

# EDITORIAL

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### Haiti's History

The Republic of Haiti was established on January 1, 1804, after a slave revolt expelled the French colonial rulers and their allies. In the world's only successful slave revolt, however, "independence" has always been a relative term. The Haitian people have experienced the ravages of colonialism for 500 years, under a long line of despots, from Columbus to Duvalier, and on to today's (post-coup) rulers, who reinstated Duvalier savagery.

Haiti is more than the New World's second oldest republic, more than even the first black republic of the modern world. Haiti was the first free people to arise within, and in resistance to, the emerging Western European empires.

On December 16, 1990, after many bitter struggles, a popular revolution led to the overwhelming victory of Haiti's first freely elected president, the popular priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He got 67% of the vote. He was inaugurated on February 7, 1991. Seven months later, on September 30,

Aristide was driven from office by a military and commercial elite who had ruled for 200 years, and would not tolerate the loss of their traditional rights of terror and exploitation.

On the morning of September 30, President Aristide made his way to the palace. Most members of the presidential guard had vanished. The military, under the leadership of American-trained Lt. General Raoul Cedras, took control. After the intervention of the French ambassador,

General Cedras agreed to allow Aristide to leave the country. He boarded a plane to Venezuela. Aristide is expected to return to power no later than October 15, 1994.

The Duvaliers are the most famous members of Haiti's ruling oligarchy -- but not the only members. For two centuries, a small group of wealthy, mostly mulatto families, have wielded enormous power in Haiti, working in cooperation with dictators and juntas, and controlling

much of the economic life of the nation. Two families continue to be major players in the current Haitian crisis -- not only in Haiti, but also in Washington, DC. Their American lawyer-lobbyists have been at the heart of U.S. policy.

Beneath the Brandts and Mevs are several lesser-known members of the Haitian oligarchy: the Accras (textiles); the Bigios (iron and steel); the Behrmans (automobiles and trucks); the Apaids (electronics factories); and the Madsens (coffee holdings and beer production).

The Haitian military maintains its power and dispenses its own brand of justice, not only through the top generals who have frequently occupied the presidential palace, but also through a complex and omnipresent system of low-level, semi-official armed operatives -- the "section chief" and their assistant (attaches) -- who rule through fear and bribery. For 75% of Haitians who live in the countryside, the section chief is the government.

## The Real Deal Behind The U.S. Occupation Of Haiti

BY RON DANIELS

### Vantage Point:

When U.S. troops came ashore in Haiti in accordance with the last minute agreement brokered by former President Jimmy Carter, they were welcomed by the Haitian masses who have endured massive abuse, torture, intimidation and murder at the hands of General Raoul Cedras and his terrorist regime. People demonstrated and danced in the streets as word spread that their beloved President Bertrand Aristide would soon be coming home. With these happy images floating across the screen, how would anyone be opposed to the U.S. occupation of Haiti? For people of African descent who have been consistently victimized by white supremacy, there is a clear warning: Beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing.

The U.S. occupation is not intended to promote genuine democracy in Haiti nor is the occupation intended to benefit the Haitian masses who welcomed the U.S. soldiers as their liberators. Europe and America have never promoted real democracy and development for the Haitian

masses. On the contrary, Europe and America have always resented the slave rebellion/revolution which destroyed the myth of White superiority when Haiti defeated the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte to win the independence from France in 1812. The whole history of the U.S. relationship with Haiti has been one of consistent efforts to thwart real democracy and development for the Haitian masses in the interest of advancing and protecting U.S. business interests.

Hence U.S. policy towards Haiti including the previous intervention and occupation has always sought to create and nurture forces inside Haiti which would protect U.S. interest. It was the U.S. that created, trained and cultivated the corrupt and repressive Haitian military. It was the U.S. that fostered and tolerated dictator after dictator in Haiti including the dread Papa Doc Duvalier and his son Baby Doc. It was the U.S. which catered to the fair skinned Haitian elite in a strategy of divide and exploit, a strategy calculated to oppress the Haitian masses in order to keep Haiti safe for U.S. capital. Given this sordid history, what makes anyone think that the current U.S. occupation of Haiti is fueled by good intentions.

African people must be clear. The U.S. occupation of Haiti is ultimately designed to maintain the sta-

tus quo with a more benign face. No matter what the present images and appearances, the U.S. is not interested in insuring the empowerment of the popular democratic movements -- the peasants, workers and the poor represented by President Aristide. Rhetoric about democracy notwithstanding, the landslide election of the populist priest John Bertrand Aristide was a nightmare for the U.S. Aristide was swept into power by the impoverished Haitian masses because he promised to redistribute the wealth in a nation where the 1% of the Haitian people control more than 50% of the wealth. Historically the U.S. has always sided with the 1% against the Haitian masses. It should be understood therefore that both the U.S. and the Haitian elite had an interest in the coup that overthrew Aristide as the first democratically elected leader of Haiti nearly three and a half years ago.

The agreement brokered by former President Jimmy Carter and the current U.S. occupation of Haiti must be considered with these factors in mind. Aristide was compelled to declare that he would step down at the end of his five year term even though he never really had an opportunity to serve as President because of the coup. Now, after the stall, Aristide only has 16 months remain-

ing in his term. This concession was a clear signal to the Haitian elite that they would have an opportunity to return to power in the very near future. Cedras and the thugs who terrorized the Haitian masses were not only allowed to stay in power until October 15, the agreement did not even call for their exile from the country. In fact the agreement called for a general amnesty which could in these murderers escaping punishment for their rein of terror. And, it does not take a genius to figure out that as long as Cedras and his henchmen are in Haiti the road ahead for Aristide and his supporters will be extremely difficult.

Beyond the images and symbols, therefore, the reality is that Aristide was forced to accept an accord which is intended to promote his demise and the destruction of the popular movements which swept him into office. The ultimate intent of U.S. policy is to continue with business as usual, and business as usual means that the Haiti elite must be restored to power. Aristide, of course knows that this is a bad agreement. But in the end he was forced to grin and bear it and say "thank you" for a U.S. occupation which is meant to destroy the popular revolt which carries the aspirations of the Haitian masses.



## Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:  
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

## The O.J. Case: The Danger Of Crying Racism?

BY EARL OFARI HUTCHINSON

Nearly every African-American I talk to asks, "Do you think O.J. did it?" Before I can answer, the questioner snaps, "Well, I don't think he did it." When I ask, "How do you know?" They repeat the standard mush of rumor, innuendo, gossip, half-truth and fluff, which almost always boils it down to: "They're out to get the brother."

When I tentatively suggest that the circumstantial evidence against him is still evidence, they retort, "He was framed." When I ask, by whom? the list of "conspirators" includes: the Mafia, Columbian drug dealers, Las Vegas gamblers, the LAPD, the L.A. County District Attorney, the Klan, the caretaker or O.J.'s son.

When Newsweek asked blacks the same question some simply said "by persons unknown." When I ask, "Why?" They say: He was into cocaine. He had big gambling debts. He was an uppity black man. He was married to a white woman. He was having extramarital affairs with white women.

Many whites, of course, say the issue is murder, not race. The criminal justice system is not on trial, O.J. is. Blacks should stop screaming racism whenever a black gets into trouble with the law.

According to CNN polls 77 percent of whites say the case against O.J. is strong. Forty-five percent of blacks disagree. Sixty-three percent of whites think he'll get a fair trial.

Sixty-one percent of black think he won't. When it's race, many blacks and whites are on separate planets with no danger of colliding.

The case would be the last one I'd pick to harden racial lines. He dutifully followed society's rules, parlayed his talents into megabuck football, media and entertainment careers and attained cross-over appeal. O.J., along with Bill Cosby and Colin Powell are the only three black men since Booker T. Washington to claim the title of "honorary white man."

But O.J. outdid Cosby and Powell. They occasionally make nods to "black causes." O.J. didn't. He said nothing that stirred racial or political controversy. O.J. bucks the traditional groundrules that blacks use to pick their martyrs. In the past, the rallied around: Any black group or individual under attack by the white establishment of resisting injustice. Examples: civil rights activists and Black Panthers: Any black whose house was bombed by racists, beaten or killed by the Klan, Aryan Nation or police. Example Rodney King, et. al.: A prominent black in a high profile case who appears to be punished more severely than a prominent white who commits the same crime. Example: Mike Tyson vs. William Kennedy Smith.

O.J. doesn't fit any of these examples. But it doesn't matter. The knee's of blacks now jerk for any African American in the court docket. Here's why:

The system. Blacks remember the savage history of lynchings,

shootings, burnings and beatings. They still see laws enforced by white police, judges, prosecutors and juries. They still see a disproportionate number of black men being arrested and sentenced to stiff prison terms and the death penalty. They believe that the system is the inherent enemy of African Americans.

Racial stereotyping. The media tossed the presumption of innocence out the window with O.J. To many blacks this proved that white society automatically presumes black men are guilty of crimes. The relentless Hollywood and mainstream media stereotyping of young black males as crime-prone, drug dealing "gangstas" doesn't help. When Time doctored the cover photo of O.J. to make him appear more menacing and sinister that cinched it.

The Conservative assault. Black cringe at the drumbeat attacks on social programs and affirmative action, the escalation in racial hate crimes, law and order mania and ghetto economic desolation. They are convinced that the federal government and corporations have gone from benign neglect to vicious assault.

Conspiracy. The Nation of Islam, black militant organizations and some black leaders accuse white of plotting to wipe out blacks, the FBI's covert COINTELPRO campaign in the 1960s and 1970s to subvert black organizations and the government prosecution of black elected officials in the 1980s and 1990s fan the fears.

The monolith of race. No sane

person judges the character of white males by convicted mass murderer, Jeffrey Dahmer. But when a black is accused of, or commits a crime, blacks perceive that they are all on trial too. That's because whites seldom make gender, class, political or religious distinctions between blacks.

White males aren't routinely threatened with harassment or arrest as dope dealers, drive by shooters and gang bangers. They aren't followed by security guards in stores. Women don't hide their purses or make fast exits from elevators when a black person approaches. But black men, even middle-class stockbrokers, scientists and college professors have suffered these indignities.

Still while blacks must continually protest racial double standards in law, media and society, continually crying racism is a dangerous trap. I asked one of O.J.'s defenders, "What if the evidence proves he did it?"

My answer: If so, you'll seem personally foolish and politically paranoid. You'll confirm the suspicion of many doubtful (and all bigoted) whites that blacks always blame the system for their criminality or failures. You'll lose credibility and further erode public support for black grievances.

Racism is a central issue in American life, but it's not central to every issue. Blacks must choose their racial martyrs more carefully. Remember what happened to the shepherd boy who cried wolf once too often.

## perspectives

### Winners And Losers In The Education Game III

Very few years I feel compelled (driven) to upset the school reformers' with a reprint of that curriculum at a 1930's Jim Crow high school in Missouri. And always I get innumerable inquiries from parents or the younger teachers: "what in the world has happened?" Last week was no different.

A number of people have been quite disturbed. "Apparently we've been hoodwinked, to put it mildly, in respect to the



By Professor Mckinley Burt

"great progress" alleged to have been made in America's public schools". Others say that given this and other retrogressions illuminated by their own experiences, how can the Portland system make statements like "we have to dramatically raise the education levels of students, schools failed to reach in the past" (without massive infusions of resources).

Or they are questioning the optimism of Jack Bierwirth, Portland Public Schools Superintendent, "this year we will embark on a plan to 'push' all students into an academic regimen equal to that traditionally reserved for the college-bound... The state plan attempts to reach the 'forgotten half' in two ways: by requiring all students to meet high academic standards and by 'blending' academics with new 'vocational' paths that lead to further studies and good jobs".

A parent called me and asked, "just how detached are these people from reality? I've started volunteering and have realized almost immediately that a number of trained specialists are needed in the areas of remedial and tutorial support. We volunteers are certainly committed but there is no way we alone can implement this 'great-leap-forward' -- which allegedly will in just a half a decade reverse a serious decline. Neither the tax payers nor the legislature seem willing to seriously engage the problem". The woman was almost in tears.

Opponents and backers of Oregon's school reform plan have drawn up along some rather well defined lines. We have seen here the optimistic plans

and projections (and rhetoric) of the supporters. But we also are aware that Ms. Jeanne Allen, founder of the Center For Education Reform, feels that the national reform effort is "the train that went down the wrong track". Allen claims the so-called reform waters down learning requirements to accommodate slow learners and that it emphasizes "learning

skills" and behavior rather than strict academic standards. Many black parents are saying the same thing. And in addition are protesting what they view as new "tracking" modes. Our State Superintendent of instruction says "not true at all".

I frequently cite my own experiences in The Dalles, Oregon where I served as a volunteer and consultant with the Junior High School (1966). I was able to win a National Science Foundation award for this district because the project I designed was predicated upon a student level of academic achievement similar to my own at the same time of life. Last week, I described an academic experience that was routine (unless you decided on a vocational school).

The emphasis then, in 1939, and in The Dalles, 1966, was on developing students who could enter anybody's college whether it was immediately after high school or much later, after a period of work experience (so often necessary for survival). The merit of this approach was emphatically drawn to my attention at The Dalles aluminum plant where I was employed in the accounting department I noticed that some of the most sophisticated machinery and instrumentation in American industry was operated and serviced by graduates of the local high school. There wasn't even a nearby community college at the time.

With their solid background in the fundamentals of basic math, science and English there was no difficulty in handling this sophisticated interface given adequate manufacturer's manuals, guides and films. The kids from the cherry orchards, farms and logging shows made the transition with no sweat.

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