the junta officially recognised the rapid deterioration of the situation, but predictably the communiqué made no mention of the death squads. While,

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<sup>5</sup> T.D. Allman, Haiti: After Baby Doc, Parade (Bombay) June 1989, p. 78-93.

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ordering the military to show 'strict impartiality' in its handling of the elections, the junta also adamantly refused to assist the CEP in its final preparations. CEP, which had to in desperation hire helicopters from the U.S., was further handicapped when the military grounded them for reasons of security. 6

Accustomed by now to the sound of gunfire, the inhabitants of Port - au - Prince were woken by the louder explosions of grenades and mortars in the morning of 29 November 1987. By day break, the three most important independent radio stations were off the air, their transmitters blown up during darkness. Petrol stations, churches and polling stations were other targets; Many of the capital's hundreds of rudimentary polling stations were burned down, as was the trade union office which contained ballot papers for over sixty local polling stations.

On the voting day a significant number of stations in the capital were destroyed, or their staff too frightened to open them. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of voters were determined to exercise their constitutional rights. In some areas there was an expectant and a most euphoric atmosphere to celebrate

6. Peter Ford, Severed Ties Leave Nation Adrift,  
Christian Science Monitor, January 3, 1988

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the historic occasion. But many of them unfortunately fell victim to the death - squads patrolling the polling stations.

The full irony of General William R gala's pledge to 'guarantee order and security' was by now apparent. The thin dividing line between the army and the Tontons Macoutes had finally vanished. Army vehicles were to be seen, but they were merely following the cars of the death - squads, lending open support to the Duvalierist gangs. Some of the Tontons Macoutes were dressed in military uniforms; conversely, many soldiers wore civilian clothing. The irregular militia and regular troops -- who, alone would have presented the violence -- were colluding to smash the elections. In Port - au - Prince, the Dessalines battalion, under the command of Colonel Jean - Claude Paul, was particularly visible on the streets. The terrorist commandos, for their part, were reportedly led by such well - known Duvalier loyalists as the son of the banned presidential candidate, Claude Raymond.

By 9 a.m., the elections were over. A brief statement from the CEP announced that voting was indefinitely postponed. At 2.30 that afternoon,

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as sporadic shooting continued, government decree was broadcasted which dissolved the CEP and suspended the electoral law. The electoral council, the decree said, 'had violated the constitution and put the unity of the nation in peril' . There was no promise of new polling, but merely a reiteration that the junta had 'solemnly committed itself to free and honest elections' which was repeated in General Henri Namphy's television broadcast and claimed that CEP had refused to cooperate with the Government and had encouraged foreign influence.

The junta had thus achieved its long standing aim of a coup against the constitution and sabotage of the elections. What had seemingly produced this drastic action was a power struggle within the CNG and the military establishment. In particular, it was evident that more overtly Duvalierist hardliners such as Colonel Paul and General Williams Regala had outflanked Gen. Henri Namphy, who, up until the last minute had remained open to the idea of letting the elections proceed. The fear that a civilian administration led by Sylvio Claude or Gerard Gourgue, the frontrunners in the presidential race, was likely to initiate legal action against Duvalierists and weaken the army, were enough reasons for the military high command to unleash violence and <sup>annul</sup> annul the elections. However, the old

Duvalierists elements were reluctant to hand over unconditional political powers to an elected government which may even, under popular pressure, begin a shifting wealth and privilege away from the small - military dominated elite which saw itself as the national success to Jean Claude Duvalier. Fuelled by this mixture of anxiety and ambition, the views of the more hardline military faction prevailed and together with the banned Duvalierist candidates and their paid henchmen, this faction succeeded in undermining the elections at the eleventh hour. 7

Political leaders who the previous day were confident of victory had seemingly gone into hiding. Others, such as the Duvalierist Gregoire Engine and Hubert de Ronceray, were to be heard on the state - run radio, castigating not the junta, but the electoral council for the day's events. What was not fully

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7) Times of India ( New Delhi ) 3rd December, 1987



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realised, however, was that in many parts of the country voting had gone ahead without violence and interruption, and that many thousands had peacefully participated in the election especially in Leogane where observers reported that polling stations <sup>had</sup> been full. Informal opinion polls suggested, moreover, that Sylvio Claude or perhaps Gerard Gourgue would have emerged successful from the first round of voting. This was clearly the eventuality that the military - Duvalierist forces had acted to prevent. The U.S. Secretary of State Mr. George Shultz commented that "so far as we know, this is violence caused by the supporters of the deposed dictator Duvalier". The U.S. State Departments' initial assessment of responsibility and one significantly, which made no mention of the military's role in the violence - was swiftly followed by the announcement that the U.S. was suspending military and economic aid worth \$ 62 million and ordering military and some diplomatic personnel home. 8

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8) International Herald Tribune (Paris)  
18 January 1988.

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Faced with the evidence of the CNG's complicity in the violence, the Reagan administration was seemingly shaken and incredulous. U.S. supported democracy though it had desired that the transition to civilian regime must not disturb the old balance and, besides, the privileged position of the military should not be compromised. Such a perception, if it is true, made U.S. support -- at least implicitly -- the anti - democratic forces while mouthing support for democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

Such an altitude is borne out, for instance, by its response to the Jean Rabel massacre in which in July 1987 as many as 500 people were killed at the instigation of powerful land owners <sup>as</sup> the peasants and local priests had begun organising a campaign for the landless. One month after this, the State Department certified to Congress that the interim regime was improving human rights in Haiti and was thus eligible for further military aid. The calls of the democratic opposition for Namphy's resignation went unheeded in Washington D.C., as did increasing evidence of Duvalierist terrorism and military repression. Even the junta's victimisation of the CEP produced no official condemnation from the U.S.

although it was instrumental in providing the electoral Council with 80 per cent of its financial support. 9

Furthermore, the fact the General Williams Regala had visited Washington D.C. hours before the aborted elections was, in itself, mysterious and gave rise to considerable speculation. He had reportedly met Elliot Abrams and Richard Holwill, the State Departments top Officers responsible for Caribbean affairs.

Elsewhere, international condemnation of the coup was widespread and mostly unequivocal as particularly the French and Canadian Governments and U.N. Secretary General Perez de Cuellar had openly blamed the CNG for permitting the violent disruption of the elections.

In Haiti, however, such actions met with little enthusiasm among those political leaders who were slowly beginning to recover from the shock of 29 November. Only Sylvio Claude openly supported the idea of a peace-keeping force, while Bazin, Gourgue, Dejoie and others insisted that the Haitian people would find their own solutions to the present problems. All major candidates also expressed their opposition to the proposed military - organised elections and demanded the reinstatement of the electoral

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9) Jonathan Power, "Haiti - not down and not out", February 2, 1988, New Strait Times (Kuala Lumpur).

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 Council. In the midst of such confusion and division, the junta announced that it would be forming a new electoral council and invited religious and professional bodies to nominate members. It also promised an inquiry into the violence and claimed that an official Commission, consisting of representatives of two ministries, two army officers, a lawyer and a human rights specialist, would eventually produce a report. Coincidentally news now emerged that almost fifty people from the Carrefour Feuille district of Port - au - Prince had been arrested during the night preceding the election day. Identified as members of a vigilante group that had lynched two Tonton Macoutes, they were taken to Fort Dimanche<sup>n</sup> prison and executed by the army that same night.

The next initiative belonged to the real winners of the 29th November election: the Haitian military. The junta was determined to go ahead with its own version of a return to civilian rule. The CEP, it claimed had been financed by foreign sources which planned to subject the country to 'communist' rule, calling for outside intervention in Haiti's political process. Amidst this rhetoric of nationalism and military integrity, the electoral time-table and structures were rapidly reinstated. On 12 December 1987, it was announced that

a new electoral council had been selected and that elections would be held on 17 January 1988. A week later, the new CEP, consisting of political non-entities and allegedly Duvalierist sympathisers, presented its electoral law. Under the new electoral rules, candidates were to print and distribute their own ballot papers; voting was not to be conducted in secret; voters were to present their completed ballot papers to officials at the polling stations; and no formal registration document was required from electors. With its electoral law in place, all that the junta required was a number of appropriately compliant candidates. On 15 December, 1987, Hubert de Ronceray declared his candidacy, to be followed a week later by Leslie Manigat, Gregoire Eugene and Gerard Philippe - Auguste. These four right - wing candidates who, a month earlier, had been considered outsiders were now seen as the frontrunners simply because Gourgue, Bazin, Dejoie and Claude refused to participate. The Council's stage - managed elections were primarily intended for the consumption of Outside world specially U.S. The unexpected banning, as on 9 January 1988, of a number of well-known Duvalierists from standing for the presidency was a concession to international opinion as the military government searched for support and legitimacy in the diplomatic circles particularly in the U.S.

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The elections took place as scheduled on 17 January 1988. The 'group of four' had called for a general strike on 16th and for a day of 'national disapproval' on the Sunday, which had formed the Committee for Democratic Understanding (CDU) with the aim of campaigning for a boycott<sup>of</sup> elections. Some polling stations closed at lunchtime for lack of voters, while others remained more or less empty throughout the day. According to foreign witness, at most, 10 per cent of the electorate voted. In the absence of voters, children, beggars and psychiatric patients were all enrolled to fill in ballot papers. Though people feared a resurgence of Duvalierist violence it never occurred. By the end of the day it had become apparent not only that the boycott had rendered the elections invalid, but also that the army had already selected the next president of Haiti - Leslie Manigat. Manigat was conveniently found to have received 50.3 per cent of the votes cast, thus precluding a second round of voting. From an estimated turn - out of 35 per cent ( the original figure had been halved in response to widespread ridicule), Manigat had received 534,080 votes, compared to 210,526 for de Ronceray, 151,391 for Philippe - Auguste and 97,556 for Eugene.

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Manigat's direct assurances to most prominent Duvalierists that no action could be taken against them, and the support he received from the Venezuela - based Christian Democrat International and his acceptability to U.S. as a solid anti - communist and advocate of U.S. endorsement was seen in congressional hearing where Richard Holwill , the State Department Official said:

"In truth' there is little, if anything, which President Manigat has done which merits criticism as being anti - democratic." 10

EXPANDING ROLE OF THE MILITARY AND TONTONS MACOUTES:

Inside Haiti, the democratic opposition refused to recognise either the electoral results or the government of President Leslie Manigat . By presenting the Haitian people with a fait accompli, the CNG had apparently pre empted much of the inevitable popular outrage and protest. Instead, there was cynicism and resignation and only occasional organised protest. Those who had advocated abstention, moreover, now faced repression and reprisals as arrests were made among Church, trade union and peasant activists. 11

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10) "Manigat says Haiti democracy destroyed," June 22, 1988, Times (London)

11) Patriot (New/Delhi) / September 27, 1988.

The relative respectability of the cabinet contrasted, however, with the political complexion of the Senate and the Chambre des députés. Here, as in the local government posts, overt Duvalierists had been voted in through low turn - outs and stuffed ballot boxes. The Constitution intended to curtail the executive powers of the president, gave increased weight to the two chambers. Ironically, then, the liberal constitution had strengthened the political power of the anti - democratic supporters of the old order. Well - known Duvalierists found themselves elected to positions of power that a year earlier would have been inconceivable. 12

As a young official in the foreign Ministry, Leslie Manigat had, it is said, been an enthusiastic supporter of François Duvalier after his election in 1957. He had been drawn to the black consciousness movement of François Duvalier and had reportedly played a part in the establishment of the Tontons Macoutes. By 1960, he had broken with François Duvalier and was briefly jailed for two months. Others however assert that he had political ambitions which François Duvalier found threatening. After seeking asylum in the Argentine

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12) Charles pierre Gerard, "The Democratic Revolution in Haiti," Latin American Perspectives vol. 15, no. 3 Summer 1988, pp. 68 - 70.



embassy, Manigat fled Haiti in August 1963, to begin a twenty - three year academic career during which he set up a government - in - exile.

The two - year period between the flight of Jean Claude Duvalier and the inauguration of Leslie Manigat witnessed the Haitian military play role of political arbiter. Many of the former militia were recruited into the regular army, while others were protected against popular reprisals by military personnel. From top ranking generals to local commanders, the Haitian military was involved in the smuggling which Manigat's Finance Minister Delatour condoned as 'free - market economic policy'. The military was also allegedly involved in the drug-running in which Haiti increasingly acted as a transit point between Colombia and the U.S. Mayors and local government officials were also selected as acceptable to the military authorities and their Duvalierist allies. The judiciary appeared equally tame.

In Manigat, then, the military confronted an autocratic politician possessing strong ideological affinities with the old order and familiar with the practices of Duvalierism. At first, it seemed that the military needed Manigat, just as Manigat needed the military. For Namphy, Regala and the other generals, Manigat was a possible intermediary in the process of reapproachment with the outside world; the token of

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civilian legitimacy that would allow external relations and financial assistance to be resumed.

and Manigat's downfall came much sooner than expected, was precipitate by the conflicts within the military hierarchy. The key figure was Colonel Jean - Claude Paul, allegedly involved in drug running and who was charged by U.S. for it and to whom Manigat had promised protection against U.S. pressures. Colonel Paul increasingly powerful in ruling circles decided to show his gratitude to Manigat by arresting nine soliders who were supporters of General Namphy. This move signalled Paul's attempt to challenge the head of the armed forces. He was transferred by General Henri Namphy from the Dessalines battalion to an ignominious desk job. This was forseen by Manigat as an opportunity to divide and rule. On 17 June, 1988 - General Namphy was relieved of his duties and placed under house arrest; and his post as Commander - in - Chief was offered to Colonel Paul. 13

The struggle was initially between Colonel Paul and General Henri Namphy and Manigat merely opportunistically exploited the military's internal

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13) Statesman (New Delhi) / September, 21-1988.

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divisions to his own ends. Realising General Henri Namphy's popularity within the army, Colonel Paul relinquished all his claims and refused to accept the post of Commander - in - Chief. As a result, Manigat faced General Namphy but without military allies and without a hope of survival.

The coup, when it came on the evening of 19 June 1988, was quick and efficient. General Namphy was released from house arrest by loyalist troops and personally supervised the almost bloodless overthrow of the president. After some quickfire, several explosions and the appearance of a tank at the presidential palace, Manigat was led away and flown into exile to the Dominican Republic. General Namphy appeared on national television, complete with tin helmet and Uzi sub - machine gun, assuring Haitians of the army's commitment to the rule of law and national sovereignty. General Namphy had once again become de - facto ruler of Haiti, thus, completing the third stage of the coup which had begun with the disruption of free elections of November 1987 and continued with Manigat's selection in January 1988.

In brief, the interim period in which the military - dominated National Government Council promised to oversee the peaceful transition to an elected civilian government proved tumultuous. As has been described, the Constitution of 1987

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though framed<sup>41</sup>, a conservative body proved to be more liberal and soon came to symbolize the popular aspirations for democracy. Among its salient features were greater powers for the legislature and an independent, non-partisan body to conduct the elections. As the electoral process gathered momentum leading to the elections of 29 November 1987, it became clear that none of the aspirant for the office of the president was likely to win the majority of the popular votes. However, neither the Christian democrat Sylvio Claude nor Gerard Gourgue, a conservative but backed by a variety of left - of - centre groups, who were considered as potential winner instilled confidence neither in the military nor the old Duvalier elements.

The interim government set aside the electoral process and unleashed a campaign of violence and terror against its perceived opponents. Indecision and compromise appeared to have over taken those politicians who, prior to 29 November 1987, had seemed likely to take power. The weakness of the party organisations and their dependence on personalist politics had been exposed in the face of military's three - part coup. The period saw the intensification of the polarisation of political forces. The events surrounding the 1987

elections eliminated the moderate centrist elements and left the political spectrum with a large void. The victorious military and Duvalierist ~~dem~~ elements occupied the far - right. While the dejected and still disorganized masses retreated seeking alternatives to democracy and reforms.

Despite the setting aside of the electoral process in 1987 and assumption of power directly by the military following the coup against president Leslie Manigat, in June 1988, the process of politicization of the masses continued outside the electoral arena. Despite the intolerance of all opposition by the interim regime, press and media continued to enjoy relatively more freedom. Ordinary people like the peasantry, urban poor and workers ~~continued~~ to organise themselves in community - level self-help organisations.

The growing inability of the political parties and politicians, in the face of the military onslaught, created a large void after the June 1988. In such a situation, radical elements of Catholic Church began filling the void. As has been discussed in the next chapter, the electoral victory of the radical

Priest, Jean Bertrand Aristide in December 1990 was indicative of the growing impatience of the masses for a more radicalized solution to the problem. It also underscored on the other hand, the fact that the differences between the forces of change and status quo have become irreconcilable. Aristide's policy and functioning soon gave an impetus to the civilian and military opposition not only from the conservative but some moderate elements as well. At the same time, admittedly it was Aristide alone who could keep his impoverished followers under some check. The short - lived presidency of Aristide proved that Haiti's politics remains as always a zero - sum game.

## CHAPTER IV

### ELECTIONS OF DECEMBER 1986

Democratic aspirations of Haitian people remained frustrated despite the deposition of the president-for-life, Jean Claude Duvalier in a popular uprising in February 1986. Admittedly, the Duvalierist elements who still controlled all major levers of power were unwilling to relinquish their powers and privileges, rather their goal was to control and channel the popular movement and eventually subvert it. The immediate target of the Duvalierist elements entrenched in the military, was the 1987 constitution which under popular pressure had conceded several democratic demands including an independent electoral commission.

The military-dominated interim National Government Council (CNG) moved to annul the elections of November 1987 once it realised that election results may lead to transfer of political power to independent democratic forces. It was partly to meet the growing criticism and isolation from foreign governments, particularly US that it organized largely unpopular and farsical electors in January 1988 and installed a civilian Leslie Manigot as President. Internal divisions in the higher ranks and the fact that an ever-larger section of the armed forces craved for the power and privileges brought an end to the veneer of civilian rule.

In a sense, the growing international criticism and the patently unpopular and illegitimate nature of the government forced the military to renew its commitments to civilian rule. Besides, having directly assumed the power and in virtual control of all economic spoils, internal divisions on various lines emerged in the armed forces the most significant being the growing ambitions of the junior officers.

While discussing and analysing some of the aspects, the present chapter also focusses on the regrouping of popular democratic forces on more militant lines under the leadership of the radical church elements. With moderate centrist political forces having retreated, Haiti's political spectrum was divided sharply between two opposite poles. The candidature of Jean Bertrand Aristide galvanized the popular movement but at the same time, stiffened the resolve of the old Duvalierist elements. Even US looked askance at Aristide's electoral victory. Though winning with a landslide margin, Aristide in power still lacked both a coherent programme and a viable political party. Further, his radical rhetoric worsened the already bad law and order situation. Amidst these circumstances, Aristide's presidency proved short-lived and only after seven months in office, he was overthrown in a bloody coup.



"Constitutions are not for Haiti", said General Henri Namphy and tore-up the country's post-Duvalier constitution. He was the, head of the interim National Government Council established after the flight of Jean-Claude Duvalier. The Constitution was suspended and remained so after Namphy was himself removed in a further coup on 18 September 1988, by the new President, Brigadier-General Prosper Avril.

General Namphy himself had earlier on 19 June 1988 ousted Manigat after Manigat ordered the reassignment of some 30 military officers whom he considered to be General Namphy's allies. Before the order could be implemented, however, troops loyal to Namphy freed him from detention and in the early hours of 20 June, 1988 seized control of the presidential palace. On 8 July, Namphy formally abrogated the country's Constitution, overwhelmingly endorsed in a referendum in March 1987, promising that a new constitution would be drawn up. The coup was condemned by foreign governments and especially by Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Events that succeeded Namphy's overthrow, would be said to be the product of a series of shifts in alliances within the army, U.S. policy of seeming indecisiveness and helplessness, in the face of ongoing coup attempts. Brigadier General Prosper Avril led coup, was a result of the increasing disintegration in the military due to a series of

purges in post-Duvalier period which had fissured the military hierarchy. And this was at a time when the benefits from smuggling were increasing the prerequisites of a military career. In fact the coup that brought down Namphy was led by Sergeant Joseph Hebreaux and his non-commissioned officer colleagues who were ~~xxxxx~~ known as 'little soliders.' Popular dissent against the military-led regime remained largely uncoordinated because of the continuing differences between the numerous opposition political parties and groupings.<sup>1</sup>

After a period of prolonged popular opposition and devoid of all legitimacy, Avril himself was forced to resign as President in March 1990 and was replaced by Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, a Supreme Court Justice. Soon initial optimism on Ertha Pascal Trouillot's installation evaporated as the new administration proved unable to counter violence and corruption, and fears of increasing organization by pro-Duvalerist elements.

#### EMERGENCE OF MILITANT CHURCH

The struggle within the Catholic Church between radical and conservative forces intensified, during 1988

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1. Patriot (New Delhi) September 17, 1988.

and 1989. The Catholic Church, particularly through its radio station Radio Soleil, had been a key element in the campaign to oust Duvalier. However friction remained between conservative members of the church hierarchy and radical priests, who favoured the ideas of "liberation theology". The Haitian Conference of Bishops condemned liberation theology as inciting violence and discord and in mid-December of 1988, Fr. Jean - Bertrand Aristide, a leading exponent of liberation theology whose church had been attacked in September 1988, was expelled from his order, the Salesians. He had earlier refused to leave Haiti when ordered to do so by his superiors in mid-October. The conservatives also strengthened their position by dismissing Fr. Hugo Trieste, the manager of Radio Soleil, in March 1989 and replacing him with an aide to the Most Reverend Francois Wolff-Ligonda, the Arch-bishop of Post-au-Prince, who was related to the Duvalier family. Other staff changes at the radio station followed.

Jean-Bertrend Aristide, the thirty seven year old Roman Catholic priest who worked in the slums of Post-a -Prince was adoringly called "Titid". He was popular with young priests, but the Roman Catholic hierarchy - which had often supported the establishment in Haiti -- opposed him. After his expulsion from the Salesian Order in 1988 for being too political and prohibiting him from celebrating mass in public, the bishops issued a statement against his campaign.

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2. " Ron Howell, Haiti's New Regime has an Uphill task, Deccan Herald, (Bangalore), January 2, 1991. "

Aristide's campaign metaphor was lavalas (flood). He called his followers the flood which would ~~re~~ rid Haiti of Duvalerism. "Let the flood descend, the flood of poor peasants and poor soldiers, the flood of the poor jobless multitudes, of poor workers, the flood of all our poor friends and the church of the poor, which we call the children of God". Aristide promised to purify the government of **corruption**, redistribute wealth and empower the poor.

Aristide popularity stood on his eloquent denunciations of Duvalierism, the army, the wealthy, and the United States.

Aristide has been the figurehead of a messianic movement, "The incarnation of a collective dream" says Laennec Hurbon, a specialist on religious movements in the Carribean, "his responsibility to his followers is not

as that of a politician to his constituency". As Aristide had gained a nation - wide support following largely from radio broadcasts of his electrifying sermons in which he railed against successive military regimes in the post-Duvalier period.<sup>3</sup>

#### PRESIDENT JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE AND HIS POLICIES :

In the country's first reasonably free polls held

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3. Lee Hochstades, Deccan Herald, (Bangalore) February 12, 1992.

on 16 December 1990 under the guidance of about 600 international observers, Father Jean Bertrand Aristide, a radical priest-turned-politician was elected President. Working independently and in conjunction with the organisation of American States, the United Nations and other interested governments devoted material and political resources to help ensure that campaign, the election itself and the transition were carried out in accordance with accepted democratic principles and in a climate free of fear and intimidation. The OAS moved in due to its Charter's basic provisions to promote and consolidate representative democracy in the member countries.

Aristide unexpectedly entered the presidential race in mid-October after Roger Lafontant, former head of the Tontous Macoutes, declared his candidacy. Lafontant was later disqualified on technical grounds. Aristide represented the National Front for Democracy and Change defeating 10 other candidates to achieve a landslide victory in the Presidential elections. Some 60 percent of the electorate participated in the poll, with Aristide winning 67 per cent of the votes cast. He had reportedly been regarded by the U S government in the past as a mentally unstable communist and had survived numerous assassination attempts like the St. Jean Bosco Church massacre during which at least 12 parishioners were killed and 70 others wounded. On this occasion however,

apart from some irregularities and sporadic outbreaks of violence, the elections passed off peacefully. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) formally proclaimed Aristide as the winner of the December elections with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who was one of the international observers to the elections, congratulating the armed forces "for the remarkable work they performed during the elections". Aristide reiterated his commitment to lower the cost of living, stimulate employment and 'promote a stable atmosphere for production and protect investor's interests.

A former World Bank official, Marc Bazin, of the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress, came second with 13% of the vote<sup>4</sup>

Aristide was an early member of what came to be known as the Ti Legliz (Little Church). His antagonism to the established church hierarchy was equalled only by his dislike of the local bourgeoisie. In sermons from St. Jean Bosco Church in Post-au-Prince slum of La Saline, Aristide frequently used biblical passages to preach rebellion. Advocating the right of the common people to defend themselves, Aristide would quote from the Gospel of St. Luke, where Christ is cited

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4. Holiday (Dacca), November 1, 1991.

as saying, "And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

Neither Aristide nor his followers seemed to have accumulated any swords. His followers defended him by their willingness to die for him. A human shield appeared<sup>e</sup> to be his only protection.

#### CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OPPOSITION TO ARISTIDE :

Aristide victory was strongly opposed, however by forces loyal to Jean Claude Duvalier , the former dictator overthrown in 1986, Lafontant, a former Interior Minister who had returned from exile in July 1990, was still free since the military had repeatedly refused to act on a warrant for his arrest.<sup>5</sup>

Lafontant and several dozen supporters including a former presidential candidate, Alphonse Lahens, seized control of the presidential palace late on 6 January 1991 and forced interim President Trouillot to announce her resignation.

In an attempt to fulfill his promise to prevent Aristide from taking office on 7 February 1991 , Lafontant declared himself provisional president and committed himself to create

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5. " Alan Tomlinson, Haitian Army puts down attempts at midnight coup," Times (London) January 8, 1991.

"true democracy" and to "wipe out the blot and bloody insult of the December 16 election". Tens of thousands of Haitians responded. In response to the mass protests, Chief of Staff of the 8,000 strong army General Herard Abraham, denounced the coup attempt and pledged his support for Aristide.

Loyal troops stormed the presidential place on 7 January 1991 freeing Trouillot and arresting Lafontant. Aristide was criticised by the Haitian business sector and by United States for not condemning the actions of his supporters who took to violence after the coup attempt.

A series of purges in the post-Duvalier period had fissured the military hierarchy. And at a time when the benefits from smuggling (from toothpaste to illegal drugs) were increasing the prerequisites of a military career, indiscipline and greed were bound to further divide the armed force. Paralleling the collapse of military discipline was the rise of a series of paramilitary groups, and without any known central command. Haitians called them variously grupes sans maman (groups without mothers) zemglendo (bandits) or simply escadrous de la mort (death squads) 6

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6. " M.Bazin, Aristide and the Generals: Haiti in Limbo, New Leader (New York) Vol.76, January 25, 1993, P.8-9



Aristide's political problem had been that he was surrounded by ideologues and idealists -- all political amateurs, Aristide never seemed able to distinguish friends from foes. Worse he never seemed interested in the art of political maneuvering. In fact, he seemed to excel at turning other into opponents. Despite social/chaos and the bankruptcy of his state, Aristide had several things going on for him in addition to his massive popular support.

Aristide's failure to speak out forcibly against mob violence by his followers, The practise of pere lebruno (putting a burning tire around an enemy's neck) was never sufficiently condemned. More than 100 perceived Aristide enemies were so executed after the failed Lafontant coup. And Aristide's already strained relations with the Church hierarchy deteriorated dramatically after the Papal Nunciature and Haiti's oldest cathedral were burned to the ground, and the papal nuncio and his Zairean deputy were beaten and made to walk nearly naked down the street. These acts of violence brought a series of international criticism against Aristide.★<sup>7</sup>

His arrest on 4 April, 1991 of former President Pascal-Trouillot on vague and unsubstantiated conspiracy charges.

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7. Arthus Boers, "Flowers on the Cannon - balls, Other Side", Vol. 27, no. 2, March-April, 1991 P.28-31.

further alienated, even some of his supporters. Fear of arbitrary arrest spread through the already wary opposition. His sweeping purges of the army top command, including the retirement in July of General Abraham, who had managed the peaceful transfer of power. Traditional Haitian military apprehensions about civilian intentions intensified. His sudden, and some say intemperate and threatening request in mid-April that the "middle class" contribute millions of dollars to the state. He gave them four days to do so. It reminded some of Duvalier's notorious campaigns for 'voluntary' contributions.

All of this could have been managed or at least explained away if Aristide had not committed his most costly error: marginalizing, then antagonizing and eventually attacking his own political party and its followers in the legislature. This behaviour best revealed not only Aristide's modus operandi but how soon and completely he had acquired the Haitian habit of emphasizing the presidency as the only significant office.

Although it held only 40 of the 110 seats in the parliament, Aristide's National Front for Change and Democracy (FNDC) initially controlled the presidency and other significant posts in the legislature. It was with his own party that Aristide had his major confrontations as it attempted to exercise checks and balances on the

executive, the single most important feature of the 1987 constitution. Many parties had participated in drawing up that constitution and took their role in the new politics seriously. They were indignant about being ignored in appointments, policies or indeed even informal consultation.\*<sup>8</sup>

It was Aristide's own FNDC legislators who began to call for the resignation of Aristide's prime minister, Rene Preval, and it was this group that was violently threatened with individual pere lebruns if they proceeded with their plans. Under pressure from the executive, the FNDC lost control over parliament to minor opposition parties. One of these, the minuscule National Patriotic Movement-November 28, secured the presidency of the Senate, making its leader Dejean Belizaire, a formidable opponent of Aristide's. Belizaire would emerge as one of the legislative leaders opposing Aristide's return to the presidency after his ouster.

By early May 1991 the complaints about Aristide's style had become a chorus. Human rights activist and Aristide supporter Jean-Claude Bajeux summed up the situation; "Aristide, "he lamented, "has established himself as the parish priest of the National Palace."<sup>9</sup>

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8. Anthony P. Manigot, "Haiti and Aristide. The legacy of History," Current History (Philadelphia, Pa.) Vol.91, February 1992, p.66-67.

9. Ibid, p.67-68.

The commander-in-Chief of the army General Henry Abraham, was dismissed on 2 July 1991 but later claimed that he had retired 'for personal reasons'. He was replaced by General Raoul Cedras who had supervised security during the December presidential elections and whose appointment was subject to congressional approval. This was Aristide's lack of faith in General Abraham and extreme dependence on Raoul Cedras which ultimately perpetrated Aristide being ousted in a coup.<sup>10</sup>

#### MILITARY COUP OF 1991 SEPTEMBER

Following the resignation of Rrust Pedro Casseus as president of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house of parliament) after disagreements over his decision to suspend the session, Duly Brutus was unanimously elected as the chamber's new president on 20 August 1991.

Disagreements within the FNCD, especially in relation to the August 13 disturbances, led the session of the parliament sabotaged by Preval's supporters especially the suspension of the current movement of the organization of the country (MOP) <sup>who</sup> ~~to~~ asked its deputies, to withdraw from the FNCD parliamentary block.

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10. E. Moore, Interview with Pere Aristide, America 1991, p.165-76.

So the situations leading to the coup were in themselves responsible for the failure of adhering to democratic norms. Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected President, was deposed in a violent military coup on September 30. He had just returned from addressing the UN General Assembly in New York where he had given an assurance that democracy was now firmly rooted in Haiti.

The coup began with a late night meeting at the Freres military training camp, east of the capital Port-au-Prince, where heavy fighting took place. In response, government supporters erected flaming barricades in the capital and attacked the property of legislators whom they accused of obstructing the government's current reform programme. All radio stations were closed down by the mutineers; several ministers, including the Prime Minister, were reported to have been arrested and others were seeking asylum in foreign embassies. Among those killed, was the prominent politician Sylvio Claude leader of the Christian Democratic Party (PDCH) and consistent critic of Aristide, who was murdered in an apparent backlash by government supporters. Though Aristide took refuge at his home in the suburbs of Plains de Cul-de-Sac, soldiers killed his security chief and due to the prompt intervention of ambassadors of Canada, France, the United States and Venezuela who persuaded the coup leader not to kill

Aristide but to allow him to leave the country, saved him.<sup>11</sup>

The coup was nominally the work of young rebel soldiers of the Engin Lourd Motorized Unit, formed two years previously by the then ruler of the country, General Prosper Avril. They had warned Aristide in recent weeks to drop his plan to replace them with another motorized unit, which was Swiss trained and more loyal to him. The restoration of the army's position of influence and autonomy was one of the six demands of the mutineers, which also included the replacement of Cedras, an Aristide appointment by a new Army Commander-in-Chief.<sup>12</sup>

This last demand gave rise to speculation about the level of the involvement of the army leadership in the organization of the coup. Many analysts believed that Cedras and his colleagues had only taken charge in order to prevent themselves from being swept away by events and some senior commanders had reportedly refused to join Cedras in the ruling Junta. Many sections of the army leadership

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11. George Pacher, "Choke hold on Haiti," Dissent (New York) Summer 1993 p.297-308.

12. S.Rodman, "First test for Democracy, ..President-elect J.B.Aristide" National Review, Vol. 43, Fall 1991, p.25-6.

were thought to be hostile towards Aristide, however, because, in response to United States pressure, he had begun to act to stop drug trafficking from which they were known to benefit.<sup>13</sup>

The accusation that the Haitian elite and the army overthrew Aristide does not tell the whole story. The bourgeoisie was never his friend; so was it with many corrupt bureaucrats and military men who were direct targets of Aristide's speeches and policies. The experienced editor of Haiti's Le Nouvelliste wrote on 30 August, 1991 that the "patricidal" struggle for power between Aristide and his Selavalassien clique and the members of the FNCD could "end in a catastrophe" as the former had the mantle of newness, honesty and sincerity and the latter had the political sagacity and contacts.

With Aristide's constitutional - institutional space shrinking, he turned to political rhetorics, the president and his prime minister personally dealt with the increasing military mutinies, strikes, food protests and land disputes; but Aristide's popularity soared as his efficiency plunged. And this created a negative cycle: the lower the ability to

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13. " K.Roth, Haiti Deserted, The Nation, 1991

cope with 'conventional' politics (in the Haitian sense) the greater the appeal to populism, which in turn makes more apprehensive, aroused and dangerous the practitioners of conventional politics. In Haiti from time immemorial, it is the latter who have held the trump cards.

Aristide fell as those who controlled major levers of power felt threatened by his radical rhetoric and the increasing lawlessness of his followers, Haiti, as never before, presented itself as a zero-sum game. In a country with few and poor resources, the elite can ensure its own prosperity and survival by denying nearly all services to the vast multitude of the poor. The remoteness of the government is essential for <sup>such</sup> a system to survive. Any attempt by the impoverished masses to come closer, demanding participation in the government of the country is a major threat to the continued privileged status of the military, big business and ruling civilian groups of bureaucrats and technocrats.



## CHAPTER - V

### EXTERNAL FACTORS IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROCESS:

In previous chapters, an attempt has been made to describe the deep antagonism between the predominantly - black, creole - speaking impoverished masses living mostly in rural and in urban, French - speaking elite of both mulattos and blacks. For the former, the voodoo and self-help community measure seem the basis of organizing a different society different from that of elite. As has been argued in Chapter II, Francois Duvalier rose to power on the basis of an incipient black consciousness movements working for redressal of discrimination and exploitation noted out to blacks by the mulatto elite of Haiti. However, what Duvalier created was a personalist - authoritarian rule that was, at the same time, hereditary. As first he himself and after his death in 1971, his son Jean Claude Duvalier ruled Haiti as president-for-life. Sustaining the Duvalier family rule was what can be described as the franchise system, wherein all political and economic power remained concentrated in the hands of Duvaliers and the supporting elite' enjoyed franchise rights. Resisting once modernization and even encouraging isolation of the country, Duvaliers supported by a small elite of businessmen, professionals and military men ensured their rule by keeping the economy backward and foreclosing each and every avenue of political expression and participation.

As the Chapter-III has highlighted, such a system rested in the continued subjugation of the impoverished masses and by maintaining

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the delicate balance between various supporting interests. Personalist network of loyalties and alliances created by Francois Duvalier were evidentially under strain as Jean Claude Duvalier began reshuffling major levers of powers. His rhetoric promising economic modernization and some minimal politicizing activity saw the formation of several political parties. However, the possibility that a personalist - authoritarian rule may eventually become a modernizing authoritarian regime disappeared as Jean Claude Duvalier retraced his steps and reverted to the old system of governance. He was deposed in a popular uprising that was amorphous and lack<sup>ing</sup> a coherent programme and organisation. As chapters III & IV highlight, the post-Duvalier period has seen a growing chasm between process of change and the old Duvalirist elements who still control major levers of past. Frame by a conservative body, the 1987 Constitution, under popular pressure acceded<sup>to</sup> a democratic aspirations and demands and has come to symbolize the yearnings of the impoverished masses for a better future. Military that was initially committed to oversee the transition to a civilian rule soon abandoned its role as an arbitor and became a claimant for power itself. Growing internal

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fissures and corruption saw a series of coups and counter-coups during 1988,- 1990. The electoral victory of the radical priest Jean Bertrand Aristide in December 1990 elections, however, saw military close its ranks and with support from the conservatives, pro-Duvalierist businessmen and professionals stage a coup in September 1991. The present Chapter looks into the ramifications of the external responses especially that of US to the September coup for the domestic political processes. Neither impositions of sanctions nor threats of invasions have so far convicted the armed forces in giving up power. On the contrary, violation of human rights and flouting of democratic norms continue unabated. The reason for stubbornness of the junta are not far to seek. US insistence on negotiations and restoration of democratic rule through the medium and consent of the armed forces have only emboldened the Junta to continue to defy international opinion and indulge in indiscriminate terror against its perceived enemies at home.

EXTERNAL RESPONSE TO THE COUP OF SEPTEMBER 1991:

In the twenty first Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) held in the Chilean capital, Santiago

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on 3 - 9 June, 1991 attended by delegation from 34 members countries, the Declaration of Santiago was endorsed. It was designed to begin the "renovation" of the OAS and initiate a "process of joint reflection about hemispheric security in the light of new world and regional circumstances." The Declaration's central point was a resolution instructing the OAS permanent council to convene immediately in the event of any "abrupt or irregular interruption of the democratic, political and institutional process or the legitimate exercise of power by a democratically elected government" in any member country. 1

Such a development was <sup>seen e</sup> ~~easy~~ as an attempt by the OAS to affirm its identity in the post - cold war regional scenario as a genuine independent body and to shed the image of being an instrument of United States foreign policy in the region. Others saw it as marking a shift in U.S.

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1) OAS Resolution in Haiti, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, Vol. 2, 2 October 1991, pp. 760 - 1.

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perceptions of the OAS and readiness to see it perform a new role in encouraging the closer economic and political integration of the Hemisphere, in line with the "Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) announced by President George Bush June 1990 with a view to establish a Hemispheric wide free trade zone of market - oriented democracies. The U.S. foreign policy had resulted from viewing the problems of the region through the "sometimes distorting prism of Cold War" which was admitted in a speech to the assembly by the then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger. 2

Another remarkable achievement of the same Assembly was its rejection of a proposal that member states, in the event of the forceful removal of a democratic government, should jointly & immediately sever relations with the country concerned and instead, voted for Mexico's counterproposal of the traditional Estrada Doctrine of non-intervention and recognition of a new government if there was proof that it had established its control of internal affairs.

With few months of the passage of the resolution,

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2) Addington, Coppin, "Recent U.S. Economic Policies and the Central Caribbean Economies, " Review Black Political Economy (California) Vol. 20 Spring 1992, pp. 56-59.

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South OAS as a regional body and U.S. as the regional hegenon were confronted with the crisis in Haiti, when the democratically elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in a violent coup, staged by the armed forces and the led Duvalierist elements in the government and the business circles. Haiti presented a major challenge to the post- cold war U.S. policy of fashioning a new world order.

The Bush Administration in response to the coup immediately suspended some U.S. \$ 85,000,000 in military and economic aid; France also cut off \$ 150,000,000 was also suspended. The US, France, Venezuela and Argentina denounced the coup and demanded Aristide's return to power. OAS also echoed the same demand despite the re-affirmation of position at its June assembly of non-intervention if proof was given by a new government that it had gained control of its internal affairs. 3

Strict economic sanctions were imposed by the United States government on 29 October in protest at the coup of 1991. The U.S. decision was the decisive factor in persuading the military backed - interim government and local business groups to agree on the same day for negotiations with the OAS. A special OAS mission aimed <sup>to</sup> ~~at~~ negotiate Aristide's return to power arrived in the capital. The effect of sanctions

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3) Support for Haiti U.S. Department of State Despatch, Vol. 3, 27 January 1992. pp. 69-70.

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on the <sup>s</sup> islands weak economy, highly dependent on trade with the USA, was expected to be instantaneous as food and oil supplies were nearly exhausted. In fact, Aristide's address to the emergency session of foreign minister of OAS and an extraordinary session of the UN Security Council saw a reiteration of support by these organizations to his return to power, while not endorsing military action. President George Bush had endorsed the OAS diplomatic effort but effectively ruled out the US military involvement, unless the lives of US citizens even at risk for which the US marines were deployed to the nearby US naval base at Guantanamo in Cuba to evacuate US citizens from Haiti if necessary. Aristide was now in the good books of US Officials who criticized him for the tone of his speeches which they claimed had fomented class hatred. On the contrary, they believed in the professionalism and sagacity of armed forces to negotiate and hand over powers back to Aristide.

The breaking up of the meeting of an OAS high level delegation in the terminal of Port-au-Prince's international airport by soldiers who had suspected that the coup leader, army Chief, Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras had agreed to Aristide's conditional return was proof that rank - and - file soldiers too, and not necessarily the army commanders only, were preventing a political settlement. In spite of the growing demands of OAS members like Argentina,

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Venezuela and Costa Rica for firmes action, including threat of direct intervention by a multi - national peace - keeping force, the OAS settled unanimously for a trade embargo, the freezing of Haitian government assets, the burning of arms sales and the diplomatic isolation of the military junta, although agreeing to the provision of basic humanitarian aid. 4

The mayor of Port - au - Prince one of the few public officials to openly oppose the coup was badly beaten and arrested while Preval the deposed Prime Minister who was in hiding, issued leaflets calling for non-violent civil disobedience campaign, as did Aristide in radio broadcasts beamed from neighbouring Dominican Republic. A general strike on 15 October 1991 closed shops, Offices and schools but astbnishingly no confrontations with the army was seen. In the space of two days September 30 to October 1, 1991 - at least 600 people were estimated to have killed by the army police and in the succeeding days more killings and arrests were made in search of troops loyal to Aristide. The killing of Roger Lafontant the former leader of Tonton Macoutes was blamed on Aristide's supporters but this version was disputed by analysts who thought it marked the settling of old scores between Lafontant and his opponents within the army.

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4) H. Machenzie, A Cycle of Despair, (Aftermath of Ouster of J.B. Aristide), Macleans Vol. 104, Summer 1991, pp. 76-77.



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Cedras, confirmed as Armed Forces Commander - in - Chief, characterized the coup as a "correction of the democratic process" claiming that Aristide had adopted an autocratic style of government, had flouted the Constitution and was inciting the mob violence.

Local U.S. embassy officials described the coup as the work of disaffected rank-and-file soldiers, who had compelled reluctant senior Commanders to participate. While Lt. Colonel Joseph Michael Francois, the Chief of Police, acknowledged by diplomats to have been a ringleader, insisted to foreign journalists that the main impetus had come from the ranks of the 8,000 strong army who feared the growing influence of Aristide's new foreign trained 50 members presidential guard.

Other Western diplomats, local journalists and most political analysts claimed, however, that the coup had been rumored for weeks- and had a level of sophistication far greater than that expected from mostly illiterate soldiers in the ranks. Reports of the importation of 2,000 Israeli Uzi submachine guns and Galil assault rifles three weeks before the coup, and which were widely used by rebel soldiers, lent credence to this view. The army, where profiteering and corruption had become endemic, had profitable interests to protect, especially from its reported involvement in drug trafficking.

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Financial and logistical support (vehicles, petrol, and food) had been provided for the coup by Haiti's business elite, who saw Aristide fomenting class war. They were incensed by Aristide's September 27 speech in which he appeared to encourage his supporters in the teeming shanty town areas to rectify gross social inequalities by rising up and killing their opponents with "necklaces" of flaming tyres known locally as "Pres<sup>e</sup> Lebruns"<sup>5</sup>.

Over 100 soldiers, supported by tanks, invaded the National Assembly on October 7 and forced the 29 delegation present to elect the little-known Joseph Nerette, a Supreme Court Judge, as interim President. Nerette was inaugurated on October 8.

A compliant "interparliamentary crisis commission" had been formed earlier by upwards of two dozen politicians hostile to Aristide to confer a spurious constitutional legitimacy. On the coup, as interim Prime Minister Jean Jaques Honorat, who had been a government minister under former dictator Jean Claude Duvalier and was one of Aristide's bitterest critic was installed. No dates of fresh elections were fixed, even though the 1987 Constitution had stated that an interim government must convene elections within 45 days.

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5) Anthony, P. Manigot, Haiti and Aristide: The legacy of History, Current History (Philadelphia) Vol. 91, February 1992, pp. 67-68.

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SANCTIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS TO RESTORE ARISTIDE :

The Special Mission of OAS with the aim of negotiating an agreement with the representatives of the National Assembly met with the delegation of eight parliamentarians led by the president of the Senate, Dejean Belizaire but no agreement could be reached. The Haitian delegation demanded the lifting of the economic embargo but was unwilling to consider the immediate return of Aristide as president. No date for further talks was announced but, the interim Prime Minister announced that fresh elections would be held on 5 January 1992 in defiance of an OAS resolution.

Meanwhile, news filtering into neighbouring Dominican Republic, confirmed that the army had initiated a new wave of repression on December 15 to forestall the celebration of the first anniversary of free elections the following day.

Aristide held a meeting in Caracas with the mayor of Port-au-Prince and six Haitian parliamentarians to discuss a new effort at national reconciliation in order to restore himself to office. The coup leaders suggested that Aristide endorse Rene Theodore, leader of the National Reconciliation Movement (MRN) as compromise Prime Minister in place of Jean Jacques Honorat. It was widely felt that Theodore a bitter

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critic of Aristide who wished severely to restrict his future powers was not guaranteed to be acceptable to the army or the business sectors which were not expected easily to drop their opposition to Aristides return.

But the result of OAS negotiations resulted in Aristide's return depending on his accepting one of the national consensus candidates for Prime Minister such a candidate had among eight conditions to be from a political party outside parliament but favourably disposed to the parliament and to be able to "reassume the popular masses, the international sector, the middle classes and the army".\*6

OAS in May 1992 stepped up trade sanctions in a renewed attempt to persuade the military - backed provisional government to restore constitutional rule. But the existing trade embargo had failed to produce concessions and had apparently provided opportunities to the rich pro-coup elite and sections of the army to profit from widespread smuggling from the borders of Dominican Republic. However, there was evidence that sanctions have had a devastating impact on Haiti's economy. The majority of the population had been reduced to a state of extreme poverty, an estimated 150,000 people had lost their jobs and famine was reported in the north-west region.

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6) Ibid; pp. 68 - 69.

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The new sanctions (i) barred from all ports in the Hemisphere ships delivering oil and other commercial cargoes to Haiti; (ii) stipulated that commercial air flights could not transport goods; and (iii) ended the issuing of travel visas and withdrawing those which were still outstanding. However, communications and diplomatic links were not cut and US business with assembly plants -- established under the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) of US Ronald Regan administration -- in Haiti were allowed to continue operating. 7

The deteriorating situation in Haiti prompted many poor people to attempt to flee the country by sea in small boats. By the end of November <sup>1993</sup> over 5,000 people were estimated to have left Haiti, of whom some 3,500 were being held abroad United States vessels or at US bas~~s~~ and over 1,000 were being cared for by the Cuban authorities. Many of the boats carrying Haitians were intercepted by US Coast Guard vessels operating in the area and their occupants held either on board or at the US Navy base at Guantanamo Bay on Cuba where an emerging refugee camp was set up. US fears of a potential flood of refugees to southern Florida prompted the government to appeal to other Caribbean nations to accept the 'boat people' 8 They were described as economic

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7) \_\_\_\_\_ Haiti, 'The Shadows of Terror', The New York Review of Books, Vol. 39 March 26, 1992, pp. 63-64.

8) A. Robbins and R. Knight, A diplomatic Stalemate the Haitian poor Adrift, US News and World Report, 1991.

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and political refugees and, therefore, not entitled to asylum or other privileges in US.

According to the New York Times of 29 June, 1992 a softening of the US Government's previous stance against recognition of the regime, set-up after the September 1991 military coup in Haiti, was detectable after Marc Bazin was sworn into office as Prime-Minister, on June 19, 1992.

The new US approach fell short of outright recognition for Bazin's Government, but involved urging Jean - Bertrand Aristide to meet with Bazin, whereas the earlier US position had been that Aristide should choose his own Prime Minister prior to his return to the country. A deadlock arose with Aristide refusing to recognise Bazin and Bazin, on his part, pledging his willingness to talk to Aristide while making no mention of his being restored to the presidency -- a condition insisted upon by the OAS before the current US backed trade embargo could be lifted.

Bazin according to diplomatic circles had, attracted US criticism, as being one of the most vociferous opponents of the diplomatic attempts of OAS to restore Aristide. Bazin owed his nomination as Prime Minister to the May 8, 1992 tripartite agreement between the army, the provincial government, and leaders of the bicameral legislature. His

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nomination was approved by the Senate and the Chambers of Deputies despite the boycott of session by the largest party, the pro-Aristide National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD).

Bazin's inauguration was boycotted by local diplomats but was attended by the papal nuncio (the <sup>Vatican</sup> ~~vatican~~ being the only state to have recognized the army-backed regime) and also heralded another bloodshed with 300 people murdered by troops.

The Eight opposition parties and voters throughout Haiti boycotted partial legislative elections called to review one third of the senate on 18 January 1993 and appealed to the Supreme Court to cancel the elections which were seen as part of the army-backed regime's attempt to legitimize its rule. The UN and USA too regarded the poll as illegal.

Marc Bazin the Prime Minister called the election successful with a "massive turnout while he blamed "saboteurs" for irregularities.

The available results increased government's majority in the upper house making it more likely that the regime might be able to even impeach the exiled President Aristide, should he be returned to resume Office.

The UN mediators, former Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo, began negotiations with the regime in

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power suggesting the deployment in Haiti of an enlarged international observer force from the UN and the OAS, and the beginning of discussions between the parties in dispute to end the crisis. It was for the first time, that Aristide agreed to negotiate with those who had overthrown him but Lt. General Raoul Cedras did not say whether the army would agree to withdraw from its role in government as hitherto demanded by Aristide. However, Bazin refused to accept the UN - OAS proposals for a 400 - strong observer force, on the ground that its presence would amount to "foreign tutelage". The talks ended in a deadlock with Cedras insisting on a power - sharing agreement.

US POSITION ON REFUGEES:

U.S. President elect Bill Clinton in a reversal of his election campaign pledged to give fleeing Haitians refugees haven and consideration for political asylum, until democracy was restored, announced that " for the time being" he would continue the Bust<sup>h</sup> administration.

Diplomatic peace efforts gained a fresh impetus with the unanimous adoption on June 16, 1992, by the UN Security Council of Resolution 841 authorizing a world wide oil and arms embargo on Haiti and freezing its financial assets abroad.



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Drafted by USA, Canada, France and Venezuela, the sanction which were to take effect on June 23, represented the strongest international pressure to date on the military regime and its supporters, although no enforcement measures accompanied the resolution. The Cuban permanent representative at the UN opposed the Security Council's action in a statement on June 16, claiming that the primary responsibility of the Security Council was the "maintenance of international peace and security and that this did not "embrace the situation prevailing in Haiti",

In earlier parallel moves, the US administration froze assets of the military and the rich Haitian elite, and the cancellation of their travel visas and the OAS General Assembly responded to Aristide call for oil supplies and air links to be cut.\*9

RESIGNATION OF BAZIN AS PRIME MINISTER :

On September 2, Robert Malval was installed as Prime Minister to prepare way for exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide 's scheduled return on October 30 1993. But, the assassination of Justice Minister Guej Malary, the accord signed by Cendras sponsored by UN for the return of Aristide to office on October 30, 1993 was shaky from the start. An army backed port workers refused to allow a US Navy

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ship to dock and unload US and Canadian troops.\*12

The military junta which almost certainly ordered the <sup>k</sup>illing, declared a day of mourning, and Francois offered a reward for information leading to the capture of the murderers. "The military now feel they can do what they want", said one government official, "they can even re - in - vent truths."

Its fears grew for the safety of 1,000 American nationals in Haiti, Clinton warned: "The military authorities in Haiti must simply understand that they cannot indefinitely defy the desires of their own people as well as the will of the world community". He has frozen Haiti's assets in America and, in a <sup>y</sup>more reminscent of the 1962 cuban missile blockade, given the six American warships that arrived off the coast yesterday sweeping powers to stop and search suspicious merchant vessels. A further 450 American marines were kept on stand-by at the American base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

But fear gripped Port - au - Prince. One western diplomat said : 'There is nobody left to stop the country disintegrating. Things prevented the greatest superpower in the world from coming ashore and they are chasing the UN out. Nobody is in charge except hoodlums run by the military.\*13

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13) New Strait Times ( Kuala Lumpur ) October 30, 1993.

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PM Marc Bazin resigned on 8 June as head of the army backed coalition government as the outgoing minister refused to resign unabling him from installing four new cabinet members. The discredited former provisional President Joseph Nerette than formed a new government which was rejected by the OAS.

GOVERNORS ISLAND AGREEMENT:

Exiled President Aristide and the 1991 coup leaders General Cedras, Commander - in - Chief of the armed forces signed on 3 July 1993 a peace agreement mediated by the UN and OAS to resolve the political crisis in Haiti.

No direct meeting took place between the two in six days of talks. The 10-point peace plan known as Governors Island agreement allowed for (i) the granting by Aristide of an amnesty (without specifying precisely whom this would cover. (ii) Aristide's return to Haiti by October 30, 1993 (iii) the resignation of Cedras ( but not of other army officers) and the appointment by Aristide of a new armed forces commander - in chief , who, in turn was to name his own staff; (iv) the adoption of a law creating a new police force and the appointment of a new police chief by Aristide (v) the appointment by Aristide of a PM (vi) the ratification of the PM's appointment by a 'normal' Haitian's National Assembly (vii) the suspension of UN and OAS trade sanctions once the new PM <sup>took</sup> ~~app~~ Office (viii) the start of exchanges among political parties under UN - OAS auspices to put the country on the path of normality (ix) international cooperation, consisting of

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technical aid and assistance to make administrative and judicial reforms and to modernize the armed forces. (x) UN and OAS verification of full compliance with the agreement.\*10

The quick acceptance of the agreement by Cedras' delegation reportedly placed much pressure on both Aristide and the Haitian military to comply.

Aristide ~~Resistance~~ held out for several hours before signing and did so on receiving UN guarantees for his personal safety on his return and a pledge that the Trade embargo would be reimposed if the military continued to violate human rights. He had initially opposed the proposed four month 'transition period' before being restored to office and had sought the quick retirement of the army high command. Cedras who on his return to Haiti called on the army to return to the barracks, confidently announced that the military would however honour the agreement representatives of the main political parties also approved the agreement and agreed to a political truce which would last some six-months to guarantee a stable transition period for the establishment of democracy.

The U.S. state Department announced on July 26 that Aristide intended to name as new Prime Minister Robert Malval, a European educated intellectual and owner of

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Natal Publishing Company, who 'also' commanded the respect of the business class. Malval headed a transition cabinet that was to prepare for the presidents' return. Malval's government <sup>has</sup> been powerless in the face of army backed terrorism and assassinations including that of the justice minister.\*11

Haitian army Chief General Cedras rejected president Aristide 's demand that high ranking military officers the chief of staff and the army high command resign . After their resignations, Aristide said he would summon the legislature to ratify an amnesty for the military. Cedras rejected the demand saying it violated Haiti's constitution, as he wanted ~~an~~ amnesty not only the army but ' a general amnesty for society'. Cedra's demand for its ratification has been impossible since the legislature has been unable to muster a quorum.

Robert Malval expressed reservations over the exiled president's call for an embargo of all non-humanitarian goods. "It's a heavy burden" said Malval, who agreed to remain in Office despite the apparent collapse of a\*14 July agreement to reinstate Aristide tomorrow.

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11) A. Wilentz. " Agreement signed to restore Haitian President Aristide to Office' Foreign Policy Bulletin (New York) Vol. 4, Summer 1993, pp. 69-70.

14) Times of India (New Delhi) October 30, 1993

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Some experts fear that a total blockade would cause more harm than good by making life even more difficult for ordinary Haitians, but several pro-Aristide parliamentary deputies visiting New York predicted it would bring the military down in days."

At US request, the Security Council voted to reimpose an embargo on oil and arms shipments to Haiti. The Justice Minister in the transitional government that was to pave the way for Aristide's return was assassinated in Haiti. Now, what practically amounts to a blockade of Haiti prevails.

Thus, Haiti experienced the democratic wave sweeping Latin America in the 1980s and voted a priest and pacifist Mr. Aristide to power as President. Aristide's firm steps to handle corrupt business men and unruly armed forces made him unpopular with the powerful elite. He <sup>1</sup>lost out in a military coup after just nine months in Office .

Two years of intense diplomatic efforts had failed to restore democracy to Haiti when the UN Security Council voted in June 16, 1993 to impose economic sanctions on that island from the Florida coast (USA). The resolution covered an international embargo on oil and arms shipments and a freezing of Haiti's foreign assets. These were no enforcement clauses, though the US had a fleet of coast guard ships in the area to intercept Haitian boat people, sanctions were imposed

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despite a ~~last~~<sup>last</sup>-minute effort by Haiti's military backed parliament to avert disaster by formally recognising Aristide. But the offer came with conditions attached, including Mr. Aristide's confirmation of General Cedras as Haiti's military Chief until 1994.

The OAS had imposed an embargo on Haiti soon after the coup but it was full of loopholes and had no more than a limited effect. Haiti got its oil from Holland.

The UN embargo, however, appeared to have worked. On July 3, General Cedras, the strongman who led the coup, agreed to let UN troops into Haiti to 'professionalise' his military and police forces. More important he agreed to step down and allow Mr. Aristide's safe return to power by October 30, in return for an assurance of amnesty for the coup plotters. On August 25, Haiti's Parliament confirmed Mr. Aristide's choice of Mr. Malval as prime minister and said that he would resume his duties at the earliest.

Yet the UN was soon to be warned trouble. In September one of Aristide's closest advisers, Antoine Izmerly was shot dead during a church service by gunmen suspected of ties with the military regime. During a strike some days later enforced by the army's plaincloths friends, demonstrators chanted anti-Aristide slogans. And it was

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soon evident that the Haitian military forces were determined to back out of the agreement that let Mr. Aristide come back to power.

As the troopship US Harlan County, as part of a UN force, pulled into the approaches of Port-au-Prince on October 11, 1993, an angry mob of armed protestors, probably organised by the military regime, shouted 'go back'. The 600 troops on Haitian County were neither armed nor prepared for an opposed landing -- they were mostly engineers and specialists intended for repairing roads, hospitals and schools and train a new Haitian police force. The ship pulled up an anchor and steamed away.

At US request the Security Council voted to reimpose oil and arms shipments to Haiti and after a practical blockade the political impasse continues in Haiti.

EXTERNAL FACTORS AND PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY:

Reinforcing the impasse is the dilatory even indifferent approach of the US. All though the period since the ouster to Aristide in September 1991, US policy makers have been ostensibly looking for a political centre in a highly polarized country. While, committed in principle to supporting and restoring the elected government of Aristide, US finds the armed forces alone as a long - term guaranter of stability and perhaps constituting the political centre itself. While supporting the return of Aristide, It has simultaneously looked



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the other way. As far as the violation of human rights by the armed forces is concerned, while talking of a military option, the forces, so to say is on multinational pressure and negotiations. In terms, US support to the restoration of democracy in Haiti is more vocal and much less material with his 5 year Presidential term due to an end in December 1993, Aristide has already been out of power for nearly three years; and there were no prospects of early and easy return. Hardly professional and extremely unpopular Haitian armed forces can hardly offer any resistance to any involving multinational forces seeking to re-establish democracy. However, such an argument has created, serious misgivings about the intentions of US and US led OAS and UN. In the post-cold war scenario, is democracy becoming a new pretext of covert and overt - interventions?

Be that as it may, the failure of July 1993 agreement to restore Aristide by 30 October 1993 a president led to re-imposition of UN sanctions. Not to be deterred by threat of armed invasion or UN sanctions, the military junta began contemplating invoking article 149 of the Constitution which calls for the Chief outside of the Supreme Court to assume presidency. Haiti's parliament, a bogus body which was elected in January 1993, could ratify the change. Already several right - wing

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anti-Aristide political parties began supporting the idea of an interim President. Fearing that an interim presidency would precipitate the crisis and make negotiations even more irrelevant, UN <sup>0</sup>envoy, Dante Caputo warned the military Government, ~~UN envoy~~ not to appoint any interim president. Despite such flagrant violations of all norms and backtracking on the July 1993 agreement, civilian administration still spoke of "America's commitment to finding a negotiated settlement" what is perhaps, however, not so astonishing in all this is Clinton administration's unflinching faith in military's bona-fides.

In December 1993, Clinton administration again proposed negotiations with the military US special envoy to Haiti, ~~however~~ Lawrence Pezallo along with representatives from UN, France, Canada and Venezuela tried to persuade Aristide to endorse the new plan who only rejected it saying that talks can begin only after his "physical return to Haiti". The new plan originally mooted by Robert Malval before ~~he~~ resigned as prime minister, suggested a more broad-based negotiations. Malval's resignation as head of the transitional government was occasioned its failure to restore Aristide. His resignation removed perhaps the last moderate leader, US could have relied upon.

As expected, military junta installed the Supreme Court Geradje Emile Jonassaint as provisional

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President in May 1993. Army Chief, Raoul Cldras has vowed to stay on as head of the armed forces until his term expires in January 1995, and made army negotiations conditioning on the outside world re-organising the Junassaint Government. Unable to either persuade or pressure the military junta to allow Aristide to return. Talks of an invasion on not very clear grounds ranging from restoration of democracy to protecting the lives of some 3,500 US citizens in Haiti have re-surfaced with greater intensity and while US administration has acknowledged that US marines were conducting training exercises in the Bahamas port of 15,000 multinational forces to restore democracy admittedly with UN approval, US Vice President, Albert Gore urged that sanctions be given more time to work. Gore has desired any imminent invasion. While Aristide has demanded "swift and definitive" actions by the international community to ~~out~~ oust the military leaders, the junta has begun drumming up popular support against any impending invasion.

Both sanctions and threats of military invasion have not yet weakened the resolve of military junta to step down. Tightening of sanctions in June 1994 by US which included an end to most financial transactions between the US and Haiti and banning of all commercial flights, led to further deterioration in human rights situation as

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the number of refugees fleeing Haiti mounted sharply since May 1994. Unrecognized by most governments, rather considered as illegitimate, military now insists on recognizing the ~~non~~constitutional and legitimacy of Jonassaint government as the new condition for any further negotiations. Junaissant's appointment has formalised the military's break in negotiations with the UN on a peaceful end to the crisis. Even a much - mellowed Aristide who has been speaking now in terms of a general amnesty and national reconciliation that remains simply unacceptable to the military junta and the conservative dominant classes.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present impasse is continuing with no prospects of the early solution. The two Haiti's-- one belonging to the Urban, French-speaking, rich elite, and the other composed of the impoverished rural masses -- are locked in an inverse relationship. In a country with few economic resources for development, the tiny ruling elite ensured its continued domination and rule by keeping the vast majority economically poor and excluded from all political avenues. This has been, in sum, the experience of Haiti since its independence in the nineteenth century. The first black republic and only the second country to gain independence -- after US --, in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti remained mired in civil wars and brief periods of stability imposed by regional strongmen throughout the nineteenth century. In the process, it developed neither traditions nor institutions for democracy and rule of law. On the contrary, the century marked the rule of a mulatto elite who during the Colonial period were favoured by the France. Vast majority, mostly of Blacks, settled into a subsistence economy.

US intervention in 1915 and occupation of the country until 1934 incensed racist feelings. <sup>Seeking</sup> ~~Lacking~~ revenge against the mulatto elite for its exploitation and injustices, the urban educated blacks launched a black consciousness

movement <sup>whose</sup> Chief protagonist in the 1940s was Dr. Francois Duvalier. Using his popularity among the blacks especially among the poor of Port-au-Prince, Duvalier managed and manipulated the support of the military and the US --- the two key factors in Haitian politics and staked his claim for the presidency in the elections of 1956.

Once in office, the popularly elected president Francois Duvalier ~~started~~ laying the basis of a personalist-authoritarian rule which can better be described as a personalist dictatorship. To keep the military in check, he in 1959 created the National Security Volunteers, nicknamed as Tonton Macoutes. Brutish and thuggish, Tonton Macoutes not only successfully counter-balanced the military but, also through violence and intimidation kept the entire population under check. Personally loyal and under direct control of the president, Tonton Macoutes lived off extortion and intimidation. Duvalier even used them to spy, manipulate and even <sup>eliminate</sup> ~~ultimate~~ his opponents <sup>among</sup> ~~and~~ the upper crust of the society. To keep the tiny business class and the small group of professional and bureaucrats loyal, Duvalier introduced a kind of franchise system; ~~the~~ <sup>he</sup> let out economic opportunities and sources to his allies -- all inter-related, through marriages and business partnerships with the proviso to withdraw them if they wavered in the loyalties to the dictator. In the process the entire elite lived off the few resources and foreign economic aid by denying even ~~basic~~ amenities to the people. Such a

system enabled Duvaliers to amass a huge fortune since there was no distinction left between public ~~trading~~ <sup>treasury</sup> and personal wealth.

To the masses, Duvalier offered the sop of voodoo. Himself well-versed with the cult and its intricate rituals, no gainsaying, voodoo ~~traced~~ <sup>endowed</sup> his personalist dictatorship with certain amount of legitimacy. Denying and despised by previous regimes, voodoo is more than a religious cult for the masses. In the absence of a meaningful role of the state and governments in their lives, the impoverished rural masses took to voodoo as the ongoing <sup>basis</sup> ~~lack~~ of their community and social life.

With all vital elements in place, Duvalier manipulated the constitution and the legislative on the eve of 1964 elections and gotten himself declared a president for life. He went ahead and further got the constitution changed making his rule hereditary. Different on account of its history, colonial background and racial composition from rest of the region, Duvalier further encouraged the country's isolation from rest of the region including the US.

Jean Claude Duvalier who became president - for life at the age of nineteen in 1971 tired to tink~~e~~r with

the system. In the first place, the political system itself was being strained as the old network of personalities and loyalties was undergoing change as a result of change at the top. Besides, Jean Claude Duvalier brought his <sup>own</sup> other loyals --- mostly his own school mates -- and a small group of professionals into positions of power and prominence. He promised political reforms including electoral politics and political parties. For a while, it, looked that a personalist - dictatorship is changing into a modernizing - authoritarian rule. Strains within the system mainly as a result of changing power equations among the ruling elite and the <sup>emergence</sup> ~~experience~~ of several political parties and political activity made Jean Claude Duvalier retrace his steps. Political parties covering the entire ideological spectrum for left to right, press and radio station and above all, the myriad of community-based organisations who had began assuming political <sup>role</sup> further too, all took the promise of electoral politics seriously.

The reasons for the downfall of Jean Claude Duvalier are not far to seek. The Duvalierist system had lost its internal cohesion and balance between feuding components. Jean Claude Duvalier and his internal Coterie consisted of immature and political <sup>c</sup> ~~novies~~ <sub>^</sub> who lacked the manipulative abilities of Francois Duvalier and his cohort.



His promise of economic modernization and political reforms aroused new hopes and aspirations. The regime compounded its problems by shuttering off all political activities and resorting to violent and repressive action. Its ham-handedness in dealing with several agitations and strikes further precipitated the crisis, and alienated those belonging to middle strata of the society such as teachers, lower rungs of the bureaucracy and particularly those urban educated elements who had taken the promises of political liberalization seriously.

It was an amorphous popular uprising that deposed Jean Claude Duvalier. It was an event of far-reaching implications. In the first place, it called for overt alliances and understanding of the body politic. With the deposition, the much-dreaded and hated Tonton Macoutes disappeared, some of them fell even to popular anger and in such a situation, military saw a opportunity to redeem its historic position as the sole repository of all coercive powers and the only <sup>institution</sup> ~~situation~~ capable of guaranteeing public order. Not averse to transition to a democratic <sup>rule</sup> ~~one~~, it assumed the role of an arbiter. The small business class felt apprehensive of any civilian rule for it may mean reduction in the economic process and privileges.

The popular movements lacking both a programme and an organisation could not go beyond aspiring for a democratic rule. However, Beneath their aspirations were the aspirations of peasantry for land and better prices for their produce, workers aspirations for unions and other labour rights and in general, a desire for a political order free of violence, intimation and consumption.

The interim-military-dominated National Government Council (CNG) though committed to election and transfer of power to civilian Government, was however apprehensive of the popular demands.

The outlying provinces, long ignored by Duvalier and in the absence of viable communication network, pillaged by the Tonton Macoutes and provincial army garrisons longed for some modicum of economic development. Likewise, communities living in isolation whose only contact with the capital city was in the form of penetration by Tontons Macoutes and the business elite and significantly who, in isolation, had developed that over mechanism of community living and sharing, now demanded decentralisation of powers and participation in local affairs.

The 1987 constitution though framed by the conservative body however under popular pressure had to accede to demands such as independent electoral commission and a more powerful legislature. It became the symbol of democratic aspirations and change. The political ~~scene~~<sup>scene</sup> before the elections due in November 1987 had few notable features; most significant being the emergence of several political parties mainly occupying the centre of the political spectrum. Nebulous both in their programmes and organisations, they were led by political personalities that, if elected, were expected to govern with moderation and consensus. They were nearly all committed to democratic rule; their political-programmatic differences were<sup>of</sup> hardly if any relevance in the context of the unfolding political situation of 1987. The press and radio stations had taken their role seriously and with responsibility. Especially the radio stations belonging to reformist and radical catholic church were in the forefront of political socialization and mobilization.

The Haiti of the deprived and impoverished masses saw in the forthcoming elections, an historic opportunity to get rid of centuries of exploitation and denial of

political rights. In equal measure, the old Duvalierists elements particularly the big business and the armed forces, at least a section of it, saw a danger to their decades-old privileges and corrupt practices. Not only military hierarchy stood divided; even lower rungs were apprehensive of losing their new ~~found~~ <sup>outcome</sup> power and sources of enrichment. The ~~entire~~ of these developments was the brutal repression of the entire electoral political process.

Outside World especially US seemingly responded to the situation only when the indiscriminate violence by army and Tonton Macoutes, who had resurfaced, resulted in several hundred deaths. International <sup>cry</sup> outcry and the patently, illegitimate nature of the CNG rule forced the military and their conservative allies to hold the farcical elections a January 1988 and install the civilian Leslie Manigat a President. Manigat's imprudence and his bid to play off different sections of the military against each other cost him the presidency.

Manigat's <sup>removal</sup> ~~system~~ indicated that the die had been cast. No civilian regime could survive without the explicit support of the armed forces; and no civilian rule would be permitted to go to the extent of upsetting the continued domination of the conservative elements. The period since the overthrow of Manigat <sup>saw</sup> deep divisions and polarizations. Moderates of various hues who occupied an

important place only few months ago had all disappeared. The mass democratic movement though repressed and broken for the ~~time~~<sup>K</sup> being was to reemerge as a more ~~than~~<sup>militant</sup> ~~wherecut~~ and ~~without~~ a movement. Equally significant, was a series of coups and counter-coups indicating breaking down of the armed forces as a cohesive body.

All-though the period since the deposition of Duvalier was lacking a catalyst around which diverse elements seeking change could organize and galvaize themselves. When the elections for December 1990 were announced, ostensibly under considerable external pressure, such a catalyst emerged in the form of Fr. Jean Bertrand Aristide -- a radical priest belonging to the Salesian order. Immensely popular, he won the presidential elections with a landslide majority. His la lavalala i.e. 'cleansing' movement promised to wash away all elements of the corrupt decadent system. Neither his radical rhetoric nor his policies were acceptable to the old Duvalierist elements. Even the US was apprehensive of radicalism and his inability to keep his militant following in check. Promising only poverly with dignity, he became the epitome of all that the old Duvalierist elements had feared. Lynching of Known Tonton Macoutes by his followers, <sup>purges</sup> ~~progress~~ and transfers of the officers in the armed forces and his rhetorical calls to the big business

to adopt honest practices and show compassion and responsibility towards the poor only strengthened the resolve of his opponent.

Aristide was overthrown in <sup>September</sup> ~~Leptate~~ 1991 and Haiti saw another round of indiscriminate terror and violence directed against his followers. Aristide had "subverted" the democratic process, alleged any chief, Lt. General Raoul Cedras and the principal leader of the coup. International<sup>-al</sup> condemnation of the coup especially by members of the organisation of American States (OAS) including US ~~and~~ <sup>led</sup> imposition of oil and <sup>arms</sup> ~~embargo~~ and ~~also led to~~ suspension of economic aid by US and several European countries. For nearly two years after the coup, UN, OAS and several other countries have worked to broker a political peace that would allow Aristide to return and resume his office. After several efforts and under intense pressure from UN and US, Aristide and Cadras finally signed a formal<sup>al</sup> accord at Governor's Island in New York in July 1993. Under the terms of the agreement while Cadras agreed to step down and permit Aristide to resume power by 30 October 1993, Aristide agreed <sup>to</sup> an amnesty for all those who had participated in the coup.

The accord broke down as military junta -- which had reportedly signed it only to get UN sanctions lifted -- retraced its steps and refused both to relinquish power and allow Aristide to return. Neither sanctions nor threats of

harsher economic and military <sup>measures</sup> resources have persuaded the returned<sup>of</sup> the military Junta. Rather, emboldened it responded to internationalising criticism and reimposition of sanction by unleashing a fresh wave of violence and terror. Military Junta broke all pretensions to compromise and negotiations as it went ahead despite serious warnings by US and UN, and installed Supreme Court Justice Emile Jonassaint as provisional president.

Sancti<sup>i</sup>on's have been leaky <sup>as</sup> the military Junta continues to meet requirements for fuel and other goods from across the 250-mile long border with Dominican Republic. Wary of Aristide's radical rhetoric and given the low strategic importance of the country in the post-Cold war era, it is the US insistence on a negotiated settlement that has further emboldened the Junta. Its support for democracy including restoration of Aristide but only with the cooperation; in fact through the medium of the military that mainly accounts for the present impasse. Even possibilities of a multinational armed invasion -- that are being entertained presently -- are unlikely to restore Aristide. It is suggested that once military Junta is forcibly removed, Haiti should remain under the control of an internationalizing peace-keeping force until 1995 when fresh elections would be due. Such a scenario, if it permits the return of Aristide, would do so only for a brief period and that too, with his powers greatly circumscribed. In sum, the goal of democracy still remains far away

despite popular mobilization and peoples' sacrifice  
for it, and even more, despite regional and international  
rhetoric of support for it.



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