

Aristide demands 'Contras' for Haiti

by Carlos Wesley

Jean Bertrand Aristide, the former dictator of Haiti, called on the United States to use his country for a rerun of Ollie North's drugs-for-arms Nicaraguan Contra policy. "We need you to fight with us in the same way we saw Americans fight in Nicaragua," he said, at a rally held at New York City's Brooklyn College on April 27. Aristide was induced to abandon Haiti's presidency last Sept. 30 by the country's military for, among other things, recruiting members of the dreaded Tontons Macoutes death squads of former Haitian dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier to set up his own Swiss-trained goon squad, the SSP.

Aristide also called for tightening the genocidal embargo that the Bush administration and the Organization of American States (OAS) have imposed on Haiti, one of the world's poorest countries, to force the reinstatement of Aristide and the appointment of Haitian Communist Party boss René Théodore as prime minister.

These two objectives can only be achieved with "a real blockade," said Aristide at an April 17 news conference at New York City Hall with Mayor David Dinkins. "Without petroleum, those who led the coup cannot resist. After a couple of days, they will be forced to allow democracy back in Haiti." When reporters noted that the embargo is causing starvation, Aristide said that the people are willing to "accept these big sacrifices," since "the solution is having democracy back in Haiti."

What democracy?

According to syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak in the April 24 *Washington Post*, the "demand from Washington boils down to this: Accept democracy or die! But it is a false democracy, of theory, not fact," they say, adding that Aristide's "commitment to democratic ideals is doubted even in the State Department." Aristide is best known for advocating the death of his opponents by the "necklace"—murdering a victim by chopping off his arms, placing a gasoline-filled tire around his neck, and setting the gasoline ablaze.

What Aristide and his patrons in the Socialist International and the Bush administration mean by "democracy," is unquestioned obedience to the dictates of Washington. Take the Bush administration demand that the communist Theodore be made prime minister. According to Sen. Dejean Belizaire, who led the Haitian parliamentary delegation to the OAS talks in Caracas last January, where Theodore's

designation was first announced: "When we got there the decision was already made. . . . It was not a negotiation. It was an imposition."

Politics of racism

Haiti's Parliament failed to ratify Theodore's nomination, and Haiti's Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the method through which he was selected—in a deal cut outside the country, which would have ended Haiti's sovereignty and made it a ward of the OAS. Nonetheless, the Bush administration deployed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America Robert Gelbard to Port-au-Prince, to threaten Haitians with more economic hardship and even a military invasion, unless they submit to U.S. demands.

Gelbard treated the black Haitians with utter contempt, reported Evans and Novak in the April 15 *Washington Post*. Gelbard rudely walked out of a dinner he himself was co-hosting with Ambassador Alvin Adams for half a dozen political leaders at the U.S. embassy. When his Haitian guests balked at naming a communist prime minister, Gelbard left in a huff, saying, "I have established that Haitians have one less chromosome, that of compromise and consensus, and on the other hand, one additional chromosome, that of conflict and dissension."

The blatant racism exhibited by the United States was scored by both Haiti's interim President Joseph Nerette and by Prime Minister Jean Jacques Honorat. "The United States and the OAS have always had one standard for blacks and another for whites," President Nerette told reporters in the United States by telephone on April 16. "The OAS does not respect the 'niggers' of Haiti. We can expect nothing from the OAS," Prime Minister Honorat said April 15, according to Reuters. "The whites can only impose an embargo on the 'niggers' of Haiti," said Honorat, who last year was awarded the American Bar Association's International Human Rights Award. "We will not sit to negotiate with any white. . . . They are doing all they can to have pretexts to invade us. We are doing our best to prevent the whites from taking over the country as they did in 1915," said Honorat, referring to the U.S. invasion and military occupation that lasted until 1934.

In an exclusive interview with this news service last Dec. 10, Honorat called the embargo "an act of destruction against this country, and it is an act of genocide." He added that Ibero-American leaders backing the embargo and calling for an invasion of Haiti "are afraid of their own militaries. They are afraid that the events that took place in Haiti will serve as an example, as an incitement, to induce their own militaries to act in this manner." He also blasted the United States and other OAS members, particularly Venezuela and Argentina, for refusing to grant asylum to the thousands of Haitians forced to flee their country because of the embargo. "It is a case of racism; it is well proven," he said of the U.S. policy, under which more than 10,000 Haitians were ordered forcibly repatriated earlier this year.