

KONBIT: HAITIAN-AMERICAN SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

Konbit means "working together" in Creole.

WHY KONBIT?

Konbit began in 1989 to develop North American support for human rights and self-determination in Haiti.

WHY NOW?

Since dictator "Baby Doc" Duvalier's forced departure in February, 1986, Haitian efforts to create an elected, representative government have been blocked violently by powerful

elite figures supported by military factions and para-military forces known as the Tonton Macoutes.

Elections in 1987 were cancelled after at least 54 Haitians were massacred in Port-au-Prince while waiting in line to vote. A series of short-term presidents, mostly military officers, have continued oppressive rule.



Yet this is still a time of hope for Haitians. United popular protest loosened Duvalier's stranglehold in 1986. Now there is a proliferation of groups, many of which are forming coalitions for democratic self-determination in Haiti despite violent official efforts to squelch them.

As in Central America, past and current United States interventionist foreign policy in Haiti has supported dictatorial government and oppressive labor practices, undermining progress toward economic and political independence.

Most people in the United States know little about these developments. Konbit believes that a working partnership of Haitians and North Americans can open new avenues of support for progress toward the kind of republic that the Haitian people have been struggling to create.



KONBIT GOALS

EDUCATION

Konbit is an opportunity to educate North Americans about

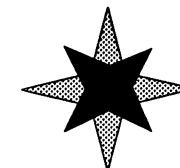
- the political, economic and human rights situation in Haiti
- United States government support of economic, military and political oppression in Haiti
- Haitian history and culture

ACTION

Konbit offers a range of action opportunities:

- building the Konbit committee
- petition and protest campaigns
- educational outreach programs

Konbit seeks to move beyond humanitarian assistance to address the *causes* of oppression in Haiti. With information and action we can empower Haitians and North Americans in promoting constructive change.



American Friends Service Committee provides staff assistance and office support for Konbit. AFSC is a Quaker organization working for peace and justice through nonviolence since 1917.

JOIN KONBIT

•You will have access to information about Haiti not available in the media.

•You can choose the level of participation most appropriate for you.

•You will be supporting a North American/Haitian cooperative effort to promote the aspirations of Haitians for justice and self-determination.

____ Please place my name on the mailing list.
____ Enclosed is my annual dues of \$5
____ Contributing Member \$15
____ \$25

Tax deductible: Make checks payable to Konbit, AFSC.

(Please print)
Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ zip _____

Date: _____

Telephone: _____

Our address:
KONBIT
2161 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140
Tel: (617) 661-6130

KONBIT'S FIRST YEAR

Public meeting: "Three Years After Duvalier"

Special membership meeting with AFSC international staff

Participated in the "Walk for Peace"

Petition Campaign for release of three political prisoners in Haiti

Pre- and post-trip support for Harvard Medical School delegation to Haiti

Five educational presentations to religious and university groups

Monthly Konbit committee self-education series:

- U.S. Coast Guard interdiction of Haitian refugees
- Boston-area business activity in Haiti
- Human rights and political updates
- Evaluation of films, videos and literature

Networking with local and national Haiti-oriented groups

News bulletins, action alerts, media contacts.



KEY FACTS ABOUT HAITI

•Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic.

•Capital: Port-au-Prince. Population over one million.

•Total Haiti population: 6,285,000 - most densely populated country in the world.

•After a successful rebellion against French colonialism, Haiti became the first and only nation founded by slaves.

•Independent since January 1, 1804.

•Occupied for 19 years by United States marines (1915-34).

•Ruled for 27 years by US-supported Duvalier dynasty.

•90% of more than 250 foreign companies doing business in Haiti are owned by US nationals.

•Over 50% of Haiti imports come from the United States.

•Over 59% of Haiti exports go to the United States.

•60% unemployment.

•Hourly wage: 58 cents.

•Per capita income lowest in this hemisphere: \$300 a year.

•Highest infant mortality rate in this hemisphere: 124/1000.

•Lowest life expectancy in this hemisphere: 55.

•85% illiteracy.

•Over 40,000 Haitians in the Greater Boston area; nearly one million in the U.S.

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WE WANT OUR OWN KIND OF DEMOCRACY!

"We understand exactly what democracy means. It is the government of the people, by the people, for the people. The institutions that can best carry this kind of system should be built by the people in Haiti, because they understand and respect our history and our traditions."

"The United States is a big country - half a continent. We are a small country - half an island."

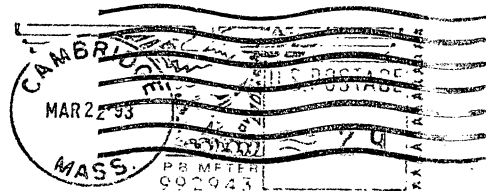
"You are predominantly white. We are predominantly black."

"You were founded by slave owners. We were founded by slaves."

"We do not want a democracy that will keep us from helping each other. We do not want a democracy that will kill our souls. We do not want a democracy prescribed by the United States."

Jean Claude Martineau,
Poet and playwright,
February 10, 1989

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O Haitian-American Solidarity Alliance
N 2161 Massachusetts Avenue
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I Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140
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City Clerk's office
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge MA 02139

attn: Mrs. Drury

KONBIT:

Haitian-American Solidarity Alliance

c/o 2161 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02140
617-497-5273

RECEIVED BY
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MAR 24 AM 10:04
CAMBRIDGE MA March 22, 1993

City Clerk's office

295 Mass. Ave.

Cambridge MA 02139

Cambridge City Council

Dear Friends,

Our organization would like to apply for a permit to set up a table outside the Harvard Square T-station on Saturday April 3 from 11am to 1pm. The purpose of the table would be to gather petitions to the U.S. government regarding U.S. policy toward Haiti & its treatment of Haitian refugees. We would also have literature available on the table. We would not solicit funds but would accept contributions for the literature. We would also have a leaflet available for distribution
(over)

to passers-by and a few signs attached
to the table urging the return of President
Duvalier to Haiti. Five to 8 members of our
group will be present to gather signatures
and distribute leaflets.

If possible we would like to set up this
table on Saturday April 3, but also on
the first Saturday of each month (e.g.
May 1, June 5, July 10 - not July 3 because of
the holiday; Aug. 7 etc.) The hours
would be the same, 4am to 1 pm.

Thank you for your attention to this
matter. I can be contacted at the letterhead
address or phone number. I enclose a
brochure on our group for your
information.

Sincerely

Paul Shannon

Consent Comm. # 5

H-31

Petition from Haitian-American Solidarity
Alliance requesting permission to set up
a table in Harvard Sq. on Saturday, April 3,
1993 from 11:00 to 1:00 to distribute
literature regarding U. S. policy towards
Haiti and its treatment of Haitian
refugees.

In City Council,

March 29, 1993

*Referred to the
City Manager
with power.*

*3/30/93 Copy sent to City mgr
aw*