

HAPPY HAITIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY



1804



Celebrating Haiti's Independence Day (January 1st)

HAITI: THE GREATEST TEACHER OF THEM ALL!

Beyond the turpitudes of her foes, the history of Haiti is filled with hope, glory, valor, and valiance of a people who fought for freedom and liberty. Haiti's misunderstood reality stems from her brutal past as a former French colony—A place where Black slaves had led the only successful revolution in history, which on January 1st, 1804, gave birth to the first black republic in the world. The history of the Haitian people is an unprecedented event that should be remembered and celebrated by lovers of freedom and liberty worldwide. Unfortunately, the world's view of Haiti has been biased and mis-construed, as her major contributions to humanity are unknown to many.



For instance, more often than not, the mainstream media tend to portray Haiti as a constantly unstable, poor, and pariah state. However, the natural beauty of the country, its unique culture, and powerful history have often been omitted or simply overlooked. During his lecture on Haiti in Chicago on January 2nd, 1893, Frederick Douglas stated, “It is said of ancient nations, that each had its special mission in the world and that each taught the world some important lesson. The Jews taught the world a religion, a sublime conception of the Deity. The Greeks taught the world philosophy and beauty. The Romans taught the world jurisprudence. England is foremost among the modern nations in commerce and manufactures. Germany has taught the world to think, while the American Republic is giving the world an example of a Government by the people, of the people and for the people. Among these large bodies, the little community of Haiti, anchored in the Caribbean Sea, has had her mission in the world, and a mission which the world had much need to learn. She has taught the world the danger of slavery and the value of liberty. In this respect she has been the greatest of all our modern teachers.”

While the poverty and political instability have been flagged like a desperate brand to describe Haiti, yet, rare are some who would dare to ask the million-dollar question: What is the root of Haiti's systematic demise? Many have failed to understand that this tiny nation has become a sharp thorn in the side of the slave holder nations because of her stand that ended slavery in the former French colony of Saint Domingue (today's Haiti). Those brave Black slaves fought and successfully defeated the Napoleon Bonaparte's army, which was one of the most powerful armies at the time. That unprecedented and unexpected outcome has sealed Haiti's fate ever since. Haiti's act of defiance toward and against the White colonialists had resulted into her being shunned by great powers including the United States, France, Spain, Great Britain, and Germany. For instance, Haitian soldiers fought alongside the Americans during their war of independence.

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Haiti's Independence 2021continues

Also, the defeat of Bonaparte in Haiti had forced him to sale Louisiana—A purchase that doubled the size of the United States. However, despite Haiti's great contributions to the U.S., they failed to recognize Haiti as a sovereign and an independent nation. It is worth mentioning that in 1804, the year that Haiti declared her independence from France, slavery was reigning on U.S. soil. Therefore, Haiti was viewed and even considered as a menace to the American economy and the slavers' lifestyle.

After she gained her independence, despite that fact that most countries refused to recognize and trade with Haiti, she remained true to her ideals of liberty for all mankind. Unsurprisingly, Haiti opened her arms to the Latin American's liberator, Simon Bolivar when no other nations dared to help him. Once Bolivar arrived in Haiti in December 1815, Haitian president, Alexandre Pétion provided him with shelter, money, and weapons, which enabled him to quell foreign dominance in many Latin American countries. To that extent, Haiti helped several countries to gain their independence including Bolivia, Equator, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Chile. Astonishingly, Bolivar would later deny Haiti's recognition as an independent and sovereign nation.

Thus, Bolivar sided with slave-holding nations instead of Haiti that provided him with needed and unparalleled help. This level of hypocrisy and betrayal is not foreign to Haiti, as they have marred the entire existence of this "Black" nation.

As grandiose as the Haitian revolution was, that magical spring was short-lived. France had imposed an indemnity unto Haiti. The newly freed nation was forced to pay the equivalence of more than \$12 billion USD to France—A deadly blow that crippled the country's economy ever since. Many have argued that France must pay that money back to Haiti.

The racist posture and treatment of the slave-holding nations toward Haiti would turn the "Pearl of the Antilles," as the French used to call it, into a fertile ground for political instability and endless turmoil. Such antecedents have, without question, a lot to do with Haiti's current socio-economic and political situation that we shall not fail to recognize and understand. Needless to say, those foreign policies and attitudes toward this suffering nation, in many ways, have not been changed.

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