
Interview: Joseph Nerette

The embargo violates Haiti's status as a sovereign state

by Carlos Wesley

As Haiti's Provisional President Joseph Nerette states in the accompanying exclusive interview, "Small nations with no resources are the main victims" of the propaganda warfare waged by the advanced countries of the North, particularly the United States. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the case of Haiti itself.

The population of that impoverished nation is being starved to death in the name of democracy, through an embargo imposed by the Bush administration with the complicity of the Organization of American States, France, and other nations of the European Community. The claim is that by forcing the resignation of dictator Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Sept. 30, 1991, Haiti's military violated the "democratic will" of Haiti's population, two-thirds of whom voted to elect Aristide, in elections supervised by the U.N. and the OAS a little over a year ago. The embargo is supposedly designed to pressure the Haitian government to accept Aristide's return to the presidency.

But the reality of the matter, as Provisional President Nerette explained in a message to a conference of the Schiller Institute in Arlington, Virginia, on Dec 7, is that the embargo is pure genocide. In the interview below, Nerette took the occasion to again express his "congratulations to the organizers of this important conference, which gave Haiti a tribunal from which to rectify the witting or unwitting disinformation" being spread against it.

Nerette emphasized: "That an institution of such scope as the Schiller Institute could think of the implementation of an economic development and great infrastructure projects program, is and remains for me a worthy intention which should be encouraged by all means."

Aristide's private army

The reality in Haiti, which few are willing to speak about, is that the deposed Aristide was recruiting former members of the Tontons Macoutes, the dreaded death squads organized by former Haitian dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, into his own private militia, the SSP. According to acting

Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Honorat, who is Haiti's best-known human rights activist and a leader in the fight against Duvalier, more than 3,000 people had been registered in Aristide's Tontons Macoutes by the time he was overthrown. (See interview with Honorat in *EIR*, Dec. 20, 1991.)

When the National Congress, where most of the seats are held by members of the National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD), the coalition on whose ticket Aristide ran for the presidency, resisted his unconstitutional grab for power, he responded by sending the mob with "necklaces" in hand, invariably persuading the parliamentarians to go along with the President. It is not surprising that they capitulated; "necklacing" is a method of murder in which the victim's arms are chopped off, and a tire filled with gasoline is placed around his neck and set ablaze. Shortly before his overthrow, Aristide embraced an International Monetary Fund (IMF) austerity program to pay the debt, a betrayal that outraged his former supporters.

Guantanamo concentration camps

Since the U.S. decreed the embargo on Oct. 29, 1991, about 8,000 Haitians have fled the country, only to be intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard and taken to a concentration camp in Guantanamo, Cuba, to prevent them from obtaining political asylum in the United States. The U.S. Justice Department has been waging an unceasing war in U.S. courts to forcibly deport the Haitians. While out of one side of its mouth the Bush administration argues that the current Haitian government is a totalitarian dictatorship that should be overthrown, by force if necessary, it hypocritically also claims that there is no political persecution taking place in Haiti and that therefore those who are fleeing are "economic" refugees, not entitled to asylum.

As a "first step" to pave the way for Aristide's return, the administration wants a compromise prime minister to replace Honorat. Washington's current favorites are Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official close to circles in the U.S. intelligence community; Victor Benoit; and René Theodore,

the Communist Party boss. The U.S. State Department has gone on the record in support of Theodore: "This seems to be a step towards a negotiated solution in Haiti, a goal the United States strongly supports," a spokesman for the State Department said in late December. But "we still feel that the embargo is a necessary tool to encourage a negotiated solution in Haiti," said the official.

'I profoundly respect my country's Constitution'

The following interview with Joseph Nerette, Provisional President of the Republic of Haiti, was conducted by telephone on Dec. 17, 1991 by Dana Scanlon and Carlos Wesley.

EIR: The Bush administration and members of the Organization of American States (OAS) claim that your government is a puppet government, controlled by the armed forces. The current Haitian government says that the Army was obliged to intervene because the priest-President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was violating the Constitution and attempting to establish a dictatorship. Can you explain why you say that?

Nerette: You have said that the Bush administration and the countries of the OAS *claim* that my government is a puppet government, controlled by the Army. Personally, I have never been informed of such statements, which in reality are mere allegations with no foundation whatsoever. Were certain functionaries of the state or government, through an excess of language or otherwise, to advance such allegations, for reasons unknown, it would not by the same token engage the responsibility of that government or that state.

Nonetheless, I must say that since the beginning of the crisis, Haitian patriots and we others of the provisional government have not ceased to deplore the obvious ignorance manifested by certain statesmen or by the OAS, as far as the real foundation of the present Haitian government is concerned. To pretend that the provisional government is a puppet government controlled by the Army is to demonstrate a profound and regrettable ignorance of Haitian national reality and constitutional legislation.

As Provisional President of the republic and a jurist by profession, I was invested in my functions by the sovereign decision of the National Assembly, in conformity with the Constitution in place.

The deplorable events of Sept. 30, which led to the departure into exile of Father Aristide, could have been avoided. The political conflicts which marked the seven months of the latter's government are the proof.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect which I believe to be of the highest importance and which the international press has not covered. In effect, the Armed Forces of Haiti, on the occasion of the events of Sept. 30, did not seize power, as one might be tempted to believe, and the Parliament was not dissolved. In addition, it is that very same Parliament which

undertook the democratic process which led to my designation, in accordance with the Constitution.

EIR: The Haitian government is organizing elections for Jan. 5, to elect a new President, in conformity with the Constitution. According to the foreign press, Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Honorat would have declared that the elections could be canceled if a negotiated solution could be found. Does this mean that you would be ready to step down from the presidency so that Aristide might return to Port-au-Prince as President?

Nerette: If you had a true idea of the Constitution of Haiti and of the circumstances which led me to take in hand the destiny of the nation, you would know that Article 149 of the Constitution defines the conditions and the limits in which I was called upon to exercise power.

The profound respect which I profess for the fundamental charter of my country obliges me to not transgress on any of the principles that it imposes.

EIR: In an interview published recently in *EIR*, the prime minister declared that Aristide's return would provoke a civil war? What do you think?

Nerette: In my capacity as Provisional President of a country which has so often been battered by regrettable political conflicts, I prefer to abstain from answering such a question. It is, on my part, the best way to avoid such a misfortune.

EIR: Some have accused former President Aristide of creating a private army in the image of the Tontons Macoutes. It has even been said that former Tontons Macoutes were being recruited into this army. Could you provide us with any details?

Nerette: It seems that there has been some truth to all this. Nonetheless, the numerous responsibilities I have as Provisional President prevent me from going into details. The ministers of the Interior and of National Defense could be much more explicit on the matter.

EIR: The violence organized under the regime of President Aristide—the so-called *Père Lebrun* or necklacing—has been compared with the monstrous practices of the Pol Pot regime of Cambodia. Do you think this is a fair characterization? Was Haiti headed in that direction?

Nerette: In my inauguration speech, I expressed, in the most explicit fashion, my reprobation against this most inhuman practice.

We are, are we not, in the second half of the 20th century. And Haiti has always been in the Mediterranean of the Americas, the advanced beacon of a civilization of peace, and the standard-bearer of Negro civilization. The *Père Lebrun* has always, in my eyes, symbolized grounds for the disparagement of our race.

No matter what form violence takes, or where it is prac-

ticed, it must always be condemned, so that it is not even necessary to compare one form of violence to another.

EIR: Those who advocate the new world order are carrying out an international campaign to eliminate the armed forces in developing sector countries. The former U.S. secretary of defense and World Bank president, Robert McNamara—among others—is a leader in this effort. The President of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez, is also now demanding that the Haitian Armed Forces be dissolved, because they would represent, according to him, an obstacle to democracy. Do you think that the measures recently enacted against Haiti could be part of this campaign?

Nerette: As far as I know, Haiti is a sovereign country. Without underestimating its place in the concert of nations, there are certain decisions which can only be in the exclusive domain of the Haitian authorities.

From this standpoint, I strongly doubt that Mr. Carlos Andrés Pérez ought to have made such unwelcome statements, no matter what might be the reasons which could have motivated them.

It is not up to a foreign head of state to decide what is good for Haiti.

Anyway, is there not, in Venezuela, a well-established army? Because of their vocation and their training, the armed forces are the same everywhere.

Nonetheless, the Haitian Armed Forces are what they are, and they are ours.

In addition, I don't think that the embargo could be interpreted as part of a series of measures intended to dissolve the Haitian Armed Forces.

You must know that Haiti is a founding member of the OAS. From that standpoint, we can tell you that we have followed very closely the evolution of that institution. The OAS shares with all the big organizations of the world the inconveniences of administrative weight and red tape. For the longest time, the OAS was wasting away. It is almost moribund. The Haiti case seems to have been chosen by the OAS as a pretext to give itself a certain vitality and to regain an aura of importance. It is a misfortune, that it chose this hand, for this measure is prejudicial. The OAS is not in the right. Juridical notoriety of Haiti and certain foreign specialists are of the opinion that the OAS should be sued before the International Court of Justice.

EIR: In a series of documents written during the 1970s by the U.S. National Security Council, the American government calls for a policy to reduce the non-white population of the developing sector countries. This policy was put into effect in the name of U.S. national security interests. Do you think that current U.S. policy towards Haiti might be intended to reduce Haiti's population, with that in mind?

Nerette: I cannot and do not want to put on trial the intentions of American policy vis-à-vis the non-white population.

These measures, I presume, would be part of the "new orientation" that the American administration seeks to imprint on its policy. For that reason, I do not think I should venture an opinion on that.

Would they be aimed, these measures, at reducing the Haitian population? I dare not think so, for I prefer to consider the matter from a global standpoint. Also, as far as American policy toward Haiti is concerned, I do not see much of the change you seem to mention.

EIR: In an interview published in *EIR*, the ambassador of Ghana to the United Nations, and current chairman of the Group of 77, Dr. Kofi Awoonor, called for the cancellation of Haiti's foreign debt to help reestablish democracy and for the reconstruction of the country. What do you think of this proposal?

Nerette: Even Hell is paved with good intentions! The Haitian people are sensitive to this show of interest, which the ambassador of Ghana to the United Nations honors us with. I think that all those who say they are friends of Haiti should study this proposal, while taking into account, nonetheless, that democracy is already reestablished in this republic.

Any aid, any proposal for aid must seek to reorganize the national economic structures, which have been shaken to their very foundation by an unjust embargo, decreed in the name of democracy in order to impose an anti-democracy.

EIR: At the Dec. 8, 1991 conference of the Schiller Institute held in Virginia, participants voted up a resolution calling for an immediate lifting of the economic embargo against Haiti. The resolution also called for the implementation of an economic development program and great infrastructure projects, called for in the Schiller Institute's "True Fourth Development Decade" proposal. You were recently informed of this proposal, based on the economic ideas of Lyndon LaRouche. What do you think of this program?

Nerette: This is the opportunity for me to express my most spontaneous congratulations to the organizers of this important conference, which gave Haiti a tribunal from which to rectify the witting or unwitting disinformation which has taken place so far on the events which marked Haitian political life over the last two months.

In this war of the media, with great sophisticated electronic reinforcements, small nations with no resources are the main victims. It is not for nothing that a great African, Amadu Matar Umbo, during his mission at the helm of Unesco, launched his judicious campaign for a new order of North-South, South-South information.

Did you know that, since the events of Sept. 30, it is only recently that the big powers have started to listen to the real version of events? It could be said that the original moments of euphoria having passed, wisdom, reason, and objectivity are reclaiming their rightful place.

That an institution of such scope as the Schiller Institute

could think of the implementation of an economic development and great infrastructure projects program, is and remains for me a worthy intention which should be encouraged by all means.

EIR: What do you think of the role played by President François Mitterrand of France in the present crisis?

Nerette: We have all in Haiti deplored that a head of state of the importance and experience of Mr. François Mitterrand should have let himself be pulled into a gallery as subtle and complex as the events of Sept. 30 were.

Frankly, I am astonished. From this standpoint, it is possible to assume that his attitude was formed on the basis of the misinformation being supplied to him by his former ambassador in Haiti, Mr. Rafael Dufour.

EIR: I would like to know what you think of the recent statements by two black American leaders, Jesse Jackson and [Rep.] Charles Rangel [D-N.Y.], who have called for a U.S. invasion of Haiti.

Nerette: These were political statements, with no foundation.

EIR: Do you have any remarks you would like to address to our readers, in closing?

Nerette: There are many, and time does not permit us to enumerate them all.

First, the general impression one gets from this blast of aggression by the big powers against Haiti is as follows: After many years of our democracy being put on ice, our society should have made giant strides to catch up to the advanced group of western countries in matters of democratic conviviality. It was its misfortune that models were imposed which in no way correspond to its culture and its socio-economic context.

The United Nations and the OAS came to organize the elections in Haiti, and you know better than I do how things turned out. The observers did not have the courage to reveal the fraud and other electoral irregularities that were noted.

Was this out of ignorance of the norms and techniques for running elections? May inexperienced experts not come and complicate the life of our people. We already have enough problems.

In addition, may your readers not be duped, for everything which is said about Haiti is not always true, and the Haitian people is open to modern ideas of the rights and liberties of the human person and of peaceful democracy.

Finally, the Haitian authorities are not insensitive and indifferent to the natural reparations which should result from the enormous prejudice caused to Haiti and its people by an unconventional embargo, adopted in violation of our status as a sovereign state and full-fledged member of the Organization of American States. It were better that the OAS had never been created.

Demjanjuk case

Lawyer charges conspiracy, frameup

by Joseph Brewda

The U.S. and Israeli governments conspired to suppress evidence exonerating a man charged with Nazi war crimes, John Demjanjuk's Israeli attorney has charged. Yoram Sheftel told the Israeli Supreme Court Dec. 23 that this evidence, which the U.S. and Israeli governments obtained as far back as 1978, showed that his client, former Cleveland auto worker John Demjanjuk, is not "Ivan the Terrible," the guard at the Nazi concentration camp Treblinka whom he is accused of being. Demjanjuk was deported to Israel in 1985, where he has been in prison since. In 1988, he was convicted of being "Ivan the Terrible," and sentenced to death. Sheftel has petitioned the Israeli court to reopen the case based on the new evidence.

"This is a frameup . . . a case of fraud, deceit and destruction of evidence," Sheftel charged, and compared the case against Demjanjuk to that against Alfred Dreyfus, the French Jewish officer falsely accused of treason in the infamous anti-Semitic show trial of the last century. Sheftel said that the U.S. and Israeli governments proceeded with a case against Demjanjuk because they wanted a sensational trial in Jerusalem involving the Holocaust. Demjanjuk has always insisted that he is a victim of mistaken identity.

That the Demjanjuk trial was sensational is incontestable. It was broadcast live throughout Israel, and became a national obsession, as it was apparently meant to be. One of Demjanjuk's previous Israeli attorneys was found dead in what was claimed to be a suicide, and a bottle of acid was thrown in Sheftel's face as well.

What the evidence said

On Aug. 12, 1978, the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI)—its "Nazi-hunting" unit—obtained 100 pages of eyewitness testimony from people who had known "Ivan the Terrible," and who identified the Treblinka camp guard as one Ivan Marchenko. All of the testimony, from some 25 witnesses, dates back to the immediate postwar period, and had been more recently assembled from the archives by the Soviet government in connection with another Treblinka war crimes trial, that of Feodor Fedorenko of Ukraine. The Soviet government forwarded the trial evidence to the U.S. government in 1978. Included was the testimony of Marchenko's