

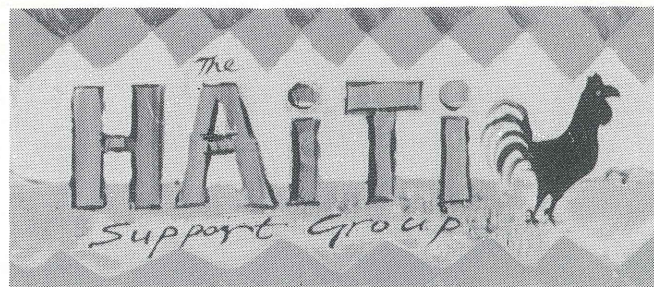
*The*  
**HAiTi**  
*Support Group*





# HAITI

## FROM DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY AND BACK



The day after the coup that ousted President Aristide, the military raided a meeting of the national peasant organisation, the MPP. Soldiers smashed the computers, printing equipment and doors of the MPP centre and stole peasant co-op savings. Military repression after the coup targeted the popular organisations which supported Aristide and forced their leaders to go into hiding. But, despite the months of brutal military rule, MPP leader Chavannes Jean-Baptiste continues to work for the return of democracy. He repeats what a peasant told him, *"They have ruined our crops and destroyed our equipment, but we were the ones who built everything, and we can build it all again."*

### ARISTIDE'S LANDSLIDE

Just nine months earlier Aristide had swept to power with a landslide 67% share of the vote. After 29 years of the Duvalier dictatorship and a further 5 years of military rule the Haitian people had won the fight for free elections. They voted NO to the brutal paramilitary militia, the Tontons Macoutes, and NO to corruption and state terrorism. Under Aristide, the people of Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, looked forward to building a new society based on participation and democracy.

But the military and the small middle class saw their vested interests and privileges threatened when Aristide attempted to empower the poor. On September 30th 1991 the military crushed Haiti's fledgling democracy and forced Aristide into exile. Since then thousands of his supporters have been killed and countless others beaten and tortured as the military has sought to break the spirit of the people.

### HAITI'S GRIM PAST REASSERTS ITSELF

Under the de facto government which replaced Aristide the repressive structures from the Duvalier era are being rebuilt. As the repression has intensified thousands of Haitians have attempted to flee the country but have been denied entry to the United States on the grounds that they are economic not political refugees.

### THE HAITI SUPPORT GROUP

The Haiti Support Group was launched in June 1992 with the following aims:

- to foster solidarity between the British and the Haitian people.
- to work to bring the situation in Haiti to the attention of the British people and government.
- to encourage Governments, Churches, trade unions, political parties, development agencies, etc. to make a clear commitment to genuine democracy in Haiti.
- to call on the governments of Britain, the United States and all member nations of the Organisation of American States to
  - i) condemn publicly and repeatedly the military repression in Haiti,
  - ii) to apply diplomatic pressure for the return of Aristide as President,
  - iii) to enforce a strict economic embargo except for humanitarian aid delivered to the poor through non-governmental organisations,
  - iv) to prepare programmes of substantial and collaborative economic development for Haiti once democracy is restored.

**In August 1992 the Haiti Support Group arranged the visit of President Aristide to Britain where he met Foreign Office ministers and addressed the 500 Years of Resistance Liverpool rally. Aristide stressed the importance of solidarity work in Britain and, on behalf of the Haitian people, asked for help in the struggle to secure a just and democratic future.**

**You can help the Haiti Support Group to publicise the situation in Haiti by making a donation.**

**Please make cheques/postal orders payable to *Haiti Support Group*.**

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