



# Haiti PAPERS

## Harnessing History to Development: The Story of Cazale

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In 2004 Haiti will celebrate the bicentennial of its Independence as the world’s first black country and the first and only place where a slave revolt succeeded. There are many aspects to this story, not all of them well known. Cazale, a small village north of Port-au-Prince, has one of the most unusual stories to tell. Its people plan to celebrate the contribution their ancestors made to Independence, and are searching for the best way to use this unique legacy to lead their community forward. In profiling how their effort is going, this paper tries to shed light on the more general question of how communities can tap their heritage and sense of belonging to mobilize all their human and physical resources for self-improvement. It also asks if a national event can be the doorway for local communities to put the community development process in motion.

This paper will try to answer these questions in two ways. First, it seeks to clarify the concept of “community” by distinguishing between its meaning as a place and as a group of people. In relation to this project, it examines how subgroups interact with one another and how these relationships are shaped by the locality. Second, the paper draws on interviews and meetings with the people of Cazale to present how one community is planning to seize the development opportunity provided by a national celebration to formulate concrete and sustainable collective actions. In addition to exploring what such a plan entails, it offers a proposed framework for its implementation. Cazale, then, is a case study of how a community can tap its roots, even when they are nearly severed, to find the resources to imagine and shape a better future.

### WHAT MAKES A COMMUNITY?

According to Robert Nisbet, “Community is an enduring and urgent need... and human needs seem to form a kind of hierarchy.”<sup>1</sup> Abraham Maslow explains it best with his hierarchy, in which people whose physiological and safety needs are fairly well satisfied long to fulfill their desire for improved relations with other people by finding their place in a group or

<sup>1</sup> Nisbet, Robert, *The Quest for Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21.

family to meet their need for belongingness.<sup>2</sup> The concept of need will serve as a basis for various dimensions of community that are relevant to our discussion here.

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**One must understand the political, economic, and social relationship between a place and its people**

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First, we are concerned with the spatial and ecological aspect of community, the actual territory where a group of individuals is concentrated. Thus the first part of this paper examines the physical characteristics of Cazale, its history and its resources. Second, because a community does not only consist of a place, its members and their different characteristics are of interest to us. In this second segment, we look at individuals, as well as at groups whose members share values and a way of life, identify with the group and its practices and acknowledge one another as members, and even include people who have migrated nationally or internationally in what Benedict Anderson<sup>3</sup> has called an “imagined community.” This study, therefore, explores the situation of those who live in the village and also of those who live in the capital of Port-au-Prince or abroad but still consider themselves Cazalien because their notion of “residence span[s] space within a given country but also include[s] people located in different countries and different continents.”<sup>4</sup>

Third, this paper examines the cultural and social scopes of community. One must understand the political, economic, and social relationship between a place and its people because, in looking to satisfy its needs, the community will find ways, or invent ways if they do not exist, to create an adequate environment to realize what it needs. Nisbet argues “people do not come together in significant and lasting associations merely to be together ... but to do something that cannot easily be done in individual isolation.”<sup>5</sup>

Finally, as a group, a community exists over time. The history of Cazale from its inception in

1802, and how it has been embedded in Haiti’s history, is vital subtext for understanding the texture of lives being lived there today. In making plans for festivities to celebrate the national bicentennial, the people of Cazale are determined to write a new finish to an old story, and in its telling offer their neighbors and the country seeds of hope.

*Community Is a Place*

In common usage, *community* usually refers to the physical space where people live. The geographical space gives a visual reference of where one is from that may connote what kind of person one is. In Creole (the only language spoken by all Haitians and one of Haiti’s two official languages, with French), one would ask: *Moun ki bò ou yé* or *Moun ki koté ou yé?* (Person of where are you, or Where are you from?). A person’s place of origin is considered crucial and is usually part of the introductory conversation between any new acquaintances. The reason is not because Haiti is immense nor that people travel extensively inside the country. The reason is historic. Under the thumb of the regime started by François (Papa Doc) Duvalier, the rural people of Haiti witnessed acute impoverishment during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, prompting large migrations toward urban areas, and especially to the capital Port-au-Prince where all the strings of government, power, commerce, education, and every other important feature of social life converged. It was therefore likely that nearly anyone you met in Port-au-Prince for the first time came from someplace else or his or her parents did. So in that initial conversation the answer would usually be: “I am from so-and-so, or I was born in Port-au-Prince but my parents are from so-and-so” If someone were to say that he or she is from Cazale, three associations from national life would likely spring to mind: people of Polish descent, the massacre of 1969, and the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1983.

But where exactly is Cazale, the place, to be found? To answer properly, one must first understand the administrative subdivisions of Haiti. There are nine departments, with 41 districts and 135 towns, each divided into communal sections or villages. Cazale is one of four communal sections of Cabaret, which was declared a town in 1934 and kept this status under the 1987 Constitution that prompted the law on decentrali-

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<sup>2</sup> Maslow, A. H., *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *The Quest for Community*. University Press, Inc. Page 21

<sup>4</sup> Trager, Lilian, *Yoruba Hometowns: Community, Identity and Development in Nigeria* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., Nisbet, Introduction, xv.

zation. Built in the 17th century, Cabaret was renamed *Duvalierville* in the early 1960s because it was to be the model town of the “progressive” Duvalier regime. It regained its original name in 1986 after Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) was ousted. The town had been selected for “special attention” because its inhabitants had voted massively in the 1957 elections to bring Dr. Duvalier to the presidency.<sup>6</sup> However the promised facelift of Cabaret never materialized. Many houses were destroyed but never replaced, leaving the town with an unfinished look to this day. Nonetheless Cabaretais continued to support the Duvalier regime, causing frictions to grow between the town and neighboring villages.

Cabaret continues to be relatively deprived, despite its proximity to the capital (35 km away) and despite being situated on the main national highway. Although predominantly agricultural, the area has no Ministry of Agriculture branch office, making do with an agronomist who also tends to daily administrative matters. In addition, Cabaret has administrative and judiciary offices, including a police station.

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### **The story of how Cazale came to be where it is begins with the climax of the struggle for Haitian Independence.**

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Cabaret covers an area of approximately 226.85 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of about 80 thousand. The Côtés des Arcadins is near, with some of the country’s finest beaches and most important resorts. The Ministry of Tourism has designated the area as the nation’s most promising site for development of the tourist industry. While most villages around Cabaret are on the coast, its most famous, Cazale, is inland, 11 km from the national highway. The road to Cazale is often impassable when there are heavy rains.

The story of how Cazale came to be where it is begins almost 200 years ago, during the climactic stages of the struggle for independence. During the slave uprising in Saint Domingue, Napoleon sent Polish troops to the colony to help the French army repress the revolt. Surprisingly, the Poles changed sides and fought alongside the slaves. Once Haiti won its Independence, some decided to stay and make it their home. Legend has it that

in 1805 General Jean-Jacques Dessalines, then chief of state, personally gave the 111 km<sup>2</sup> of Cazale to the Polish soldiers to settle, making it the largest and most accessible Polish settlement in Haiti. The general was made emperor under the post-Independence Constitution of Haiti, promulgated on May 20, 1805. In article 12, this founding document also stated: “No white man, of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he, in the future, acquire any property therein.” The Poles, however, were among those granted exceptions in article 13: “The preceding article cannot in the smallest degree affect white women who have been naturalized Haitians by the government. Nor does it extend to children already born or that may be born of said women. The Germans and Polish naturalized by the government are also included in the dispositions of the present article.” That is, in order to reward these Polish soldiers for their support, the new government had already issued the necessary decrees to make them citizens of Haiti. This article of the Constitution now guaranteed them the rights of ownership that accompanied the status of citizen.

Because it was off the main road, Cazale was considered a safe place for these new citizens. And since the flora and fauna of Cazale were rich and the Poles were believed to be peasants before being forced to become soldiers, historians seem to think that this was a most fitting site. Indeed to this day, the village’s soil is very rich, and though no special care is given to its agriculture, it produces the best mangoes in the country and a large yield of bananas. Citrus is also a major crop, sold in the weekly Tuesday market. Poor transportation and roads, though, hinder timely access to larger markets.

Since March 1999 electricity, telephone service, and running water have been available. Yet there is no clinic and no medical personnel, and residents must go to Cabaret for the most elementary care. Education is also a major concern. There are eight registered primary schools and two secondary schools, whose teachers are assigned by the Ministry of Education. There is no professional school. The church that collapsed 10 years ago is now being rebuilt with the help of the Catholic Church and with money raised by emigrant citizen associations in the U.S. A handful of small buses make the 11 km roundtrip to the main road all day long. The drivers complain about road

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<sup>6</sup> François Duvalier declared himself president for life after fraudulent elections held in 1961.

conditions, and their concern is widely shared since the road's disrepair brands the whole community as being uncivilized, unwanted, and undeserving of development.

The springs feeding the river Bretelle are only a few kilometers away. The river is an inconstant friend. It runs through the village, yet peasants lack the infrastructure to properly divert its water for irrigation. And when heavy rains come the Bretelle leaps its natural bed and floods houses and farmland. Discussions have long been held on harnessing the river for hydroelectricity, but the talk seems likely to remain talk for at least the near future. In the meantime, the village depends on a fuel-powered generator for limited service. Consumers sometimes have difficulty paying their bills on time, making it hard for the managing group to buy the fuel to keep the generator running. Most residents think the government should provide electricity for free since they lack the means to provide it themselves. The same goes for telephone service. Of the 27 lines available, less than 10 go into private houses because most people cannot afford them. So one must go to the telephone office where public booths are available to make or to receive calls. Despite the lack of means, however, Cazale is not seen as being destitute. Because it has a civil courthouse and a new building to house local government authorities, the village must have some importance.

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As a place with a special history, one would expect to find some sign of Cazale's Polish heritage. Unfortunately, this is not so. It is believed that the Poles who stayed in Haiti were foot soldiers with no formal education, with no officers among them. To blend in as much as possible, they changed their names to sound Haitian and adopted the lifestyle of Haitian peasants. They vanished from official records, and though a few renowned historians mention them in general terms, no real research has been conducted. The little that we know comes from France or Poland, and only relates to their journey to Haiti and their participation in the final battle for Independence. For subsequent events the pages are blank. One can assume that the soldiers were all men, and since storytelling is mostly the affair of women

and since there must have been a language barrier, it is understandable that most of the historical facts would disappear with scarcely a ripple. Not only is there no museum, there is no documentary compilation telling the Poles' story. Even the cemetery where one can find a few gravestones with Polish names has been neglected for decades and is almost completely overrun by creepers. Cazale therefore cannot market itself to the tourist trade until it finds the means to recover its origins for presentation to others.

### *A Community Is Its People*

Jan Pachonski and Reuel Wilson offer the most complete account of the origin of these men.<sup>7</sup> The fate of the Polish people, like that of the Haitians, seemed in the hands of France at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Poland had disappeared from European maps by 1772, parceled out among its economically and militarily powerful neighbors — Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Polish nationalists turned to revolutionary France for inspiration, hoping to find the means toward their own freedom under the banner proclaiming the universal rights of man. In 1794, Polish exiles under the leadership of General Dabrowski volunteered their services to Napoleon Bonaparte in exchange for his pledge to help Poland regain its independence. They formed the "Polish Legion," an army of about 5,200 men led by Polish officers and outfitted in its own distinctive uniforms.

They eventually found themselves being dispatched from their base in Italy not to liberate Poland but to end freedom in Haiti, arriving in two troupes, the first in September 1802 and the second in January 1803 for service under Bonaparte's brother-in-law, General Leclerc. An uprising of African slaves during the early years of the French Revolution had sparked a decade-long struggle for control of the island, in which the forces of General Toussaint-Louverture, a second-generation slave of the African Diaspora, finally prevailed. Toussaint-Louverture had consistently pledged his allegiance to France but governed the island autonomously. Now Leclerc had orders to put this "upstart" on a ship to France for arrest, and reinstitute slavery, restoring

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<sup>7</sup> Pachonski, Jan, and Reuel K. Wilson, *Poland's Caribbean Tragedy: A Study of Polish Legions in the Haitian War of Independence 1802-1803* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

the colony of Saint Domingue to its former status as the crown jewel of the French Empire.

They were lost and disappointed. At last it seemed clear Bonaparte would not keep his word, and they felt nothing in common with the French soldiers in Haiti, who were brutal and inhumane. Most importantly, they had come to see in the Black slaves they were supposedly fighting, the mirror image of their own longing for independence and freedom from occupation. Pachonski and Wilson say the Poles not only shared the Black's ideals, but also befriended them and even shared their food. Contemporaneous reports describe Poles deserting to fight alongside Blacks, and it is said that General Dessalines at one point had a 30-man honor guard called *Les Polonais*.

By war's end in November 1803, most of the Polish Legion had died of yellow fever; others had drowned at sea or were killed in action. A few went to Jamaica, Cuba, or the United States. Only about 240 legionnaires are known to have stayed in Haiti and been granted naturalization as Haitians in 1805. Pachonski and Wilson are unsure if they stayed by choice or force of circumstance. What can be said is that the majority of those who remained settled in Cazale and married local women, either Creoles or former slaves who came from Benin, Africa. Unlike the remaining French, the Poles were among the few white men whose lives were spared from Dessalines' order to newly freed Blacks to, "Coupe tête, boulé Kay" (cut off their heads and burn the houses).

Polish men joined with Black women and men as the founders of Cazale. Today stories of Polish roots have withered, faded whispers from a distant past. There is little evidence the Polish ever touched this place, except for the features of a few light-skinned people living in the mountains. For years the people of Cazale were referred to as *moun rouge*, or light-skinned people. In *Présence Polonaise en Haïti*, six full pages show local people with the blue eyes and high cheekbones of their Slavic ancestors.<sup>8</sup> By 2002 the population of Cazale was estimated to be about 25,000, living on 111 km<sup>2</sup> divided in 11 *habitations*. The population is very diverse, getting older, with children who have migrated to cities for school or in search of employment. The village is usually crowded during the summer and on September 29, the patron saints day of the Archangel Michael, when the young typically visit their relatives.

The exodus that emptied out the countryside began in the 1960s when Duvalier gave priority to

cities, particularly what came to be known ironically as the Republic of Port-au-Prince. Under Duvalier most major public works were reserved for the capital, which along with other major cities also got the lion's share of foreign aid for projects. Rural areas, especially ones farthest from the capital, were forgotten by the State or worse, put in the hands of the army in the person of the rural section chief or at the mercy of the paramilitary corps known as the Tontons Macoutes. Section chiefs were renowned for their brutality, and for their rapaciousness in collecting taxes, fines, and bribes without any hint of return service. People in places like Cazale had to watch helplessly as their young men and women departed, searching for a better life and fleeing the stagnant economy and threats of political reprisal. The flood of emigration did not stop in the cities but spilled across national borders, until nearly a million Haitians were living in the U.S. alone by 1998, according to the World Bank (having contributed up to \$810 million to the Haitian economy<sup>9</sup>). No one can say exactly how many Cazaliens are living abroad, but we know that they are among the 46 percent of emigrants who live in New York, the 34 percent who live in Florida, and the 6 percent who live in Massachusetts. Others can be found in Venezuela, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and elsewhere.

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For those who remained in Cazale life is not so much different from that of Edward Banfield's "amoral familists" in southern Italy, where chronic *miseria*, distrust, corruption, fatalism, class struggle, lack of education, and land deprivation snared peasants in a circle of poverty and isolation that precluded participation in the development of their own villages. As Joseph Lopreato, building on Banfield's sociology, describes it, "The combination of economic poverty and social castigation had produced in the peas-

<sup>8</sup> St Juste, Laurore, and Enel Clerismé, *Présence Polonaise en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1983), 50–6.

<sup>9</sup> Multilateral Investment Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, *Remittance to Latin America and the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C.: February 2002).

ant a deep sense of depravation and despair and, in his own group, a system of interpersonal relations based on tension, conflict, and rampant insecurity." He then adds a hopeful note about the liberating winds released by emigration: "And through emigration [he] has rapidly achieved a degree of social recognition ... [and] the social and psychological vitality with which to challenge the old social order and to demand the recognition that his achievements deserve."<sup>10</sup>

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By enlisting in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Haitian Diaspora, the peasant from Cazale discovered new forms of social relations that are democratic and more humane. Moreover, he was freed in another way to act. No longer in a place where everybody knew his name, where he was identified as the son of so-and-so, he tries to escape the Proustian box in which, "A Combray, une personne qu'on ne connaît point était un être aussi peu croyable qu'un dieu de la Mythologie..." [In Combray, an unknown person was as believable as a god of Mythology].<sup>11</sup> Socially unchained from the past in his daily life, he could fulfill his Maslovian physiological and safety needs, and also satisfy his needs for esteem and achievement, without sacrificing his need for belonging by retaining his place in his hometown through sending remittances or by one day coming back himself with enough money, as Lopreato explains, to buy the cultural symbols that establish social status and superiority. Usually this translated into building a house in one's hometown to show one's newfound success. Another strategy was to contribute to fund-raising in accomplishing a social task ignored by the State. Thus, the peasant in escaping his traditional environment typically is not looking to cut all ties with his roots. Communication channels that open the door on a wider vista, link him to his national or to an "extra-national" society, also make him more aware of his place in his own society. He discovers a widened dimension of community, and tries with fellow Cazaliens to recreate organizations in their new setting that respond to communal events as if they were still home, in effect creating a psychological place called home while waiting

to return home. In striving to keep the moorings of their identity, emigrants renovate institutions as they recreate them, releasing previously hidden potentials.

### *Community Is the Story of People Living in a Place*

"Community is indivisible from human actions, purposes and values. It expresses our vague yearning for a commonality of desire, a communion with those around us, an extension of the bonds to kin and friend to all those who share a common fate with us."<sup>12</sup> At least one day a year — September 29 — the people of Cazale can be found together, arriving from the capital and abroad as well as just down the road to celebrate the feast day of the Archangel Michael, patron saint of the village. At first this might seem odd since Cazale, despite the very visible presence of the Roman Catholic Church, is now predominantly Protestant. But puzzlement fades when one sees how the social aspect of the celebration overlaps the religious: yes, people get together to pray, but also to laugh, do small projects, and make plans for the future.

The second most important day in the lives of the people of Cazale is March 27, which commemorates the anniversary of the events known as the Massacre of 1969, when the village's most brilliant and committed young militants for change were killed or "disappeared." That year will be remembered as one of the saddest under the Duvalier regime. Hundreds died nationwide in what observers have called "a campaign of extermination against progressive youth."

Duvalier had steadily tightened his grip on Haiti in the preceding years. After winning the elections of 1957, he was fraudulently reelected in 1961 and organized a referendum in 1964 to make himself President for Life. From then on, his only campaign was to eliminate anyone who disagreed with his views. Supported by the United States, which in the early 60s needed an ally against Cuba, Duvalier had only to label his adversaries as "communists" to get rid of them

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<sup>10</sup> Lopreato, Joseph, 'Emigration and Social Change in Southern Italy,' in Colin Bell and Howard Newby, eds., *The Sociology of Community: A Selection of Readings* (Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.), 85.

<sup>11</sup> Proust, Marcel, *A la recherche du temps perdu. Du côté de chez Swann*, Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1913).

<sup>12</sup> Minar, David, and Scott Greer, *The Concept of Community* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969), Introduction, ix.

without any outcry, since the international human rights organizations were only beginning to emerge. In 1969 the visit of Nelson Rockefeller to Haiti confirmed Duvalier's power. Most politicians in the opposition had either been killed or gone into exile. Intellectuals had also fled to teach in French-speaking Africa and Canada. Yet, a new breed of militants in their twenties was emerging. Although inspired by Che Guevara, the Cuban Revolution, Mao Tse Tung, or the USSR, mostly they wanted to change things at home and had humanitarian and democratic ideas. In 1968–69, a national campaign of arrests swept Haiti, from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien, including Arcahaïe, Plaine du Cul-de-Sac, and of course Cazale. Duvalier did not discriminate among his victims, killing men and women, young and old, light-skinned and black. The people in Cazale had never trusted Duvalier and did not vote for him in 1957, which led, they believed, to the village being economically marginalized and Cabaret being rewarded. A decade later, they were victimized a second time by the denunciations of the Cabaretians of the activities of Cazale's youth.

According to Professor Gérard Pierre-Charles, the political party PEP (Parti d'Entente Populaire) was established in Cazale in 1966.<sup>13</sup> Cazale was also the "resistance base" for light-skinned intellectuals from Port-au-Prince who had studied in Europe. They felt secure there because they blended perfectly in this village of Polish descent. That is how Alix Lamaute and Roger Méhu, activists not originally from Cazale, came to die there in March 1969.

Class distinction based on color goes back a long way, to the Spanish and French occupation of Saint Domingue in the 17th century and the start of the Middle Passage from Africa to the Americas. Black slaves had been imported from the Songhai and Yoruba empires in Nigeria and Benin. Class distinctions emerged between those who worked in the field and were blackest (and often newly arrived) and those who worked in the house (who were often the offspring of white male owners). This created class distinctions and bitterness among the slaves that have persisted over time, even in the face of white opposition. During the battle for Independence, Europeans and Americans feared that the first Black state in the Americas would inspire slave insurrections in other colonies and the Southern U.S. That is why they ostracized newly independent Haiti. After

the war, General Dessalines had all the French planters and merchants assassinated. That, however, did not settle the matter of color. Well before Independence, the rebel generals and their armies were divided along color lines. This distinction was underlined at the death of Dessalines, when black-skinned Christophe became king in the North in 1811 and the mulatto Pétion became president in the West in 1808. After Pétion's death, his mulatto friend Boyer stepped in, to be followed in turn by Geffrard, also a mulatto. The color bar became firmly established. The poor masses were Blacks who spoke mostly Creole, had little access to education, and practiced voodoo. The elite were generally light-skinned, well-educated, French-speaking Roman Catholics.

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**According to the people of Cazale, the color problem is a caricature that distorts rather than describes them.**

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During the war for Independence factions had at various times sought alliances with outside powers to gain internal advantage. The pattern reemerged in 1914, when the Americans invaded Haiti with the support of the elite, and stayed until 1934, to protect U.S. investment in the Haitian National Bank and the Haitian Railroad company. Americans owned these with elite proxies, circumventing Haitian laws prohibiting any foreigner from solely owning property or businesses. While the Marines administered the country, they also organized elections for the mulatto Sudre Dartiguenave to lead the Senate, and to sign at gunpoint legislative papers that facilitate direct American investments in Haiti. They also created the Garde d'Haïti, the foundation of the Armed Forces, which was composed almost exclusively of mulattoes. A new Black middle class started to emerge under President Estimé in 1946, but it was Duvalier who, with his pro-Black speech, and deliberate sponsoring of Blacks, encouraged their social and political participation. Despite this rhetoric, however, he left economic power in the hands of the mulatto elite, which is where it remains today. The color problem has never been resolved, and remains a potent issue that can be tapped for political advantage whenever neces-

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<sup>13</sup> Pierre-Charles, Gérard, *Haïti: Jamais plus! Les violations des droits de l'homme à la époque des Duvaliers* (Haiti: CRESFED, 2000), 113.

sary.

According to the people of Cazale, the color problem is a caricature that distorts rather than describes them. They are poor peasants and, in reference to the Haitian saying “rich blacks are mulattos and poor mulattos are blacks”, the people of Cazale could only be considered black despite the light color of their skin. If the village’s light-skinned population has become a people in a place of resistance, it has also become a target. But if they are not part of any mulatto elite, what threat did they pose to Duvalier? The answer takes us back a long way.

As mentioned earlier, tension exists between the people of Cazale and those of Cabaret. We now add certain facts reported by elderly residents of Cazale to show that the roots of that friction run deep along economic lines. Between 1915 and 1919, when the peasantry under Charlemagne Perralte conducted guerilla warfare against the Marines, the whites, and the occupation, notable members of that campaign came from Cazale, including Jean-Pierre Israel Belneau and Da Agénor Garçon Benoit. In 1966 Jérémie Eliazer, who was a member of the Prefecture, eliminated the administrative taxes imposed by the Cabaret section chief, Saintervil Dupervil. This incident was considered a declaration of war between Cabaret and Cazale. In 1968 the people of Cazale rebelled against paying taxes on sales of agricultural products and for their use of river water, and for having to pay the church for Sunday confessions. Jérémie Eliazer, who led the uprising, humiliated the tax collector, a man from Cabaret named Neker Jean-Baptiste, by forcing him, in front of the whole population, to cross the river, over which there was no bridge, with his shoes on. A short time later the Tontons Macoutes came for Eliazer and his friends, who had already escaped.

That brings us to the time of the Massacre. The Tontons Macoutes were after anyone who opposed their power. On Holy Thursday, April 3, 1969, they came to Cazale from Cabaret and started burning down houses and raping women. On Good Friday, April 4, they arrested two members of the resistance group, Saintibert Valmont and Joseph Victomé. That is when other members of the resistance burned down the office of the representative of the Prefect and took down Duvalier’s black-and-red flag and ran up a red flag representing their socialist ideas and also ran up the pre-1957, blue-and-red flag of Haiti. The

next day about 500 military men came to Cazale and started the massacre.

On Saturday, April 5, Jérémie Eliazer’s daughter, who lived with Agatha Belneau-Benoit in Port-au-Prince, was arrested and held for 24 hours, which allowed enough time for her father to learn about it and turn himself in. Her mother Elycia Benoit-Eliazer, who was seven-month’s pregnant, was jailed also (where she gave birth to her second daughter). When it was over, the bodies of 25 people were counted,<sup>14</sup> some were imprisoned and about 40 others had disappeared forever. In addition, 82 houses were looted then torched. Mills for corn and rice were destroyed. The army carried off whatever bags of grain they needed, and burned the rest. Cattle met the same fate. Women were raped and were forced to dance with the soldiers, who stayed long enough to celebrate their “victory.”

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**After the massacre [by the Tonton Macoutes]  
the economic activities of the village never  
recovered.**

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As for the missing, they joined the legion of thousands of *forced disappearances* that occurred under Duvalier. In international human rights law, *forced disappearance* is considered a war crime and includes “unlawful confinement, failure to allow due process, and failure to allow communication between the arrested person and the outside world. It often involves torture and cruel, inhuman treatment, and too commonly, it involves murder.”<sup>15</sup> *Forced disappearance* is a form of political repression; the objective is not simply the victim’s capture and subsequent maltreatment. The anonymity of the captors gives them impunity, creating a state of uncertainty and terror both in families of victims and society as a whole. The people from Cazale, who have always fought for freedom and respect, were once again victims

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<sup>14</sup> The people who died include Neufort Victomé, Gardiner Benoit, Olive Eliazer, Max Belneau, , Benoit Philantus Willy Joseph, Christian Valmont, Dinéus Inome, Mervius Pierre-Louis, Michel Pierre-Louis, Pierrisca Pierre, Philippe Dulorier, Bélizer Cajuste, Lamarre St. Germain, Elisme Elie, Louis-Juste Ismero, Jérémie eliazer, thomas Victomé, Alix Lamaute, Théophile Victomé, Roger Méhu, Antioche Benoit, Syion Brutus, Maryo Jean.

<sup>15</sup> Dukka, Corine, ‘Forced Disappearances,’ in Roy Guman and David Rieff, eds., *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know* (New York: Norton, 1999), 124.

of their beliefs. They not only hold Duvalier's thugs responsible but also the people of Cabaret who served as agents of that regime and facilitated its hideous crimes. They feel that the personal vendetta of the Cabaretians aided and abetted the Tontons Macoutes.

After the massacre, the economic activities of the village never recovered. Some families were wiped out; many who escaped had lost their homes and did not rebuild in the village, and some even left the country. The Duvaliers, father and son, never tried to help or make amends.

The challenge now is for the community to unite in preparation for the bicentennial of Haitian Independence. It is an opportunity for people to turn their lives around, to plan and execute activities and projects to support the regeneration of Cazale, their community.

But can Cazale seize the opportunity? Is it really a community strong enough to implement *collective* actions that require blending many talents to one end, especially under the stress of such a high-profile event as the bicentennial? If we consider McKnight's scheme for when people know they are a community, we can say that certain requirements are fulfilled in Cazale.<sup>16</sup> The first element is that of *informality*, in which labor or other social goods are dispensed without the exchange of money (as in a *konbit*, where peasants come together to work on one another's land). The second trait concerns the *stories* that bind people together and pass on useful information, allowing the people of Cazale to recover a common history based on their Polish origin *and* their legitimate *metis* knowledge, whereby each individual storyteller contributes his personal experience in order for the group to learn a wider truth about the past and decide where to go in the future. In addition, the people incorporate in public rituals *celebrations* and *tragedies*, a sign that they stick together in good as well as bad times. Together they laugh and feast on St. Michael's Day and weep and mourn on the day of the Massacre. Lastly, for the people of Cazale to achieve their aspirations in preparing for 2004, they will have to recognize and use the *capacity* of each member, "because it is the sum of their capacities that represents the power of the group." Meeting the challenge of the bicentennial is an opportunity to bring a new start to Cazale .

## THE BICENTENNIAL: RECOVERING THE PAST TO INNOVATE THE FUTURE

Haiti has been struggling to find its place in the world since the departure of President Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. After 29 years of dictatorship and a coup d'état in 1991 that left at least 3,000 dead, Haitians were ready for the return to democracy with the restoration of President Aristide's government from exile. And the results of the newfound democracy were significant and visible. The first democratically elected president (Jean Bertrand Aristide) peacefully transferred power to the next democratically elected president (René Prével) who became the first president to serve his whole legal term and pass the mantle to his legally elected successor (in February 2001, to President Aristide who had come out of retirement to again run for office). The times of dictatorship and presidents for life are finally over, and a new rhythm of democracy has been established. A legally constituted police force has replaced a brutal and corrupt army and paramilitary groups like the Tontons Macoutes, which for years terrorized the population and engaged in politically motivated killings of civilians.

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**The bicentennial is an opportunity for people to turn their lives around, to plan projects to regenerate their community.**

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In 1996, the agrarian reform required by the 1987 Constitution began implementation in the Artibonite, one of the nine administrative departments of the country. The department is the country's rice basket and had experienced the most state-assisted repression by large landowners. So far 1,500 families have received 2.47 acres each for cultivation. Rice production, which had never exceeded 2.8 metric tons per hectare, now ranges between 3 and 5.5 metric tons per hectare. It is hoped this reform can help stop the rural exodus and reduce the number of people suffering malnutrition and hunger.

The project for universal schooling started nationwide in 1999, including rural areas traditionally neglected. Textbooks, uniforms, and hot lunches go to thousands of needy children.

The infrastructure of Haiti had been neglected for so long that during 1998, 1999, and 2000 the country looked like a construction site. In that span 319 km of interurban and 78 km of urban roads were constructed; bridges were renovated;

<sup>16</sup> McKnight, John L., 'Regenerating Community,' *Social Policy* (Winter, 1987).

major markets like Croix des Bossales, Port-au-Prince's most important one, were completely sanitized; and thousands of miles of canals were repaired and irrigation systems rehabilitated. Some 40 million dollars was invested to create the National Center for Equipment that manages heavy machinery for public works projects.

Modernization of the economy got under way with the privatization of the flour mill and cement plant. Tax collection reached a record high: personal income and business profit collections rose 4 percent, while customs collections rose 26 percent. In 2001, the state monopoly on the telecommunications sector ended, and the number of telephone lines went from 6,970 in 1990 to 23,580 in 2001. The new lines were installed in rural areas, and three international cell phone companies have provided services to about 100,000 subscribers so far. Some investors are considering returning to Haiti, and Hilton is starting work on the construction of a hotel with approximately 200 rooms close to the international airport in Port-au-Prince. It is scheduled to open in 2005.

The migration of thousands of boat people has ebbed, while remittances from the Diaspora, one of the biggest contributors to national finances, bring home close to a billion dollars every year.

This transformation has been slowed by the political gridlock gripping the country since May 2000. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) had organized overdue elections scheduled for the end of 1999. When voting finally took place on May 21, 2000, the CEP was blamed for using a flawed methodology to determine the winners of two-thirds of the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, the municipal governments, the town delegates, and the local councils. The methodology had been used previously, but the problem was in the results. The Family Lavalas Party of President Aristide won most of the votes and has been intransigent about letting the international community, represented by the Organization of American States (OAS), take corrective measures. The various opposition political parties decided not to cooperate with President Aristide who started his second and last term on February 7, 2001. The result has been an ongoing political crisis that clouds the future of the country. Most external aid, essential to the economic development of Haiti and primarily provided by the U.S. since 1973, has been suspended. Parliamentary inaction in 1998 has resulted in nonratification of

international loans from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), effectively blocking access to the funds since disbursement conditions have not been fully met. In the meantime, the country is still being referred to as the poorest country in the hemisphere. Before this crisis, disbursements were conditioned on economic reform and good governance; now another condition has been added. The government must negotiate with the opposition to find a consensus suitable to all political parties. This situation has not only created a stagnant economy, but also had major consequences on the informal economy as well as monetary policies. The national currency is at its lowest valuation, and nowadays one needs 30 to 40 gourdes for a dollar, compared to 5 gourdes per dollar in the early 1980s. As many as 250 international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are in Haiti doing developmental work, but the need is so enormous that results are not yet very visible. The Ministry of Finance relies on the remittances of the Diaspora and the meager taxes that can still be collected.

Foreign investments are scarce and the industrial sector is so dependant on the U.S. market for its products that it now employs only 20,000 workers. This number was as high as 300,000 in the mid-80s but has been steadily declining since. Potential investors, concerned over safety and supply reliability are going elsewhere in Latin America. The U.S. ambassador to the OAS, Roger Noriega, made clear what the U.S. and the rest of the international community were expecting from Haiti before resuming normal relations: "It is essential that the government of Haiti move decisively to end impunity and establish the rule of law and that both sides agree to fair elections and to finish the initial political accord in the days ahead."<sup>17</sup> The accord Ambassador Noriega refers to calls for establishment of a credible and independent council to oversee local and national elections; security to ensure the conduct of free elections; a national dialogue to promote democracy, human rights, the economy, and social development; and a commitment to normalizing Haiti's international economic relations. In addition, President Aristide has to prove that his government has escaped corruption and ended mismanagement from cronyism. Only then will

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<sup>17</sup> Noriega, Roger, *The Washington Times* (July 2, 2002).

\$500 million in aid be released. It is in this environment that the Haitian government is planning the celebration of the bicentennial of Independence.

### *The Government's National Program*

The government has put together a document that describes the importance and the meaning of the bicentennial for the people of Haiti and outlines the program for 2004. The idea is to treat the event as a "duty to remember and as a commitment toward the future" by all Haitians. Events actually began in 2001 with celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitution proclaimed by Toussaint Louverture. Other milestones will be celebrated successively, culminating in 2004, when independence was won.

During the three years, the primary focus, aside from special celebrations, will center on four themes: the new meaning of being Haitian, the use of culture and education as drivers of development, the creation of sustainable socioeconomic development, and the role of Haiti in an age of globalization. Within the thematic sectors, special attention will be given to certain sets of activities: the national literacy campaign, cultural events throughout the country and abroad, modernization of sanitation and other infrastructure works at patrimonial sites around the country, and finally special projects and community development projects.

Special Projects are also planned in key historical places to commemorate the various stages that led to Independence, the first being the ceremony at the "Bois Caïman" in 1791 that called for the uprising of slaves. Other commemorations include the proclamation of general freedom by Sonthonax in 1793, the declaration of the first Constitution by Toussaint Louverture in 1801, the creation of the flag in May 1803, the Battle of Vertières in November 1803, and finally the proclamation of independence on January 1, 1804.

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**Acts of solidarity by [émigrés] are critical since the State lacks the funds to do all the necessary work for the bicentennial year.**

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The special projects also entail special activities and a mobilization of Haitians outside the country. The government asked UNESCO to pass a

motion declaring 2004 to be the "Year of Black People's Emancipation." The Overseas Committee, established to coordinate activities by participants from the Diaspora, also will begin its activities. Plans have been made to organize a ritual ceremony with voodoo delegates from Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Ghana, and Trinidad-Tobago. On January 1, 2004, the official inauguration of the ceremony commemorating Independence will take place in Gonaïves, in the presence of various heads of state, personalities, and special guests.

In his Internet letter to Haitians living outside the country, Minister Voltaire states, "2004 is truly each and every Haitian's concern...in Haiti and everywhere else in the world."<sup>18</sup> According to Minister Voltaire, one way Haitians living abroad can participate in the commemoration of national Independence is through creation of Regional Associations of the Diaspora. These associations are meant to formalize the works and contributions of members of the Diaspora and to facilitate their participation, through a solidarity program with people of their hometowns, in the development of the 135 communes.

The Ministry intends for special events to be held in the cities where most of the Haitian Diaspora resides, such as New York, Miami, Montreal, and Paris. The program includes conferences on Haitian history and the identity struggles of the Haitian people; the inauguration of Henri Christophe Square in Savannah, Georgia; cultural exhibitions at different American museums, including Haiti's participation in the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Smithsonian Folklore Festival in Washington, D.C.; and conferences on sustainable development at Harvard and at SAIS/Johns Hopkins.

In addition, people of the Diaspora have made plans to go home for the festivities. Diaspora tourism has been estimated at 103 million dollars, and it is said that American Airlines routes from New York and from Miami to Port-au-Prince have been most profitable for the airline.<sup>19</sup>

What the ministry is most interested in, are the Solidarity Projects that 25,000 members of Professional Haitian Associations sponsor every year in their communities back home. According to the Haitian American Association, these associations

<sup>18</sup> Voltaire, Leslie, Letter from the Minister of Haitians Living Abroad, posted at [www.2004lakay.com](http://www.2004lakay.com) (June 7, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Interview with airline officials, information confirmed by travel agents.

spend between \$2.4 and \$3.6 million a year on projects such as the renovation of public parks; the building of schools, hospitals, churches and libraries; hospital equipment; town electrification projects; rehabilitation of cemeteries; and professional training schools. An important advantage of such projects is the restoration/fortification of links between émigrés and their homeland, building on the personal ties people have with their hometowns by carrying out beneficial development projects there.

Minister Voltaire argues further that such acts of solidarity are critical since the State lacks the funds to do all the necessary work for the bicentennial year. With economic sanctions imposed following the May 2000 elections, the government has been squeezed financially and has resorted to special actions by the Central Bank, which in turn have considerably devalued the gourde against the dollar. Unresolved political tensions between the government and the opposition have made the prospect of future elections dimmer. Although the commissions created to organize the bicentennial celebration have not been able to function properly, some program elements have been proposed and various committees are working on them.

#### *National Independence and Barriers to Development*

As a French colony, Haiti was so wealthy it was called the “Pearl of the Antillies.” Most of the riches however were repatriated to France. During the war for Independence, the means for generating wealth were destroyed. Most farmland was burned to deter recolonization. After Independence, France waited 60 years before recognizing the new country and demanded 150 million francs in indemnity. The debt was repaid with borrowed funds, which were retired only in 1922. A vicious cycle of borrowing and refinancing from foreign lenders was established, foreclosing opportunity for real economic growth. The U.S. was also hostile after Independence, and its occupation of Haiti in 1915 stirred reciprocal animosity. The Marines invited in by the local elite came to protect American financial interests, then seized customs receipts and used some of it to pay salaries of U.S. officers.

The Duvalier regime for 29 years institutionalized a system of corruption and economic apartheid that left only 1 percent of the population receiving 40 percent of national income. The

army, the section chiefs, and the Tontons Macoutes robbed the population like pirates, and Jean-Claude Duvalier left Haiti in 1986 with millions of dollars. The three years of the coup (1991–1994) saw the return to piracy with mass transfer of aid money to foreign bank accounts. Real GDP dropped 30 percent, and per capita GDP went from \$320 to \$260.

The country got another chance for development in 1994, when the army was tossed out of power. That led to the improvements discussed earlier, but it did not touch an underlying confusion about the meaning of development. *Development* has various meanings for social scientists, but the primary meaning for Haitians is *reparation* rather than *growth* or *progress*. There is still a sense among the majority that foreigners pulling the strings of local allies have robbed ordinary people of the fruit of their labor. *Aid*, commonly a synonym of *international development assistance*, is an appropriate example of this perspective, because *aid* in the Haitian context means loans that do not have to be repaid. This view reflects the anger and despair of centuries. Yet people are learning through interactions with NGOs and others that this is not how the world works. Gradually *development* comes to mean “realizing a change in fortunes”; development means food, education, roads, and pride.

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**Reflecting the anger and despair of centuries, aid in the Haitian context means loans that do not have to be repaid.**

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In order to realize its social program, the State relies on foreign aid and the help of 250 international and local NGOs, working mostly in the domains of health, education, environment, food, and micro-finance. The USAID six-year plan for Haiti (1999–2006) has five clear goals: sustained income gains for the poor, decreased environmental degradation, healthier families of desired size, increased human capacity through education, and more-inclusive democratic governance. Since the electoral problems of 2000, the American government no longer supports the Haitian government, and most USAID funds go to local NGOs to help accomplish their goals. Recently their civil society program increased, so have the micro-lending and micro-enterprise programs.

The Bush administration has made it clear from the outset that the \$500 million previously

pledged would not be distributed to the Haitian government until an accord is found with the opposition. That message must now be read in the wider context of President Bush's 2002 address in Monterrey, Mexico, to chiefs of state at a UN conference on financing for development, which underlined the need to link foreign aid to profound institutional reforms: democracy, security, and market-based development. President Bush proposed establishment of a Millennium Challenge Account that the U.S. will use to fund projects in nations that are implementing institutional reforms to make their development self-sustainable.

According to the United Nations Development Programme's annual report for 2002, Haiti is ranked 146<sup>th</sup> out of the 173 countries surveyed, slipping from last year's 134<sup>th</sup> position. This downward trend suggests that Haiti has much to do if it wants to meet the objectives of the Millennium 2000 summit for reducing poverty by 2015. Fowler explains just how hard the task is, arguing that "for all development actors, reducing poverty and eradicating marginalization are complicated undertakings... Poverty reduction can be seen as a process through which people progressively gain control over commodities in a rough sequence related to "survival, such as food and shelter; well being, such as health, literacy, security, and empowerment in the psychological sense of self-esteem and status, and in the political sense of exerting influence over the decisions which affect their lives."<sup>20</sup> Fowler's enumeration of "commodities" is like Maslow's hierarchy of "needs." Neither will be met if they are not addressed.

#### *Using Community as an Engine for Democracy and Development*

The 1969 massacre in Cazale scarred the survivors with a deep sense of powerlessness, loss, and isolation. In June 1998, the Ministry of Planning in its *Programme d'Interventions Immédiates* organized a weeklong discussion with villagers to define their priorities and begin to rectify the damage inflicted by the dictatorship. On March 27, 1999, a delegation headed by President Préval arrived in Cazale to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre, and the improvements that had been made during the past year. The *Place de la Résistance* now occupied the ground where some of the victims were buried alive; electricity and telephone lines had been installed;

the public primary school was rehabilitated; the community radio was fully equipped; and for the first time, a small overpass crossed the river. Nonetheless the people of Cazale were still unsatisfied because the road was not done. The point of this is not that the people of Cazale do not deserve a proper road; it is that the idea had not germinated that they themselves could do something about it. Having a stronger voice in local government might help change that.

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### **The people of Cazale are learning that development will and should come from within.**

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The 1987 Constitution made provisions for decentralization, and enabling legislation was passed in 1996. According to the new law, the Senate, the House of Deputies, and local mayors would now allow local *Assemblées des Sections Communales* (ASEC) to choose the people who nominate judges and the members of the Permanent Electoral Council responsible for overseeing elections.

In the case of Cazale, the new administrative dispositions did not improve its political and economic fortunes. Cazale is still in the same *Section Rurale* (district) as Cabaret, which means villagers see the mayor and other officials only during election times. The feeling is that unless Cazale's status changes, the village cannot stand on its feet. Villagers would like Cazale to become a municipality, implicitly affirming Nisbet's argument that "where power is external or centralized, where it relieves groups of the trouble of making important decisions, where it is penetrating and minute, then no matter how wise and good it may be in principle, it is difficult for a true community to develop. Community thrives on self-help (and also a little disorder), either corporate or individual, and everything that removes a group from the performances of or involvement with [one's] own government can hardly help but weaken the sense of community."<sup>21</sup>

The people of Cazale feel the bicentennial celebration will be their last chance, for a long time, for development projects. So they were

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<sup>20</sup> Fowler, Alan, *Striking a Balance: A Guide to Making Non-governmental Organizations Effective* (London : Earthscan, 1997), 6.

<sup>21</sup> Op. cit., Nisbet.

flabbergasted and desperate to learn that their village was not considered a historical site and that Haitians had forgotten the role played by Cazale's Polish ancestors in the fight for Independence. The despair will not lift till they know how they are going to participate in the festivities.

The people of Cazale are quite modest, and their contribution will mirror their economic situation. They are now learning that development will and should come from within. So far the way they have been showing that is by building houses in their hometown. Those who live outside the country, for the most part in the northeastern U.S., Florida, Canada, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Venezuela, besides sending a portion of their earnings to relatives and friends back home, have found that the best way to keep their bonds intact and to provide jobs in the community is to build a house there. One example is the case of a retired gentleman who after years of living abroad has returned home "to die." Now he plans to open a mini-market, the first in the village. Émigré Cazaliens also organize fund-raising activities to provide for burials and specific projects such as purchasing a motorcycle for the local representative. Recently villagers have donated land to build local government offices to serve the entire community.

Community development is easier if it doesn't have to add up people one by one, if they are already organized in groups and have experience working together. Though not well known, Haiti has always had strong civil society organizations (CSOs). Peasant organizations have always fought for respect and dignity by exerting social and economic pressure on the government. They also fought injustice and abuse by local authorities. Their economic and political activities are usually intertwined because they have been vulnerable to political persecution. Cazale is living proof of how peasants organized resistance to the Duvalier dictatorship and had to suffer for years because of it.

Cazale has a number of registered organizations,<sup>22</sup> but there is no substantive project record of their activities. Some people belong to more than one organization, usually for social more than economic reasons. Women's organizations are involved in income-generating activities and have set up rotating credit associations, whereby each participant makes regular contributions to a fund that is given in part or in full to each contributor in turn. This arrangement creates ties and

trust among the people whose lives depend on it.

The most active organization carrying out projects is the Groupement Communautaire pour le Developpement de Cazale (GCDC), which was created and registered in October 1983 in New York by Agenor Garçon and has a representative in Cazale. The GCDC had in the past participated in the project of rehabilitating the Church of St. Michael, repairing a bridge, and paying tuition for 200 kids for a period of five years.

One other organization is notable for its interest in the economic development of the village. It is not considered a local organization, though four of its 30 members are from Cazale, including the committee president. This organization, l'Institut Femmes Entrepreneurs (IFE), or Institute of Women Entrepreneurs, helps develop micro-enterprises all over the country based on a region's specific resources and cultural traits. It is helping people in Cazale set up a small enterprise that will make paper from banana fibers. Not only will it provide jobs and add cash value to a major crop of local farmers, it will process stems that used to be discarded as waste. The paper will be used in making prints, greeting cards, invitations and diplomas, and maybe even craft and fashion accessories such as hats and bags. Early results are promising: UNICEF is interested in ordering Christmas cards, and IFE has been invited to promote its products at several international fairs held in the summer and fall of 2002.

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**Given the village's scarce financial resources,  
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networks to pool their assets,**

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IFE is now looking into the possibility of a joint venture with growers of Francisque mangoes, considered the best in the country, to market the

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<sup>22</sup> Peasant organizations in Cazale include: L'Unité de Reflexion et d'Action pour le Developpement de Cazale (URADEC), L'Association 27 mars, L'Organisation des AnimateuRs et des Paysans de Cazale (OGAPEC), la Fondation des Paysans pour le Developpement de Cazale (FDPC), les MÉNagères de la Persévérance qui entreprennent des actions religieuses, l'Union pour le Relèvement socio-économique de Cazale (UNRESOCA), le Rassemblement des Femmes de Fonds-Blanc, le Rassemblement des Femmes de Dessables, Kès Popilè Lespwa Kazal (KPLK), l'Association des Jeunes Intellectuels pour l'alphabetisation et le Développement de Cazale (AJIADC).

produce nationally and internationally. IFE is also investigating the possibility of adding value by processing mangoes into jams and jellies.

IFE is not truly a local organization and that probably explains its early success. Its local members were educated internationally and want to satisfy their need to belong as well as their needs for friendship and achievement. According to Lopreato, the insider who became an outsider but returns brings with him the gift of new ways of doing things and stirs the imaginations of those who have not yet left.<sup>23</sup>

Given the village's scarce financial resources, it would help if its CSOs could create networks and federations to pool their assets, decide on priority needs, and make a greater impact. However, that is not the case, partly because there is a lack of social trust. In asking why a place like Cazale is so poor, one wonders: Is it inadequate resources, government mistakes, center-periphery dependency, market failures, or culture? Many of these are interrelated, of course, but in untangling the riddle of why it is so hard for local people to work together effectively three primary strands emerge: colonial history, the tradition of *mawonaj*, and a strong culture of fear.

Some of the barriers are inherited from the colonial past. Civic participation in Haiti has always had a distinctively French flavor, based on its educational system and class relationships. As Crozier<sup>24</sup> would argue, this legacy makes it difficult for public and private sectors to adapt quickly to the fast pace of social and economic change in a globalizing world, discourages participation by the people most affected by a problem, and distorts communications, especially those that involve face-to-face exchanges. French institutions in 1804 were centralized and impersonal. Haitian institutions are no different. In French universities there are unusually wide gaps and no real contact between students and teachers, and most classes are still lectures delivered in impersonal amphitheaters. Course content is usually abstract and divorced from real-life application, and is tailored for people entering strictly demarcated social strata. Until 1987 teaching in Haiti took place in French and not in both official languages, as it does now. One guaranteed side effect of this practice was to shut out those from rural areas.

The policymaking system in France has been characteristically conservative, more concerned with safeguarding rank and privilege than trying new ideas. Citizen participation was tightly

circumscribed and whole groups were deliberately excluded. The French are still struggling to fully implement the decentralization law enacted in 1982. Haiti's recent experience with decentralization is still very much a work in progress. The lack of people with public service training, the lack of funding to accomplish enough projects to instill hope in the system, and the persistence of scandals requiring national intervention to change councils all show how difficult it is to legislate tradition away.

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**Poverty does not breed idleness so much as chronic fatigue since the poor are constantly seeking the means to scrape by.**

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The second obstacle, *mawonaj*, refers to the ability of a slave to escape and hide from his master, both literally as in case of runaways and figuratively in the case of wearing one's face like a mask. Now *mawonaj* lives on as noncommitment, or the refusal to assume responsibility. These traits are easily observed in Haitian society. They also interact with aspects of French culture, including the dysfunctional relationship between the French labor movement and industrial management, which has been further damaged by interventions from the highly centralized State. Communications between workers and employers are impaired; workers do not air their grievances directly but through centralized structures and so cannot see the link between a proposed remedy and actual resolution. Even when they are involved initially, the delay between meetings to decide what to do and the doing of it are so long that people lose faith in the process. When there is an even longer tradition of nothing changing, as in Haiti, the cynicism is even deeper, and it requires extraordinary effort to mobilize people to follow up on the same subject.

The third obstacle to cooperation is *fear*. During the Duvalier days, freedom of association was banished and violating the ban could cost one's life. And when the terror is constant, and seeps from public to private life so that one can never be

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<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., Joseph Lopreato, 87.

<sup>24</sup> Crozier, M., *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon: The Importance of Bureaucratic Action in the French Social System* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1964).<sup>25</sup> Banfield, Edward C., et al., *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), 170.

sure what another person's true beliefs are, the basic trust that must be the foundation for any cooperation is eroded. Even when people saw something positive get done, it was as a product of patronage not of cooperative effort, and tended to favor personal over public interests. Often when a road was built, for instance, it would conveniently lead to the entrance of an official's house.

The concept of trust or its lack has been of concern to social scientists. In Banfield's "amoral familism," distrust is the pervasive residue of centuries of negative experiences, making it difficult even to organize basic education programs that could build social capital for other kinds of social investments.<sup>25</sup> Poverty does not breed idleness so much as chronic fatigue since the poor are constantly seeking the means to scrape by. The endless grinding builds fatalism, smothering the ability to see how a peasant's life could ever improve. The cumulative effect of this syndrome is the inability of people to come together for their common good, or any end transcending the immediate material interest of one's family, a syndrome that Banfield places at the heart of extreme poverty and backwardness. Putnam in studying Italian civic participation emphasizes the positive side of the equation, saying that a social fabric of trust and cooperation will create a civic community... whose citizens... are more than merely active, publicly spirited, and equal. Virtuous citizens are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another, even when they differ on matters of substance."<sup>26</sup> Mutual trust and social cooperation, when they are translated into participation in community affairs, spark economic development. Fukuyama takes it a step further in considering a culture of trust to be the source of spontaneous sociability that allows enterprises to grow beyond family into professionally managed organizations. However, "social capital, the crucible of the trust and critical to the health of the economy, rests on cultural roots."<sup>27</sup> This implies Haitians must first change their culture of distrust to get the benefits of social capital. But cultures change very slowly because of habit, and in the case of Cazale, can the experience of brutality and fear be expunged sufficiently so that there is room for trust and cooperation to grow and flower? Can the celebration of the bicentennial of our national freedom be a catalyst for rebuilding trust, participation, and therefore a new sense of community?

## CAZALE 2004: A TEST IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In Haiti, the history of community development goes back to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Smucker and Noriac,<sup>28</sup> community development projects were usually linked to outside agencies and focused on nonformal education and literacy. These projects did not focus on the community as an active participant but as the recipient of services. As early as the 1940s, the United States and UNESCO promoted education and agriculture, and in 1949 the Haitian government created the office of community development at the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition to the UN agencies and the U.S., major international NGOs such as CARE, CARITAS, and Catholic Relief Services have sponsored community development projects in Haiti. The Duvalier regime even established the Office National d'Alphabetisation et d'Action Communautaire (ONAAC). ONAAC was closed down after 1986, and was not replaced since the new 1987 Constitution required the decentralization of human and financial resources to develop the whole country.

Its purpose, moreover, was not really community development. The agency, like the community councils, commonly called *Kosey Kominotè* or *conseils d'actions communautaires*, with which it worked were co-opted by the Duvalier regime. The councils began springing up in the 1950s, but became politicized by Duvalier's paramilitary. "Despite the rhetoric of self-help and democratic functioning, the community-based councils tended to be dominated by particular factions and traditional power holders. In lieu of local self-determination, they generally defined their activities in response to national political forces, and flow of goods and services from foreign agencies. In the end, the community council network proved unable to mediate the interest of the poor majority, and helped maintain the status quo, both locally and internationally."<sup>29</sup> Community

<sup>26</sup> Putnam, Robert - *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 89.

<sup>27</sup> Fukuyama, Francis, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, (New York: The Free Press, 1998) 33.

<sup>28</sup> Smucker, Glen, and Dathis Noriac, *Peasant Organizations in Haiti: Trends and Implications*, (Port-au-Prince: Comité Haitien de Developpement (CHADEV) and L'Institut d'Evaluation et de Formation (ICEF), in association with the Inter-American Foundation, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

councils that would not be co-opted were closed down. They fell into such disrepute that practically all of them ceased to function after February 7, 1986, when they were spontaneously boycotted by their members and their leaders chased off.

The 1997 elections provided the first authentic local authorities (CASEC), which were given the vital task of being the representative of the people at the root level. The training campaign that was under way to provide these new representatives with the necessary education, an adequate salary that went from fifty to two hundred and fifty Gourdes in 1998, and resources to accomplish their tasks fell victim to the political gridlock created by the 2000 elections. The suspension of international assistance in order to pressure the central government also dried up funding for local government and local communities.

The upcoming bicentennial has stirred hope that a way will be found around the roadblock and jumpstart community development. The last celebration of a major historical event in Haiti was the bicentennial commemoration in 1949 by President Dumarsais Estimé of the founding of Port-au-Prince. A whole section of the city was rehabilitated, and many cultural activities were held and many countries participated in the events. Memories of that time have raised expectations for what the Independence bicentennial of the whole country might bring. Certainly those expectations are at work in Cazale.

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Yet in deciding how they are to participate in that celebration and reap the direct and indirect benefits from their work, the people of Cazale must first answer the grueling question of who they are as a community. No individual or group likes the moment of evaluation, especially when it requires dredging up and confronting painful memories. However it is imperative to find the true answer if community development is to happen. The process of searching for the truth can help bring the community into being since people must together define what their community stands for, what it values most. Establishing a commonly held identity makes it easier to define a shared vision and convert that vision into a

working plan.

What makes the people of Cazale distinctive is their Polish origin. They are also very proud of steadfastly fighting for justice and democracy, whether against the French armies or the Duvalier dictatorship; and 2004 gives them the possibility of celebrating both sources of pride, and the opportunity to develop the means for good governance and economic development.

The process of bringing the community together to define a vision for Cazale for the next 50 years started in May 2002. It started by looking within, with an assessment of the community's human resources.

After a number of informal conversations, a three-day meeting was formally organized by the author, who acted as a representative of IFE and GCDC of which she is a member since its formation in 1983. IFE covered the costs, which were small. Invitations went out to all known organizations and every individual of the village, asking each to drop in and share views on the future of Cazale and the meaning of 2004 for the community. The response was surprisingly good the first day, though attendance fell off the next two days. By the end of the three days more than 150 people, including local officials, had actively participated. They were old and young, male and female. There was a conscious effort to embrace youth and even children in the debates because they are the future of the community. Effort was also made to draw the women out. The strategy was based on Banfield's idea that one way to modify "amoral familism" is to find "a few persons, at least [that] have the moral capacity to act as leaders."<sup>30</sup> If change is needed, it can begin by including in the group of visible and established leaders, members of the new generation and previously hidden talents who may bring new enthusiasm and fresh eyes to the management of new challenges. All ideas expressed would then be fleshed out in a formal document to deepen the informal exchanges into an ongoing dialogue.

That would not be automatic since the people of Cazale have lost the habit of working together. A few years ago, peasants would get together to work on their lands in a *konbit*, but this tradition tended to disappear. Acute impoverishment makes it hard to pool savings for a common purpose even if private savings can be accumu-

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<sup>30</sup> Op. cit., Banfield, 167.

lated. Often it has been more tempting to engage in a different kind of participation, selling one's service or even one's vote, thinking it did not matter since local people had no power to bring change. Community participation that is merely ratification of someone else's agenda by people who have been paid either food or money builds no social capital, and over the long-term always undermines solidarity. Solidarity is what the community is trying to recreate with its bicentennial celebration. It is a common belief that a group of individuals with common interests usually attempts to further those interests by acting in common, but Olson Mancur suggests the reasoning is flawed.<sup>31</sup> Just because individuals in a group act out of rational self-interest, one cannot infer that a group of individuals will pursue their common interests voluntarily. They will not act unless circumstances force them to do so, or unless some incentive is offered to members of the group, individually, on the condition that they help bear the cost or burdens involved in the achievement of the group's objectives. This was the tone on the first day of the meeting in Cazale.

People arrived expecting to be paid for participating in the meeting, or at least wanted to know how they would be paid for participating in the projects. After very difficult discussions, they came to understand that they would not get any money from the IFE, nor will they be paid for participating in the festivities of 2004. There are, however, other ways for money to flow, and with a little bit of creativity, they can invent them. Perhaps due to pride or the possibility of meeting a challenge, they decided to set up a follow-up committee of that meeting and made a list of the community projects they would like to see happen. Since economic incentives seem to be impossible right now, hopefully they will settle for social incentives such as respect, friendship, and prestige, the same social incentives that are motivating those from the Diaspora to also participate in the bicentennial.

There were signs though of how a planning process can bring another great benefit. It allows people to regain confidence in their ability to use the *metis knowledge*<sup>32</sup> they have accumulated from living in this place to make their own choices, rather than following the dictates of what "aid experts" tell them to do. Participants learn that they are the experts, the only ones who can determine their needs, and therefore be the guides for combining empirical with local knowledge. In

planning, they are also able to reevaluate problems encountered in the past and think through possible new solutions. The community, with the help of the follow-up committee, will "learn to be effective, to be efficient, and to expand."<sup>33</sup>

### *Mapping the Assets of the Community*

The community had never really looked at its people or the physical assets of the village as investment resources. The follow-up committee and members of the GCDC and IFE have decided to inventory the human resources of the community, whether they reside in Cazale or otherwise. The list of associations and institutions was already available, but lacking valuable data.

The exercise in identifying and recording physical assets was an eye-opener for the community. It is still a work in progress and will be updated as people's ingenuity uncovers new resources or new possibilities for existing resources, as has happened with turning banana stems into paper. The list so far includes the history of the people and the place, the proximity to the capital and beaches, the river, the rich soil, the banana plantations, the mango plantation, the abundance of clay, the fauna and the flora, the identified endangered species.

Discussions were intense among the individuals and organizations proposing, evaluating, selecting, or rejecting projects. Six project ideas failed to win a consensus and were put aside. The following list of projects includes those that the community as a whole would like to inaugurate in September 2004. The list is divided into four building blocks of community development. There are three civic and cultural infrastructure projects: 1) renovating St. Michael's Catholic Church, 2) renovating the local radio station, and 3) building education/cultural centers. Five physical infra-

<sup>31</sup> Mancur, Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1971).

<sup>32</sup> Scott, James C., *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1998). Scott uses the term to describe the local and specific information a community possesses about its environment from living there for generations that even experts might overlook because it is confined primarily to the elders and community leaders who pass it on selectively.

<sup>33</sup> Korten, David C., 'Rural Development Programming: The Learning Process Approach' in *People Centered Development*, David C. Korten and Rudi Klaus, eds. (West Hartford, CN: Kumarian press, 1984), chapter 18.

structure projects were selected: 1) building a 30 km access road, 2) constructing an irrigation system, 3) constructing a public square, 4) renovating the public school, and 5) building a bridge for vehicles and carts, and pedestrian overpasses over the river. Five projects to develop human capital and improve the quality of life were selected: 1) getting a Municipal Statute passed by the State,<sup>34</sup> 2) setting up a police station, 3) installing a potable water system, 4) getting trained medical personnel, and 5) establishing formal and nonformal adult education and training programs. Finally, two income-generating projects won approval: 1) finding markets for local mango producers and 2) expanding the banana-paper/banana-fiber industry.

This is a very ambitious program to accomplish in only two years, but that is from design. After identifying village assets, the community was asked to list its priorities, regardless of the resources currently available to carry them out. The strategy may seem irresponsible at first, but it is intended to further the learning process. The community learns what is really important to its members, and the members learn how decisions are made, how to “prioritize,” and then how to begin juggling priorities.

Two important objectives should be paramount when implementing community development projects. They should satisfy the well being of the whole population, particularly those most in need, and planning and implementation should strengthen the community’s solidarity and capacity to lay the foundation for sustaining and building on project achievements.

Considering the list disinterestedly, one notes that it lacks economic projects to create wealth in the village. Only two are mentioned. Also, no one has pledged any personal contribution to bring these wishes into being. Having local seed money is important for the morale and pride of the community; it allows the community to take ownership of the project and claim credit for positive results. It is also the basis for convincing

external contributors that the community is serious about its endeavors, that it is, in other words, creditworthy. The new motto in the “aid industry” seems to be: “Help yourself and God and the international financial institutions will help you.” Thus the list of income-generating activities needs to be rethought, which means engaging people in thinking about workable solutions to problems, in linking community assets with market possibilities to leverage social investment.

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### **Cazale has a hidden treasure chest of latent talent.**

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This does not mean that the other items on the list are frivolous. In fact they are very revealing, and meeting their underlying assumptions is essential for long-term sustainable development. Resources are needed, but so is information sharing if trust is to be built to use the resources wisely. Both Banfield and Putnam evaluated the Italian samples in their case studies by their consumption of newspapers. In Cazale, the radio is the most important tool of public communication. It can be used for adult education. It brings the community news about the nation and other nations, including the places where neighbors and family have moved. It connects Cazale to the world. It also brings its listeners together, not only to absorb information but to talk about it. People listen to a football game, air their feelings, and develop the basis for talking about all kinds of things. Honest talk is also a habit and it is the foundation for any real public dialogue. That is why the people of Cazale want to upgrade the Gethsemanie Community Radio Station.

As members of the community work together longer, the hope is that they will focus on the more “urgent and resolvable” priorities. However one cannot help but notice the priority given to infrastructure projects that encourage sociability, such as the public square. As Banfield noted in Italy, misery is not only the result of physical deprivation, but of the alienation and despair bred by withered opportunities for neighborliness and recreation. Having a place to play cards and sip coffee with friends is as important as the coffee itself. Poor people also need to have places to socialize and interact in ways that identify them as persons entitled to respect and admiration.

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<sup>34</sup> Cazale has more than the 1,500 families required by article 3 of the October 22, 1982, decree on the organization and operations of communes. If the road were repaired, it would certainly guarantee the 25 percent of the communal income required by the same decree. The final step would require the president to introduce a legislative bill in Parliament to make Cazale a commune.

Regenerating community means using challenges and interests to recreate ties. Cazale needs to find the trust that existed before the Duvalier repression, before the massacre by the Tontons Macoutes. If trust can be recreated, 2004 is the time. The bicentennial offers the opportunity for people to work together to better themselves and their community. Patriotism and history, of course, are going to play a big part in mobilizing the community. Collective action in the past has failed because of a lack of leadership perhaps, a lack of mobilization certainly, and the way to circumvent both hazards is to create networks of horizontal cooperation, beginning with projects that require the participation of the most people so that the connection is made between reciprocity and self-help.

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**[Though mostly Protestant] the people of Cazale consider Pope John Paul II as one of their own because of his Polish origins.**

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Cazale has a hidden treasure chest of latent talent. Its human resources inventory is a kind of map to that treasure. People who were typecast in one way, and perhaps dismissed, get looked at and evaluated differently. Based on the fact that everybody has something to contribute, the community as a whole becomes revamped. One of the most serious side effects of the 1969 massacre was to disrupt the relationship between generations. Elders were seen and saw themselves as powerless, and the most-talented and dedicated leaders among the young were assassinated. The bicentennial can help repair the gap. Senior citizens can once again share their wisdom, their accumulated *metis knowledge* about the history of Cazale and its people, with a new generation. This transmission is vital since nearly all of that history is oral rather than written, and in the silence following the massacre, the links to the past threatened to snap one by one as old people died. The children and young adults can bring a fresh approach to the new debates that are forming. Local officials and the traditional leaders have the political savvy to keep the community rooted in reality, and young energetic leaders will begin to emerge once again to keep the community pointed toward a better future.

And as already noted there are some building blocks already in place. Cazale is not without civic-minded organizations. But also as noted earlier, the

climate of suspicion bred under Duvalier has made it difficult for some to reach out beyond their missions and memberships. So they too suffer from a kind of *marwonaj*, waiting for signs of true commitment from the community before risking their resources in “another” endeavor. An inventory of CSOs in the area is being updated so the community can widen and deepen its network of contacts.

The public institutions and the business and nonprofit organizations that work in the community also need to be invited to join the community in supporting a community self-help agenda. Most of these actors already have their own priorities and programs. They are not being asked to abandon those goals but to refocus them in light of the community’s plan. They are also not being asked to take over and run the community revitalization effort, which would be self-defeating. They are being asked to join the dialogue, and the best have a track record in doing so. Responding to the fear that NGOs can take over a project, Martinez-Noguera argues that there is room to integrate NGOs in a realistic fashion because “the grassroots understands its felt needs perfectly well and the NGOs facilitate the process aimed at meeting the need by providing inputs that the grassroots organizations can appropriate. Rather than one party becoming subordinate to the other, this model allows both to benefit from shared power and complementary knowledge.”<sup>35</sup>

One potentially powerful actor that needs to be included is the Roman Catholic Church. Though Cazale has a majority of Protestants, the Catholic Church occupies a special place for historical and sentimental reasons. Since the 1960s Church leaders in Haiti have taken the lead in trying to regenerate communities through reforms that improved technical services to peasant farmers and employed research methods geared to practical actions so that the community learns skills rather than borrowing and then losing them when technical experts move on. These efforts were based on the theology of liberation. Taking root in Haiti as the *ti Komité Légliz* (Small Church Association), and adapting techniques pioneered by Paolo Freire,<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Martinez-Noguera, Roberto, ‘Negotiated Interactions: NGOs and Local Government in Rosario, Argentina,’ in Charles A Reilly, ed., *New Paths to Democratic Development in Latin America: The Rise of NGO-Municipal Collaboration*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 1995).

<sup>36</sup> Freire, Paolo, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).

practitioners learned to redefine problems and solutions in terms of root causes, including social and economic injustice. President Aristide used the same approach when he was a priest seeking to heighten awareness of political issues, human rights, and freedom of expression.

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In addition, the people of Cazale consider Pope John Paul II as one of their own because of his Polish origins. When the Pope came to Haiti on March 9, 1983, three important events took place. First, a delegation from Cazale went to greet the Pope at the airport. They were thrilled by the Holy Father's words of acknowledgment and his blessings. Second, the Pope called for political changes, and mandated the Haitian Church to help mobilize the sentiments and energies needed to bring them about. The Pope's declaration that "Something must change..." is now legendary, ushering in the beginning of the end for the Duvalier regime. Third, for Christians around the world, the speech was memorable because it also called for a "New Evangelization." The Pope called for a novena that would prepare Christians for the 1992 quinquennial celebration of the New World in 1992, and proclaim Christ to a new post-Cold War world faced with new problems, challenges, and transformations. For the celebration of 2004, the people of Cazale intend to call on the assistance, the prayers, and the blessings of the Vatican for another new beginning. Protestant churches, also present in Cazale, will be asked to participate in this new beginning as well.

People who no longer live in Cazale but still have ties there are also being asked to join the effort. Members of the Diaspora have a long record of contributing to village improvements above and beyond personal remittances to kin. In 1983, Cazaliens living in the U.S. created an association called Groupement Communautaire pour le Developpement de Cazale (GCDC). The association is very active in village life despite its limited financial means, and is always willing to contribute to any program that the community as a whole has endorsed as a need. The group has opened a bank account in Haiti from which their representative, who lives in Cazale, can make withdrawals.

Haitian communities, and Cazale is no exception, still hope that the government will support their programs, but they are also aware of the difficult situation facing the Aristide government and the whole country with only 10 months to go before the major bicentennial festivities begin. So the community is turning to friends for funding. Of course old friends like the GCDC will not be enough; new friends and partners must be made. People in Cazale now realize that the rules of the game have changed; they cannot expect funding from others if they are not mobilizing their own assets. But they still have to develop the structure for raising and managing those resources, and there is still a lot of fear about revealing their weaknesses to others. The process under way is profound, one that shakes people to the core, and it is going to be painful. Cazaliens want to work with NGO funders with a track record in supporting grassroots organizations and projects, and will therefore submit their project proposals to CARE, CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services, and similar organizations. It will be difficult for UNDP, UNESCO, and USAID to react, based on the international community's stand on Haiti's national politics. An unconventional partnership with the Polish government and Polish communities in the U.S. may be possible, which would be apt given the contributions other Poles made to Independence 200 years ago.

### **MARKETING THE PROJECT AND BOOSTING UP CAZALE**

This project requires leadership and vision as well as mobilizing people through their identity and sense of belonging. The surveys and meetings got the population involved in organizing the commemoration of Haiti's Independence bicentennial, based on their own values and their vision for the future of their community. It would be naïve to expect that all suspicions and distrust would vanish overnight, but an open dialogue has been established to air and dissipate grievances. One can also expect much of the cloud of the past to burn off as collective pride builds over recovering a buried identity and planning the event. The objective is to involve Cazale's populace, associations, institutions, private sector, and local government in a campaign to create a new and truer image of this community and communicate it to the world.

This operation can be led and coordinated by a steering committee made up of IFE and GCDC representatives.

The visuals for the project will be finalized by the steering committee. Materials will include logos for press kits, stickers, letterheads, posters, event programs, and a magazine supplement. In selecting designs it will be important to remember that Cazale is not just commemorating the past, but using it to make a new impression. The bicentennial is an opportunity to remind people that they have much to be proud of that they can use as a foundation for building a better future.

Cazale's plan will mark four important moments of celebration during the year. January 1, 2004, will launch the program into what is expected to be an exceptional year. On March 27, Cazale will commemorate the Massacre of 1969 as a means of celebrating freedom and democracy. This will be a local event on the Place de la Resistance, and could be accompanied by the inauguration of a museum that tells the story of people's struggle for a better life and the sacrifices that were made to bring that about. This event will be the first to which the press is invited, and materials will be available for journalists covering it to understand how the story of what happened in this one place is also Haiti's story, and how the efforts by the people of Cazale to reclaim their past mirrors the country's efforts.

The third is the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, patron day of St. Michael, which will take on new meaning that year, one of service as pilgrimage. This will also be an opportunity to initiate the education program, which will include a documented essay on the history of Cazale, a book, and a video documentary that can be used to help raise awareness and funds for the community. The Vatican will be invited to participate, and a classical piano concert featuring the music of the Polish composer may round out the festivities.

The fourth milestone, of course, is the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2005, the celebration of the Bicentennial of the first Haitian constitution which recognized the Poles as Haitians. An economic forum will be held to showcase the resources of the village and to actively search for new markets. Also a

"tourism route" will be organized to tell Cazale's "Polish story" and its contribution to the history of Haiti and to introduce the village as a visiting site in the country's new cultural and ecological tourism program. The people of Cazale hope to inaugurate most of their projects during 2004/2005, especially in the presence of international contributors.

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All of these plans will be posted on a website that will be operational in April 2003 when the campaign will start. This campaign seeks to raise funds to realize the projects identified earlier and include special presentations of the film-documentary and book signings.

Mobilization is the best thing that can happen to a community, and so it will be for the community of Cazale. Finding their voice will test their strength, but it will help them to organize around an event that comes once in a lifetime. Most importantly, it will help the community take stock of itself, find the bedrock of its identity, and decide what kind of future they want to accomplish. In a time of economic depression, it is important for communities to position themselves, to present an image that will help sell their products. Transparent management of funds by the steering committee will also be imperative in building a trustworthy image whose ultimate dividend will be a better life for the people of the community.

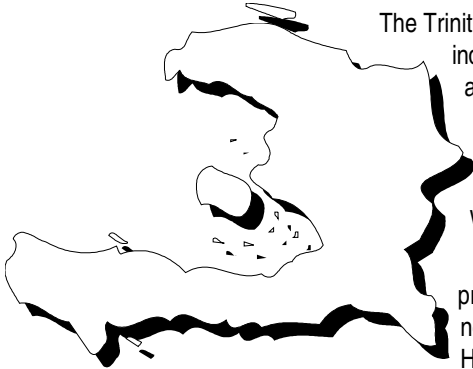
Cazale may have slipped off the map and out of people's memories for most of two centuries, but its people now have the chance to remind their countrymen and the world of what their ancestors helped accomplish and what people living now can do when they work together. The celebration in Cazale will be festive, one that brings joy and happiness to a long-suffering community. Visitors looking on can also take heart. What people's faces will be saying is this: If the people of Cazale can do it, so can the people of Haiti.

**Geri Benoît- Prével** has degrees in marketing and social and commercial communications from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York and from the CELSA/Paris IV-Sorbonne, in France. She has a Master in International Public Policy from the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University in Washington D.C. She has represented the Haitian Government since 1995 at the OAS' Sustainable Development Commission, its Social Development Commission and Commission on Caribbean Affairs.

As the wife of President René Prével of Haiti, she has attended The Seventh Conference of the Spouses of Heads of States in Panama where she spoke on the situation of women and children in Haiti. She also took part in the Regional Summit on Latin American And Caribbean Children held in Colombia where she reported on domestic violence and child labor in Haiti. At the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Spouses of Chiefs of States in Santiago, Chile, she stressed the impact of the resolution adopted at the Second Summit of the Americas on Poverty. At the 9<sup>th</sup> conference which took place in Ottawa, Canada, she described the efforts undertaken in Haiti to allow a better control of children' health, particularly that of children in maternal care. On December 1st, 1999, she was a special guest of ONUSIDA at a round table that took place at the UN headquarters on "The Forgotten Children of AIDS".

Further, Mrs Géri Benoît was the representative of The Haitian Ministry of Foreign Affairs working toward the creation of the 'Centre de Promotion des Investissements' (Center for the Promotion of Investments) that is to study the development of industrial parks and define the conditions for foreign investments. This allowed Mrs Benoît to act as moderator at the October 1998 World Conference of the Centers for Promotion and External Commerce in Chile. This laid the ground for the preparation of her thesis, along with a documentary film on community development, taking her native village of Cazale as an example. In that context, she initiated a paper-making project using banana fiber. The initial workshop is part of a vast project of Creativity and Productivity Centers which has been created by the Institute of Women Entrepreneurs (IFE) of which Mrs. Benoît is the President. This foundation composed of professionals of the private sector wishes to help minority groups and bring awareness to small communities.

# Information on the Haiti Program



The Trinity College Haiti Program seeks to provide accurate, up-to-date, and insightful information and analysis to individuals and organizations involved in current Haitian political, economic and social issues. The Haiti Program also seeks to raise awareness of the forthcoming 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Haiti's independence in 2004 by providing a forum for the exchange and dissemination of information on the contributions made over space and time by Haiti and the U.S.-based Haitian Diaspora population to the well being of the United States. The Trinity College Haiti Program is a continuation and expansion of the Georgetown University Haiti Program, which was founded in 1994 in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University.

The Haiti Program works with two core constituencies. One constituency is composed of policy makers and program planners in agencies and branches of the U.S. government as well as representatives of academic, non-governmental and international organizations. The second constituency is composed of members of the Haitian-American population actively involved in Haiti and US-Haiti issues. Members of both constituencies are convened periodically under the auspices of the *Haiti Study Group* to participate in seminars and symposia on topical issues.

The Haiti Program achieves its objectives through seminars and symposia, publications, and the development of educational materials. Seminars, usually off-the-record and by invitation only for members of the Haiti Study Group (HSG), last for two hours and involve specially invited guest speakers. The full-day symposia, also by invitation for members of the HSG and other guests, address issues related to Haiti's political and economic development; the significance of its independence to the United States; and the contemporary contribution of Haitian-Americans to U.S. political, economic, and social vitality.

To complement its seminars and symposia, the Haiti Program also publishes occasional Briefing Papers on current issues, along with Haiti Info Circulars. The latter, in addition to containing reports and articles written by program collaborators, include symposium reports. All published materials are posted on the Haiti Program's web site.

In addition to its Internet home at [www.trinitydc.edu](http://www.trinitydc.edu), the Haiti Program has created an educational web site, [www.Haiti-USA.org](http://www.Haiti-USA.org). The website features information on historical linkages between Haiti and the U.S., and on today's growing communities of Haitians in the United States. It serves as an educational tool for all individuals and organizations.

The Haiti Program also sponsors occasional briefings for Congressional Staff members and others, and participates in meetings, consultations and conferences on issues linked to its work. The Trinity College Haiti Program is directed by Dr. Robert Maguire.

The Trinity College Haiti Papers are designed to serve the needs of decision makers and analysts interested in Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora in the United States. The Papers are an occasional publication of the Haiti Program, a unit of Programs in International Affairs at Trinity College, Washington, D.C. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author, and not the Haiti Program or the College. Copies of this and other Haiti-relevant publications can be obtained by writing to the Haiti Program, Trinity College, 125 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20017 or by visiting the Project's website at: [http://www.trinitydc.edu/academics/depts/Interdisc/International/Haiti\\_Program.htm](http://www.trinitydc.edu/academics/depts/Interdisc/International/Haiti_Program.htm)

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