

DROP THE DEBT

Summer 2007

NEWS and ACTION from Jubilee USA Network, Washington, DC

Deepening Our Roots, Creating Community, Building a Movement!

2nd Annual Grassroots Conference

Hits Chicago June 15 to 17

AS THIS EDITION OF "DROP THE DEBT" goes to press, Jubilee supporters from across the country and around the world are preparing to gather for the Jubilee USA Second Annual Grassroots Training & Organizing Conference.

This year's conference will feature a keynote address by Amy Goodman of the Pacifica television and radio program *Democracy Now!* as well as speakers from Ecuador, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal. Cultural offerings include Afro-Colombian dancers and musicians Julio Montañó Montenegro and Martha Arboleda

Ortiz and hip-hop performance ensemble Kuumba Lynx. There will also be a special screening of *Bamako*, a feature film that puts the IMF and World Bank on trial for locking Africa in a stranglehold of debt and structural adjustment.

The conference program includes skill-building sessions for grassroots economic justice activists as well as workshops that will deepen participants' understanding of debt, global poverty and inequality. And of course there will also be plenty of time for networking, strategizing, and exploring Chicago nightlife with like-minded folks from across the United States.

This year's workshop and plenary offerings include:

- Envisioning Alternatives: Building a North-South Movement
- Sabbath Economics in the Sabbath Year
- China, Venezuela, and the Rise of New Lenders

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NEVER AGAIN!

Donegal Vulture Fund Receives \$15.4 million from Zambia in UK Court

ON APRIL 24, the UK Royal Court of Justice in London ruled that Zambia must pay \$15.4 million plus a yet-to-be-determined share of legal costs to Donegal International, a vulture fund that sued Zambia for more than \$50 million this year.

Though Donegal was not awarded the full amount it originally sought, the injustice of the result could not be more clear: it remains possible for companies like Donegal to operate legally as their practices continue to plunge developing nations into deeper poverty. Led by American investor Michael Sheehan, Donegal purchased a portion of Zambia's debt for \$4 million. The vulture fund now stands to make a major profit out of one of the world's most impoverished nations.

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LIBERIA UPDATE

Obstacles to full debt cancellation must be cleared immediately

JUBILEE USA NETWORK IS WORKING with partners in Liberia and Europe to campaign for the full cancellation of Liberia's odious debts.

In February, Jubilee delivered more than 10,000 valentines to U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson Jr., urging him to support immediate cancellation of Liberia's debt. After the action, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that the United States would cancel \$391 million in debts it had been claiming from Liberia.

This announced cancellation is only a first step as U.S. claims on Liberia represent only a small portion of Liberia's total debt. Liberia owes the largest chunk of its debt — \$1.6 billion — to the IMF, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank. Addressing cancellation of these debts is complicated by the sizeable outstanding arrears that Liberia has to these institutions.

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“...proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you...”
— Leviticus 25:10

Jubilee USA Network began as Jubilee 2000/USA in 1997 when a diverse gathering of people and organizations came together in response to the international call for Jubilee debt cancellation. Now, more than 80 organizations including labor groups, churches, religious communities and institutions, AIDS activists, trade campaigners and over 9,000 individuals are active members of the Jubilee USA Network. Together we are a strong, diverse and growing network dedicated to working for a world free of debt for billions of people.

In the Jubilee Year as quoted above in Leviticus, those enslaved because of debts are freed, lands lost because of debt are returned, and community torn by inequality is restored. Today international debt has become a new form of slavery. Debt slavery means poor people working harder and harder in a vain effort to keep up with the interest payments on debts owed to rich countries including the US and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Jubilee USA Network brings together people to turn this reality around by active solidarity with partners worldwide, targeted and timely advocacy strategies and educational outreach. Please join us in working for Jubilee justice.

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VOICE OF THE GRASSROOTS

Policies of the Just

Q&A With Atieno Odour

Student activist, University of Delaware

ATIENO ODUOR, A UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE SOPHOMORE, brings new energy and enthusiasm to the Jubilee USA Network. She has long been a gender activist, speaking out against gender disparity and violence here in the U.S. and in Kenya, her native country. However, it was not until recently that the Odour became aware of the issue of vulture funds and illegitimate debt. When Emily Sikazwe, director of Zambia-based Women for Change, and monét cooper, Jubilee USA program associate, spoke to Odour's womens studies class at UD, Odour became outraged. Since that March day, she has spoken at numerous events in the campus community linking the issues of debt, gender, and AIDS in Africa. Odour, a political science major with minors in African studies and biochemistry, and other UD students are starting a Jubilee group and have already started sending postcards about the JUBILEE Act to Senator Joseph Biden, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Ask Odour where this passion comes from and her reply is simple. "I am against poor nations going down into chaos simply because they had to pay off their debts," she says. "It's insane."

What inspired you to join Jubilee USA?

When monét spoke on campus about vulture funds, at first I could not believe her, I thought it was a joke. After her lecture I researched the issue and to my shock vulture funds were real but even worse they were legal and had actually drained money from poor countries such as Peru! Now they were targeting another poor country Zambia where 23 percent of all children are orphans. How can you not be enraged? I was so mad — beyond madness! So I joined Jubilee grassroots to learn more and be made aware of such illegal business deals that condemn humanity.

How did you develop the passion you have shown for the issue? Is there a personal story you can tell?

I have grown up in Kenya, and watched parents die unnecessarily leaving behind young orphans to fend for themselves. I am shocked that the international community will tolerate and endorse vulture funds and debt repayments at the expense of the poorest of the poorest in the world. It fills me with so much rage.

This past winter I traveled to Kenya for the holidays but only to find my village ravaged completely by AIDS. An entire generation of parents have been swept away leaving behind elderly grandmothers in their 60s, 70s and 80s taking care of very young orphans some of whom were sick.

Child-headed households have become common and are still on the rise. I met an 8-year-old girl nursing her sick father and at the same time tending after her 6-year-old brother. The children are up by 6:30 a.m. working on the farm so that they can have food.

The children were sick, alone and hungry. The grandmothers are blind, weak and/or are forced to beg for food in order to feed their grandchildren. My heart aches when I think of those brave children battling life on their own. And I am enraged that the world has turned a blind eye to

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the AIDS pandemic. Those at World Bank/IMF and that court in UK demand debt repayment, but they don't realize Africa has become a continent of orphans. Actually, they are aware of the situation they just want to make profits period – even if it kills millions.

What are your personal goals for the future?

I am working to become an expert at formulating and enforcing good policy for Africa. I can honestly say that I am already doing what I'd love to do after I finish my studies.

How does grassroots participation strengthen you for the work you will do?

Jubilee USA offers tremendous support, knowledge and motivation concerning having good policy in Africa. As a grassroots member I get quick info and updates on current policy changes. I pass on that knowledge to my community here at UD and am planning to travel to Kenya this summer where part of my work will include educating Kenyan youth about the effects of debt in their country and continent.

People think that Africans are just poor, but they don't understand that Africa has been made poor. The youth in my country have no jobs, I am sure they ask themselves some very hard questions on why this world has no economic place for them. In every urban area street children are growing at an alarming rate, in the rural areas the elderly have been made beggars.

The IMF, World Bank, African leaders and multinational corporations just don't get it. I know that once the debts have been cancelled, that money can be used to fight AIDS and support AIDS orphans.

How do you think your education helps you in working in the Jubilee grassroots program?

My courses revolve around African issues. I get knowledge from my classes but Jubilee offers the opportunity for one to take action against bad policies. Furthermore my studies enable me to relate well to what Jubilee is fighting against.

Anything to add?

I run a community-based project in West Gem, my village, which supports orphans and elderly grandparents who have been left by themselves. It is difficult to fundraise and there are times when the children have no fees (money to pay the school fees, etc) and are sick or when there is no food. There are very difficult times when the money is so short or not available, or when the elderly die from hunger. The story seems fictitious but it is actually the reality. I think once the debts are cancelled, it will be much easier for the children and we won't have to



Atieno Odour with a family her organization helps in West Gem, Kenya, Odour's village.

fundraise a 1,000 times on what we could get instantly. Even better, there won't be a need for many charitable organizations when the policies are just.

You visit the clinics in the area only to find AIDS patients sharing beds, or worse, four infants in the same bed. It is ridiculous. It is so annoying that we drive entire societies to such inhumane state. The clinics have no vehicles, so patients must walk miles and miles to get treatment. I am talking about elderly women too weak [to walk]. Yet, when the kids are sick, they must carry them on their back and walk those crazy miles. When you reach the hospital, there is a long line, mostly full of women and children. You look at the patients sometimes and they have not eaten for days. There is no access to clean water, no electricity. There are no doctors — just trained people from the community. I could go on and on about the fragility of our health sectors. People just die pointlessly and courts still have the boldness to pass legislation in favor of vulture funds! The same people who are supposed to defend the weak and ensure just policies are the same ones bringing havoc to our world.

If you would like to reach Atieno Odour, please e-mail her at atieno@udel.edu.

“The same people who are supposed to defend the weak and ensure just policies are the same ones bringing havoc to our world.”

OUTLOOK: EYES ON HAITI



Row 1 (left to right)

Children in Boston, a district in Cité Soleil, sit near the house of Amaral, a man who Pierre says the Haitian government calls “a gangster, thief, a criminal.” Pierre notes that Amaral was considered a great leader in Belekou, another district in Cité Soleil. He was a public opponent of Gerard Latortue’s government and is a partisan of Fanni Lavalas, which supports the return of Aristide.

A boy stands in Belekou near his house. In an interview, Pierre explains that many Haitian children suffer from malnutrition. “That is the situation of almost all children in Haiti.”

During a demonstration in front of the Canadian embassy to demand the return of Titid — the name Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s supporters affectionately call him — to Haiti, a boy raises a poster that reads, “Down with expensive life.”

Row 2 (left to right)

A woman carries a child at Belekou, a district in Cité Soleil. Pierre observes, “I think Cité Soleil describes the situation of the majority of Haitians — the poverty and all bad living situations of our brothers and sisters in Haiti.”

Former Deputy of Saint Marc Amanus Maette leaves the National Penitentiary as a free man with his wife Haitian activist Ketia Joseph Maette on Thursday, April 26. Amanus was a political prisoner held for speaking out against the Latortue administration.

Market women in Cité Soleil.



Wadner Pierre

APRIL 26—THE MAN WHO GAVE WADNER PIERRE his first camera knew him first as an altar boy, not a photographer.

It was Fr. Gerard Jean-Juste, pastor of St. Claire’s Parish of the Tiplas Kazo community just outside of Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital city, who needed someone to document the masses he celebrates. What was a chance for Pierre to support his education eventually became a career. The 23-year-old Haitian is now an independent journalist still using the camera to earn money but also to fight poverty in Haiti in a different way.

“Day by day I see I cannot fight poverty by just writing. My photos show the bad situation of the poor in Haiti,” Pierre says. “If our friends or our partners want to help us in Haiti, I track the way for them so they can make important investments...to help us build [the country].”

Pierre’s photos capture the beauty and struggle of everyday Haitians as they work, play and live in a country still reviving itself from the coup of Jean Bertrand Aristide’s administration. Each of Pierre’s subjects are a testament to the resilience of the Haitian people and the need for immediate debt cancellation in a country where newly elected president René Préval is still wrestling with the aftermath of dictators and a \$1.3 billion debt that bears the weight of every Haitian’s name.

Read more about Wadner Pierre at <http://web.mac.com/darrenell/iWeb/Site%2013/Photos.html>. Learn about how you can help Haiti by asking your representative to co-sponsor H.R. 241, the resolution that strongly urges IFI leaders to cancel Haiti’s debt, at www.jubileeusa.org.

Join the Call for Liberia's Immediate Debt Cancellation

By Ezekiel Pajibo

LIBERIA IS A WEST AFRICAN NATION that has endured more than 14 years of a brutal civil war. The civil war was preceded by a decade of an equally brutal military dictatorship. For almost a quarter century the people of Liberia have had to live in fear of losing their lives. Millions fled to seek refuge in neighboring countries and the West. Others became displaced within the country as their land, homes, and families were taken from them.

But this isn't a tragedy that began with the rise of Liberian dictators Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor. The tragedy of the Liberian people dates back 150 years when freed people of color first set foot on the 43,000 square miles of territory that they named Liberia.

The settlers refused to recognize the inherent rights of the indigenous people, who comprised more than 90 percent of the total population. The Americo-Liberians subjugated and alienated indigenous Africans from the political, economic and social life of the new nation. From Liberia's birth the pangs of injustice have lived on until now.

In 2003, the country embarked on an historic path. Parties to Liberian conflict reached an agreement to end the war and the United Nations agreed to deploy 15,000 peacekeepers to the country. A transitional government was established and the peace accord was largely observed, a feat uncommon to parts of Africa that have had long running conflicts.

Two years later, Liberia held its freest and fairest elections ever. More than a million Liberians registered to vote and more than 90 percent participated in the elections, which resulted in the first female democratically elected president in Africa.

Yes, Liberia begins anew but the task is daunting. Civil war has left Liberians pauperized and in absolute squalor. The country's unemployment is at 85 percent. Seventy percent of the population lacks access to safe drinking water and more than half of the country's population lives on 50 cents per day. Electricity is non-existent for more than 90 percent of the residents, as well as schools and hospitals. Meanwhile, roads and phone lines are in ruin.

The peace and democracy dividend has not yet manifested in the daily lives of the people; thus, the prospect of returning to hardship, despondency and war is real. To prevent this from happening, Liberia needs international support in the form of immediate and unconditional debt cancellation.

For this hard earned democracy to be meaningful and sustainable, the living conditions of the Liberian people have to dramatically improve. Servicing debt prevents this from happening. Liberia's debt was contracted by illegitimate govern-



ments, which used it to abuse the rights of the Liberian people. It is impossible to identify how the money borrowed improved the social and economic conditions of the Liberian people.

During the regime of the settler oligarchy, the majority of Liberians did not have the right to vote. Only male property owners could vote and because property ownership was largely in the hands of the settlers, most Liberians were denied the inalienable right to elect their own leaders.

During the military dictatorship, at which time the United States provided in excess of \$500 million in loans to the military government, massive human rights violations occurred including extra-judicial murders.

Now, Liberians who have survived regimes under which more than 10 percent of the population lost their lives, are paying for their own oppression and destruction. This is unacceptable and it is immoral.

Liberia, like Germany after World War II and more recently Iraq, deserves immediate debt cancellation. Give Liberia a fair chance: Cancel the debt now!

Ezekiel Pajibo is director of Center for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE), which is based in Monrovia, Liberia. The Center for Democratic Empowerment assists in efforts at building a culture of democracy in Liberia. Pajibo can be reached at +231 5 867 280 or obiejap@yahoo.com.

BLOG THE DEBT

What's happening inside Jubilee USA's blog at jubileeusa.typepad.com

—Compiled by Muhammad Kirdar and Julie Muriuki, interns

April 26: A History of Opposition to the World Bank

Catch the video on Youtube.com of Antonia Juhaz, economic justice activist and author, discussing the history of mobilization against the World Bank/IMF. Produced by FORA.tv, the almost eight-minute clip features Juhaz explaining how the formation of these international financial institutions has hurt sustainable development, rebuilding economies and supported the existence of hegemony and economic dominance of the West.

April 18: World Bank to Leave Ecuador

Ecuador's President Rafael Correa has said that a World Bank rep tried to bribe him to accept a loan three years ago when he was the country's finance minister. The rejection of loans from the World Bank/IMF and the ouster of its officials from Ecuador signals a policy shift in how developing countries deal with the international financial institutions, which stay afloat by loaning money at interest to developing nations — often with economic policy conditions attached.

April 17, 25: Beyond the Wolfowitz Scandal and the Confidence Crisis

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are declining as states break away, refusing to pay illegitimate debts: Eric Toussaint, Soren Ambrose and Brian Concannon Jr. offer their insights. Also, former Communications and Advocacy Coordinator Debayani Kar is quoted in a Wall Street Journal article on the Wolfowitz scandal.

April 9: Make the Call for Haiti

After years of political instability, Haiti is being forced to implement harmful conditions set by the IMF and World Bank to get debt relief by 2009 at the earliest. Ask your Rep to co-sponsor the Haiti Debt Cancellation Resolution, H.Res.241, calling for debt cancellation for Haiti without delay and without harmful conditions.

If you're interested in writing for *Blog the Debt*, contact [monet cooper](mailto:monet.cooper@jubileeusa.org) at monet@jubileeusa.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

REGISTER TODAY FOR THE

CANCEL DEBT FAST

SEPTEMBER 6 TO OCTOBER 15, 2007

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ORDER YOUR BROCHURES
NATHAN@JUBILEEUSA.ORG

Revolving Doors

New Communications and Advocacy Coordinator

Greetings from Karen Joyner,

In April I joined Jubilee USA as the new communications and advocacy coordinator. Debi has done a wonderful job of handing the position over to me and I know she will be missed!

I am from Charlottesville, Virginia and the very proud mother of James, 7, a second grader at Burnley-Moran Elementary.

I have worked on World Bank and IMF reform issues for over a decade. During the last five years, I worked as a consultant on global justice issues. Prior to consulting, I lived in London for seven years, where I worked with the Jubilee Campaign there in the late 1990s and carried out much of the core policy work, which included creating the campaign agenda. The basic issues are not new to me, but it has been a while since I've worked on debt. I am enjoying catching up on all the progress in the campaign over the last few years and look forward to making my contribution as part of the Jubilee USA team.

Feel free to be in touch!

Karen Joyner
karen@jubileeusa.org

Jubilee USA Interns

Our winter/spring interns have left and our summer interns are in the building. We said goodbye to policy interns **Chantal Bright**, **Julie Muriuki** and **Jason Weakley** and grassroots interns **Caryn Bruyere** and **Laura Shaw**.

Communications & Advocacy Interns



Tae Kang

Tae Kang and **William Owusu** will join the Communications and Advocacy team as summer interns.

Kang is finishing his last semester at the University of Pennsylvania where he will receive a master's degree in Social Policy. He is passionate about research in the area of social and economic development, which he believes empowers communities to alleviate poverty and advocate for alternative policy options.

Owusu, who is from Ghana and Sierra Leone, graduated from Western Michigan University in 2006 with a master's in Development Administration with a concentration in Public Policy. He returned to Sierra Leone after he received his bachelor's degree. It was

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an experience he says changed his life. "What I saw in Sierra Leone shocked my conscience," he remembers. "My mother and brothers lived there. I said I have to do something to make a difference and searched for a program that would help me contribute to change."



William Owusu

Outreach & Congregations Interns

On the Grassroots team, we are joined by **Patricia Abbey-Mensah**, who is originally from Ghana and graduated from the University of Ghana with a degree in political science in 2001. She received her master's of Development Administration from Western Michigan University last December. Abbey-Mensah is excited to work with a group that takes an advocacy approach to development/poverty issues. She comes with some great experience as an intern community organizer with Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy and Action in the Community.



Sheena Shukla

Sheena Shukla is finishing her sophomore year at Indiana University-Bloomington. She is active with the Indiana Public Interest Research Group where she has been working on getting the campus to adopt better environmental policies to address global warming. Shukla is fluent in Spanish and has lived in Guatemala.

Deepening Our Roots, *continued from page 1*

- International Debt 101
- Race to 2015: Debt, Trade, and the Millennium Development Goals
- Making the Connections: International Debt and Global AIDS
- Global Apartheid: Anti-Oppression Training
- Meeting your MOC: Grassroots Lobbying and Advocacy
- Getting Ready for Campaign '08: Bird-Dogging, Candidate Forums and more
- More 'Inconvenient Truths': Debt, Oil, and Global Warming

This year's conference builds on the extremely successful event hosted by Jubilee Oregon in May 2006. Many thanks to this year's conference sponsors and supporters, especially School Sisters of Notre Dame, Africa Action, DuPage Global AIDS Action Network, Wheaton Franciscans, American Friends Service Committee, the Crossroads Fund, ONE, Church World Service, Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America, and the Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European, and Latino Immigrants of Illinois.

Never Again, *continued from page 1*

This year, Zambia was expected to save about \$40 million thanks to debt relief from the IMF, World Bank, and U.S. government. The recent ruling allows Donegal to seize nearly half of that amount — money that would otherwise have been used to build and sustain facilities and employees in the country's schools and health clinics.

Jubilee USA and its partners are working to stop Donegal from collecting the money and to ensure that vulture funds don't prey on impoverished countries any longer. Our Congressional allies have committed to holding a series of hearings on the practices of vulture funds over the next few months. These hearings will feature testimony from an array of development and legal experts regarding policy and legal options to shut the vulture funds down.

Another opportunity to call attention to the activities of vulture funds will be the G8 Summit, scheduled to take place June 6 to 8 in Heiligendamm, Germany. Jubilee has been actively working with partners and government representatives to encourage G8 leaders to urgently commit to address the damage inflicted by vulture funds.

Until decisive action is taken in the U.S. and elsewhere vulture fund activity will continue to compromise development efforts in numerous poor countries. Vulture fund activity could pose a significant threat to the benefits to be gained through Liberia's soon-to-be won debt relief. Liberia has more than \$1.5 billion in commercial debt held by hedge funds. Jubilee is working with civil society in Liberia and allies elsewhere to ensure that the vulture funds do not sue Liberia.

Be sure to frequently check our website for continuing updates on this issue.

Liberia Update, *continued from page 1*

These arrears need to be cleared before Liberia will be eligible for a more comprehensive debt relief deal.

Disagreements between G7 members have delayed decision on Liberia's arrears clearance for some months. At their Finance Ministers' meeting prior to the IMF/World Bank spring meetings in April, G7 ministers stated they would work for a "rapid resolution to Liberia's arrears to the international financial institutions." They went on to articulate support for "available internal resources" to be used to finance the clearance of Liberia's arrears and noted that they were "prepared to make additional financial contributions."

These statements do indicate steps toward debt relief for Liberia. However, there are several remaining hurdles Liberia must clear before obtaining debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. There is significant disagreement on how to clear arrears to the African Development Bank and the deal on the arrears clearance to the World Bank and IMF has not yet been sealed. Beyond these initial obstacles, qualifying for debt cancellation under the HIPC initiative involves a years-long obstacle course in which the IMF requires countries to implement harmful economic policies such as privatization of water and electric systems, the imposition of user fees on health care, and austerity budgets that limit spending on nurses, doctors, and education.

Once the issue of arrears is solved, Liberia should qualify for quick entry to the HIPC Initiative. However, the specific economic conditions Liberia will have to implement in order to reach the point where debt relief is permanent — "completion point" — are yet to be determined. These conditions could delay debt relief substantially.

Jubilee USA will remain vigilant in calling on the U.S. government and the IMF/World Bank not to impose harmful economic policy conditions. Liberia needs immediate cancellation, without delays.

Country Profile: Haiti

By Chantal Bright, Communications & Advocacy intern, and Muhammad Kirdar, Outreach & Congregations intern

In 1804 Haiti won independence from France, becoming the first independent black republic and the only nation ever to form from a successful slave rebellion. But Haiti's auspicious beginnings have been marred by debt, economic collapse and an ongoing cycle of political violence since its independence. Today, Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere.

In February 2004, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was removed from office with support from the United States government. Enjoying broad popular support, especially from Haiti's poorest citizens, Aristide brought hope after the 30-year father/son Duvalier regime — a dictatorship notorious for its brutal death squads and self-indulgent use of foreign assistance.

On March 9, 2004 Gerard Latortue was appointed to head a provisional government by a "Council of the Wise", created by the international community against Haitian constitutional law. While the United Nations was ostensibly overseeing the organization of new elections, human rights organizations documented massacres by Haitian death squads amounting to a reported 8,000 murders and more than 35,000 sexual assaults.

The recent democratic election of President René Prével in February of last year could be an important turning point in the republic's history, but much doubt, stemming from its recent history, persists.

Debt: Haiti's instability is exacerbated by its enormous debt burden. Haiti has a total external debt of \$1.4 billion, 45 percent of which was accumulated under the Duvalier dictatorships. Recent efforts to alleviate Haiti's debt burden include the Inter-American Development Bank's approval of 100 percent debt relief and Haiti's admission to the World Bank and IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC). However, the country will not qualify for debt cancellation from the IMF/ World Bank until it completes the HIPC program, a process which involves the implementation of harsh economic policies based on the "Washington Consensus" doctrines of privatization, liberalization, and cuts to



social spending. Meanwhile, the implementation of Haiti's IDB debt cancellation also depends on Haiti's graduation from the HIPC program, a process which will drag out until 2009 at the earliest.

Population: 8,706,497

Poverty: 80% of the population lives under the poverty line and 54% in abject poverty.

Unemployment Rate: In 2002, there was widespread unemployment and underemployment; more than two-thirds of the labor force do not have formal jobs. Following the removal of Aristide, over 10,000 workers in Haitian civil enterprises lost their jobs.

Source: Jubilee USA Haiti factsheet, CIA World Fact Book, BBC News, U.S State Department

Why We Fast

By Nathan Fishman

Why do you fast
I asked
An Ethiopian spiritual warrior.
For him it was an easy question.
He said: "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection."
He said it's not the hunger that makes fasting hard,
But the immediate envy of the devil
And subsequent bombardment.
The ceaseless temptations, and internal and
external corruption.
A personal relationship with God
equals a fight against the desires of
the physical dimension.

To see the full poem and register to fast for a day or more visit www.canceldebtfast.org, and check out the Poetry Project at the same site.

A graphic advertisement for the 'Cancel Debt Fast'. It features a microphone icon and the text: 'CALLING ALL POETS', 'WHERE: WWW.CANCELDEBTFAST.ORG', 'WHEN: RIGHT NOW!', 'Jubilee USA is looking for poets passionate about social justice to join the Cancel Debt Fast! We're honoring the relationship between poetry, performance and social justice.', 'FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: NATHAN FISHMAN NATHAN@JUBILEEUSA.ORG', 'Register for the fast and commit to writing a poem. Visit www.canceldebtfast.org and click "Poetry Project" in the menu bar.', '"POETS HAVE HELD A BRIGHT LIGHT OF TRUTH ALOFT TO SHOW US A WAY FORWARD."', and 'AMY GOODMAN, HOST OF Democracy Now!'.