

tution, is a republic and should elect its leader by universal suffrage. The possibility of assuming power is denied even to Duvalierists if they are not members of the Duvalier family. The Duvaliers, having simply confiscated power, mete out favours or punishment as they wish. Nothing prevents Jean-Claude Duvalier from some day naming his offspring, if ever he has any, to succeed him. The "Presidency for life" stands in the way of any change in Haitian political institutions.

The movement to institutionalize "Jean-Claudisme" does not aim to include farmers and workers — the country's most underprivileged and exploited groups — in decision-making processes. The community-development councils and co-operatives — in fact, all the agencies established with international assistance — are generally controlled by the same *élite*. The Haitian farmer has a new "leader", but his situation remains unchanged. This control constitutes another bastion of despotism that must be destroyed if Haitians are to realize their potential for self-development instead of living in a perpetual state of mendicancy in a country placed, *de facto*, under international trusteeship.

All the laws prohibiting political parties, labour organizations and the practical exercise of democratic rights are still in effect. All the police methods invented by the supporters of François Duvalier still flourish under his son's Government. Arbitrary arrests, torture and violations of human rights are still occurring in Haiti. The institutionalization of "Jean-Claudisme" will mean the establishment of despotism and of a strange version of democracy and human rights.

It would be a mistake to believe that the violence of the Duvaliers is a tragic fact of life, which must be accepted. Some feel that Haitians are not made for democracy. Others maintain that a solution to the crucial problems of illiteracy, disease, hunger and slums can be found only through the establishment and maintenance of a dictatorship, euphemistically described as "strong government". This error implies acceptance, in the case of Haiti and, accordingly, of similar societies,

of a level of autocracy below which the violence of the governing classes would be considered tolerable. Any political methods not exceeding this level would be condoned, since the nations concerned do not have a democratic tradition. Naturally, those involved — in this case the Haitians — cannot support such a notion, implying, as it does, that there are two kinds of men: "human beings" in the full sense of the term and sub-humans. Such a postulate could initially undermine and then destroy the need for legitimate governments in states where institutional democracy was already established. Democracy is fragile and can be jeopardized by an acceptance of possible compromise, when human rights, and especially the right to life, are disregarded.

Doomed

In any event, "Jean-Claudisme" is doomed to failure, in spite of outside support. The current operation will not enable the regime to enlarge its popular base to the point of winning a national consensus. It merely affords wealthy businessmen and landowners an opportunity to reaffirm their loyalty to a team that allows them to amass wealth. It gives a fraction of the lower middle class a unique opportunity to rationalize its support of a regime whose capacity to adjust to the national and international situation is reinforced by the very weakness of the opposition.

However, this operation offers no alternative to the workers, farmers, young people and other progressive forces who refuse to participate in the destruction of the country. For them, the future lies only in changing the country's socio-economic structures. The machinery of repression can frustrate their claims for a time, but it cannot thwart them forever. The Haitian Government is tossing the people from the myth of liberalization to that of "Jean-Claudisme". Demonstration of popular discontent, spontaneous strikes, demands for higher wages and the labour movement's attempts to reorganize show that the working class is not duped by the regime's propaganda.