HTI102951.FE

Haiti: The Struggling People's Organization (Organisation du peuple en lutte, OPL) political party, its founding members, and its past and current leaders; whether Evans Paul, current leader of the Nation Change and Democracy (Front national pour le changement et la démocratie, FNCD), was one of the founding members of the OPL; whether the OPL issues membership cards; if so, the procedures for obtaining a whether members must have one.

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

OPL: from the Lavalas Political Organization (Organisation politique Lavalas) to the Struggling Organization (Organisation du peuple en lutte)

The Lavalas Political Organization (OPL) was founded in 1991 (PHW 2008 2008, 546; OPL Jan. 21 Référence n.d.), during the 1991-1994 military regime (AlterPresse 4 Mar. 2004) and President Aristide (IRSP 11 Sept. 2008). The OPL officially became a political party in 1995 (Political Scientist 11 Sept. 2005) and brought together five movements (Le Monde diplomatique Oct. 1997; Volcans Jan.-Feb [translation] “the Little Church (petite Église); an organized peasant movement; a more radical mover the years 1975-1980; a movement of socialists, communists and nationalists; and a movement compr who were never organized but who supported change, were patriots and supported President Aristide” also Le Monde diplomatique Oct. 1997).

Although initially the OPL was affiliated with the pro-Aristide Lavalas movement (Volcans Jan.-Feb Haiti-Référence n.d.; OPL n.d.; see also AlterPresse 4 Mar. 2004), it completely dissociated itself from movement when it became the Struggling People's Organization (OPL Jan. 2000; Haiti Democracy Proj 2004). During its first convention in January 1997, the organization decided to change its name (OPL Jan. 2000; Haiti Democracy Proj 2004). According to several sources consulted by the Research Directorate, this split resulted primarily from a within the Lavalas Political Organization, which gave rise to the Lavalas Family (Fanmi Lavalas) party a Struggling People's Organization (PHW 2008 2008, 546; The Independent 23 Oct. 2004; FOCAL June 2 split was confirmed in the legislative elections in April 1997, when each party ran its own candidates (1 Crisis Group 18 Nov. 2004, 6).

Founding members and leaders of the OPL

In 16 September 2008 correspondence, a political scientist originally from Haiti who is currently of the International Center for Information and Documentation on Haiti, the Caribbean and the Afro-C (CIDIHCA), a cultural institution located in Montréal, sent to the Research Directorate the following offi founding members of the Lavalas Political Organization, which was obtained from an OPL staff membe

1. Géra[r]d Pierre[-]Charles
2. Irvelt Chéry
3. Sauveur Pierre Etienne
4. Jean Louvier Elie
5. Héra[r]d Pauyo
However, two sources consulted by the Research Directorate provide only the name of Gérard Pi as founder of the OPL (IRSP 11 Sept. 2008; *Le Monde* 14 Oct. 2004).

In a 1995 article in the magazine *Volcans*, Suzy Castor, one of the OPL’s founding members, is quoting that the OPL originally wanted to distinguish itself from other political parties by moving away from an organization built up around a [translation] "leader" to instead being a [translation] "collectively managed organization comprising national coordinating body and a seven-member executive" (*Volcans* Jan.-Feb 1995).

The following information comes from the OPL’s website and concerns the organizational structure in 2000:

[translation]

The Struggling People's Organization (OPL) is led by:

A nine-member executive committee. The general coordinator is Professor Gérard PIERRE-CHARL and the primary members are

Senator Irvelt CHERY, International Relations

Paul DENIS, former senator and senatorial candidate

Sauveur Pierre ETIENNE, Secretary of the executive committee

Rosny SMARTH, former prime minister.

A political committee comprising a varying number of members includes the nine-member executive committee, as well as the following:

The elected OPL senators

The speakers of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, if they are elected OPL members

Representatives of the OPL’s parliamentary group in the Chamber, managers and experienced le...
Edgard LEBLANC Fils, current Speaker of the Senate

Suzy CASTOR, Senate candidate for Ouest department

Vasco THERNELAN, former president of the Chamber of Deputies and candidate for a seat in the Chamber. (OPL n.d.)

In its January-February 2005 newsletter Potekole, the National Democratic Institute for Internat reported that, during its second convention held from 17 to 19 December 2004, the OPL voted to reor; leadership team as follows:

[translation]
Edgar Leblanc Fils, General Coordinator
Ernst Mathurin, Vice-Coordinator
Rosny Smarth, Vice-Coordinator, Training
Paul Denis, Vice-Coordinator, Information
Sauveur Pierre Etienne, Vice-Coordinator, International Relations
Suzy Castor, Executive Secretary
Claude Jean François, Vice-Secretary
William Kenel Pierre, Treasurer
Milton Chery, Vice-Treasurer

Five of the nine executive committee members elected during the second OPL convention are als in a 20 December 2004 AlterPresse article. The same source also reports that Edgar Leblanc replaced 1 professor Gérard Pierre-Charles (AlterPresse 20 Dec. 2004).

In a 7 July 2008 article, the Haitian daily Le Nouvelliste published a list of 13 members of the OP committee following elections held during the third national OPL convention of 4 to 6 July 2008:

[translation]
Edgard Leblanc Fils, General Coordinator; Andris Riché, Assistant General Coordinator; Anick Jos Training Coordinator; Ernst Mathurin, Organizational Coordinator; Pierre-Paul Harry Marsan, Communications Coordinator; Suzy Castor, International Relations Coordinator; Roland Étienne, Finance and Budget Coordinator; Eloune Doréus, Executive Secretary; Anthony Jean-Louis, Assis Executive Secretary; Paul Denis, Vasco Ther[n]elan, Arthur Papillon and Rosny Smarth, Advisers

In an 11 September 2008 telephone interview, the Political Scientist and CIDIHCA President prov names of most of the members of the OPL’s leadership as they appeared in Le Nouvelliste. He also ser correspondence to the Research Directorate that provided the following information: During the third C convention, the executive committee was expanded from 9 members to 14, and Evans Paul has never member of the OPL (Political Scientist 6 Sept. 2008b). This information could not be corroborated amo sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

**OPL membership cards**

In additional correspondence, the same Political Scientist stated that since 1995, the OPL has iss number of membership cards, but only through the OPL headquarters (ibid. 16 Sept. 2008a). Further corrobating information on the existence of OPL membership cards could not be found among any of sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclu merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in re this Information Request.

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Political Scientist and President of the International Center for Information and Documentation on Hait
Other sources consulted

**Oral source:** Attempts to contact the OPL were unsuccessful.

**Internet sites, including:** British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Rights & Democracy.


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