

A Giant Step for Mankind - Made in Haïti

The Bwa Kay Iman uprising against slavery

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There was a time, not so long ago, when popes, kings and queens enriched themselves and built vast empires on the profits made with the sweat and blood of kidnapped men, women and children loaded on ships, stacked like sardines and reduced to slavery on plantations of coffee, sugar, cotton, cocoa, all over the Americas[1]. From the 1444 Portuguese attacks against the coast of Africa, followed by the 1452 papal bull of pope Nicholas V[2] which invited Christians to attack and enslave non-Christians, to the faithful year of 1791, millions of human beings had already been kidnapped, terrorized, thrown to sharks in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

 Immediately upon arrival on the islands or the mainland, they were worked to death, tortured, eaten alive by dogs that were especially trained to feed on African flesh or they were blown to pieces with ignited gun powder shoved into their sexual parts by British, Spanish, French and Portuguese colonizers. It has been estimated that the population of Africa in the mid 19th century would have been 50 million instead of 25 million had this catastrophe known as the MAAFA not taken place[3]. It is within such an atmosphere of unparalleled terrorism and human decadence that a remarkable gathering of men and women took place on the small Caribbean island of Haiti, the evening of August 14-15, 1791. Known as the Bwa Kay Iman Ceremony[4], it is said that this revolutionary meeting brought together representatives of twenty-one displaced African nations who vowed to revolt against the powers that had unleashed against their people such a relentless campaign of terror; a genocide that was expertly conceived and implemented, state-sponsored and financed, justified with numerous literary works and blessed by the most powerful and influential religious institutions of the day[5].

[The Jesus of Lubeck](#) - Slave Ship provided by Queen Elizabeth I to John Hawkins.

The Bwa Kay Iman uprising of 1791 was not the first major revolt against racial slavery in the Americas. Rather, it was the culmination of years of organized struggle. Singular only in its successful conclusion, Bwa Kay Iman counts among its main leaders a lady named Cecile Fatiman[6] and a gentleman called Boukman[7]. The lady, herself a former slave and a Vodou Priest, was said to be born of an African mother and a European father (a Corsican Prince). Boukman, also a Vodou Priest, was said to have been formerly enslaved on the island of Jamaica, before being sold to a plantation in Haiti. The following prayer has been attributed to Boukman officiating at the Bwa Kay Iman ceremony: "The god who created the earth; who created the sun that gives us light. The god who holds up the ocean; who makes the thunder roar. Our God who has ears to hear. You who are hidden in the clouds; who watch us from where you are. You see all that the white has made us suffer. The white

man's god asks him to commit crimes. But the god within us wants to do good. Our god, who is so good, so just, He orders us to revenge our wrongs. It's He who will direct our arms and bring us the victory. It's He who will assist us. We all should throw away the image of the white men's god who is so pitiless. Listen to the voice for liberty that speaks in all our hearts.”[8]

Honoring their Bwa Kay Iman pledge, the Africans of Haiti launched an all out war against the armies of France, Britain and Spain which they would eventually defeat, thanks to the military savvy of the maroons and the apt leadership of Generals Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Alexandre Pétion and Henry Christophe. The revolted Africans also counted among them fierce women warriors like Sanite Bélair, Marie-Jeanne Lamartinière and the aged Toya Mantou, aunt of General Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

Twelve years after the Bwa Kay Iman uprising, General Dessalines would outwit French Generals Leclerc (Napoleon Bonaparte's brother-in-law) and his particularly unscrupulous successor Donatien Rochambeau[9]. Dessalines would successfully chase the last European slave makers out of the island, on November 18, 1803. The resounding victory achieved by the revolted Africans would force Napoleon to abandon his dream of building a French empire (fueled by racial slavery) in the Americas. It is no coincidence that in the very year Haiti defeated Napoleon's army, the United States of America was able to acquire Louisiana from the French, thus doubling its territory, for merely 81 million Francs. Three years later, fearing slave uprisings on its American colonies, the British would pass an act declaring it illegal to transport more kidnapped Africans into the Americas[10].

During a 2003 interview offered to the author of this article, esteemed American physician and author Paul Farmer commented that, more certainly so than for the 1969 moon landing, he considers the Haitian Revolution to be “a giant step for mankind”.

✖ Indeed, the grave consequences that were to follow the climatic conclusion of Bwa Kay Iman, were not lost to the world at the beginning of the 19th century. Barely days after the creation of the Republic of Haiti, Jean-Jacques Dessalines published a decree in which he announced his intention to devote part of the nation's meager post-war budget to securing the emancipation of formerly enslaved human beings. Many American slave ship captains collected the 40 dollars payment Dessalines had reserved for the release of each formerly enslaved person who sets foot on Haitian soil [11]. Meanwhile, in 1805, French foreign minister Prince Charles Talleyrand wrote to U.S Secretary of State James Madison: “the existence of a Negro people in arms, occupying a country it has soiled by the most criminal acts, is a horrible spectacle for all white nations.” The United States responded by banning trade with Haiti in 1806. The embargo was renewed in 1807 and 1809. Later, in 1825, with the help of other white powers of the time, France began extorting a ransom which would eventually amount to 90 million gold francs from the young Black Republic[12]. To justify the exorbitant Charles X Ransom, the French offered the same “logic” the British would use to justify compensating former White slave makers who were dispossessed of “their human property” following the emancipation proclamation.[13].

Actual photograph of British slave ships taken in the 1860s

The Haitian Revolution gave impetus for African uprisings all over the Americas. Gabriel Posser, Nataniel Turner, Denmark Vessey, were all Haiti-inspired revolutionaries who sent cold shivers to the spine of American slave makers[14]. Yet, for several years, racial slavery would persist everywhere in the Americas, save Haiti. When she provided shelter and

assistance to Miranda (1806) and Bolivar (1815, 1816), Haiti's sole request was that all enslaved Africans be freed wherever the South-American revolutionaries would be victorious. Haitians were often accused of fueling anti-slavery rebellion in the Americas. Routinely, European powers would send warships to intimidate and collect ransom from them, on account of suspected Haitian complicity in uprisings happening in the region[15]. Despite the collective punishment through repetitive acts of extortion (dubbed "gunboat diplomacy") that the crippled Black Republic suffered at the hands of its historical enemies, late into the 19th century, Haiti was still making notable, albeit suicidal, contributions to human dignity and freedom. Few people know for instance that José Martí, founder of the Cuban State, was provided a Haitian passport to facilitate his revolutionary travels. It is believed that, in fact, Martí died a Haitian citizen[16].



Francisco de Miranda, created the first Venezuelan flag near [Jacmel](#). Anchored in the Bay of Jacmel (Baie de Jacmel), he first raised the flag on March 12, 1806 on the ship; Corvette Leander. This day is still celebrated as Venezuelan Flag Day.

Eventually, it became financially and politically unprofitable for the Europeans to maintain the system of racial slavery in the Americas. By 1833, the British had abolished slavery on their colonies, including Canada. Then, the French followed suite in 1848, the United States of North-America in 1862 and eventually the Spanish and the Portuguese in 1886 and 1888.

When, on a hot July 20, 1969 day, U.S. astronaut Alvin Aldrin dubbed Neil Armstrong's moon landing "a giant step for mankind", his enthusiasm was understood and, to a great extent, shared by all those who had the opportunity to hear his words. The vast majority of humans alive at the time had no logical reason to believe they or their descendants would ever have an opportunity to follow in Alvin Aldrin or Neil Armstrong's footsteps. It was, nonetheless, understood that what had just transpired had forever changed the range of opportunities opened up to mankind, especially as pertains to further exploration of the universe.

As with the extraordinary 1969 moon landing, the 1791 step (to uproot racial slavery) was taken in Haiti, not by human giants but by regular men and women. In fact, they were deemed to be "the wretched of the earth". A people who, despite being subjected to hundreds of years of systematic torture aimed at breaking the human spirit, had stoically risen up to rescue itself from the jaws of genocide. By so doing, they elevated us all to higher spiritual grounds and offered to our heart's eyes yet unforeseen human possibilities. Besides the sheer physical terror, religion and the falsification of history top the list of powerful tools that were used to try to crush the human (African) spirit on the slave plantation. The damage caused to the African psyche by the recurring sermons of priests such as Father Labbat and Father Fauque de Cayenne are described in Jean Fouchard's "Les marrons de la liberté"[17]. The tragic case of Scipio Africanus is illustrative of the disastrous damage that Christian brainwashing was indeed inflicting to enslaved Africans, some of whom would end up accepting racial slavery as their God-ordained fate, due to the very fact of being African[18]. Professor Ron Karenga describes the collective loss suffered by the Human race as a result of the MAAFA when he notes how "the destruction of human possibility involved redefining African humanity to the world, poisoning past, present and future relations with others who only know us through this stereotyping and thus damaging the truly human relations among peoples".



The 1791 uprising in Haiti forced the world to take a giant step upward. Within the span of these twelve years of revolution, we sprang up from the pits of inhumanity where we had stagnated since the 15th century to the – yet unattained but now foreseeable –possibilities of genuine human brotherhood and sisterhood[19]. 218 years later, it is evident that this giant jump upward remains insufficient to catapult us where we ought to be as a highly intelligent species. Thus, it is important that we commemorate Bwa Kay Iman and allow ourselves to be inspired to build – together- the better world to which we all aspire. So, we are not there yet!

But, what have we done with the possibilities we’ve been offered since 1791? It would be short sighted to think this question ought to be pondered only by the sons and daughters of Boukman. We all need the inspiration of 1791 to garner courage: the courage to fight barbarism and triumph over terrorism; the courage to face history, learn its tough lessons pertaining to the price of freedom and the value of justice. We need courage to recognize and capture the possibilities offered to make amend where amend is due and to enact, real, positive change in our world, today.

In the first days of September 2001, the nations of the world were convened to Africa and offered a golden opportunity to take yet another giant step for mankind. Unfortunately, among those who led the world at the time of the 2001 Durban Conference, there were no Boukman, no Cecile Fatiman, no John Brown, no Dessalines. Our Tony Blair, Queen Elizabeth II, Georges Bush, Jacques Chirac, Jean Chrétien, Thabo Mbeki, Jean-Bertrand Aristide needed not be giants themselves in order to step up to their responsibilities at Durban. They required regular human courage coupled with wisdom; the wisdom to realize that the time had, for a while now, come to start long overdue reparations to the native peoples of Africa and of the Americas. At that strategic moment, when the slavery-built empires of our times had record budget surpluses which would have made possible the crucial step toward redemption and restorative justice that was so eagerly anticipated at the Durban Conference of September 2001, the world witnessed instead a missed opportunity of gigantic proportions. Few seem to have noted how this important opportunity quickly dissolved into nothingness over the noisy and smoky shadows of the September 11, 2001 collapse of the World Trade Centre towers in New-York City.[20]

✖ The world was said to have forever changed on September 11, 2001. Terrorism was declared to be a “new monster”. It is as if, instantly, the world population was invited to engage in an exercise of collective amnesia, the sort of which was unimaginable prior to that tragic morning. Global Terrorism is a new phenomenon menacing humanity, they claimed? Millions of First Nations peoples all over the Globe could not believe their ears! What about all the horrendous crimes against humanity of which we were just speaking at Durban, a couple of days ago? What about the MAAFA? How did our bold plans to finally repair the damage caused manage to suddenly evaporate, just so? Yes, just so, the modern champions of “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” cowered away from the opportunity offered by Durban. There was no giant step forward in September 2001. Instead, one time too many, the First Nations of Africa and of the Americas were told by their European brethren to simply “get over it”[21].

After 2001, came 2004, the 200th anniversary of the creation of the abolitionist Republic of Haiti. Apparently, neither the British, nor the French, the Spanish nor their descendants were in a mood to celebrate freedom and human dignity with the descendants of Boukman and Grann Iman. Instead, Haiti’s Head of State who had a few months earlier uttered the

words REPARATIONS and RESTITUTION was violently taken away from his residence by white foreign soldiers and sent to forced exile in Africa, where he remains to this day. Certain self-described “serious” people say it is improper to call what transpired on that ignominious night of February 29, 2004 a “coup d’état” – that is a violent and criminal violation of the “Democratic Charter of the Americas” – you see![22]. Suffice to say, we missed yet another opportunity in 2004.

☒ Then, came 2007, when Her British Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her beloved subjects deemed it most proper to commemorate the efforts of one William Wilberforce whose 1807 Act, they say, is an earth-shattering accomplishment for the cause of abolition. Unfortunately for the royals, a number of voices disturbed the harmonious chorus they had come to expect from their loyal subjects. Some of them stood up and reminded the world that well over three years before 1807, Haitian General Jean-Jacques Dessalines had proclaimed and verily invested in the abolition of racial slavery after having defeated, among others, the British army. Within England itself, an organization named Operation Truth 2007 worked tirelessly to counter the shameful attempts of the British State to falsify history[23]. Publications after publications were presented to adequately document how the so-called 2007 commemorations were serving to purposefully suppress the role Africans had played in the abolition of racial slavery while, at the same time, grossly exaggerating the dubious contributions to the same by folks like Wilberforce.[24]

Thus, 2007 was yet another opportunity which we missed to deal courageously with the lasting scars that the MAAFA has left on humanity[25].

Then came 2008! Surely, you must have heard the good news. The day has finally come and, this time, it is dubbed “Change We Can Believe!”. The face of change in 2008 is tall, dark and, according to Berlusconi, handsome. Of mixed European and African heritage, like Haiti’s Grann Iman (Cécile Fatiman) of Bwa Kay Iman fame, the new Superstar President of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama, is in charge. He is the “change” who shall make everything right, just so. Or so, many seem to think! Since his remarkable and inspiring meteoric rise to power, Obama, who recently returned from a quick tour of fatherland Africa, has done everything possible to avoid uttering the words REPARATIONS. He may, after all, not get deposed in a coup d’état. To arrive with his beautiful black family in the White House, he was also compelled to disavow his pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who carelessly uttered one too many inconvenient truths, at the wrong time, about the invisible American Elephant – lingering white supremacist racism that permeates society. Thus far, through the magic of words and, more recently, “beer diplomacy”, Obama has been able to manoeuvre a path out, on the perilous landscape of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemming’s imperfect union. We recognize that the Barack is indeed good at what he does! However, it is too early to ascertain whether President Obama will have made enough baby steps, if any at all, in the direction of the restorative justice that our world so urgently and so seriously needs.

A few days ago, in the midst of a nasty coup d’état in Honduras, a bloody terror campaign in Afghanistan, and fake elections in UN-occupied Haiti, someone who truly cares about my mental health attempted to distract me with a good-news rumour: “the U.S. State Department, he claims, is about to announce the nomination of Dr. Paul Farmer as head of U.S.A.I.D.” Yes, the white guy who said he felt happy and privileged to join Haitians for the bicentennial celebration of their now impoverished Abolitionist Republic! The rare American who is not of African descent but feels justified to describe Bwa Kay Iman as “a giant step for mankind”; this unorthodox Harvard-graduated medical doctor who has spent over twenty

years serving the most vulnerable in Haiti and Rwanda; Paul Farmer of Partners in Health and author of *The Uses of Haiti*; that guy! He was to be named at the helm of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). That is: the same USAID that has consistently financed the overthrow of progressive governments in the Americas, under the guise of aid for “correction démocratique”? Now, this is what I would call a great step, at least for the United States of America! But, as quickly as we were led to give this wild rumour serious thought, we received indication that it is too soon to dream that the U.S. State Department has become tired of investing in dead-aid and is now ready to consider life and human dignity as worthy targets of USAID investments[26].

How many possibilities have we already missed in 2009?

What has a man or woman gained if s/he has conquered the world but lost his/her soul?

I invite you to look with me toward the inspiring lives of Grann Iman and Boukman to answer these questions while I wish you a Happy Bwa Kay Iman celebration!

Jafrikayiti (Jean Saint-Vil) was born and raised in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and currently lives in Canada. He hosts two radio programs in Ottawa and has been featured as political analyst by Canadian radio and television as well as by Embassy Magazine, ZNet and Rogers Ottawa Television. He is the author of “LAFIMEN: Listwa Pèp Ayisyen Depi Nan Ginen”, CD1 (2003), CD2&3 (2006) – audio recordings narrating Haitian History in Kreyol and “Viv Bondye ! Aba Relijyon!” (2000) – book in Kreyol (Praise God Down with Religion) which deals with the history of Christianity and its influence on the lives of people of African Descent. Saint-Vil is Deputy Director at the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and holds a B.Sc. (Hon. Biology) degree from the University of Waterloo.

Notes

[1] Speaking of John Hawkins, historian Walter Rodney writes: “On returning to England after the first trip, his profit was so handsome that Queen Elizabeth I became interested in directly participating in his next venture ; and she provided for that purpose a ship named the Jesus. Hawkins left with the Jesus to steal some more Africans, and he returned to England with such dividends that Queen Elizabeth made him a knight. Hawkins chose as his coat of arms the representation of an African in chains” [How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Walter Rodney, 1972](#)

[2] Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull [Dum Diversas](#) on 18 June, 1452 which reads as follows: “We weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso — to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit — by having secured the said faculty, the said King Alfonso, or, by his authority, the aforesaid infante, justly and lawfully has acquired and possessed, and doth possess, these islands, lands, harbors, and seas, and they do of right belong and pertain to the said King Alfonso and his successors”.

[3] The word "'[Maafa](#)'" (also known as the African Holocaust) is derived from a (Kiswahili) word meaning disaster, terrible occurrence or great tragedy. The term today collectively refers to the Pan-African study of the 500 hundred years of suffering of people of African heritage through Slavery, Imperialism, Colonialism, Oppression, Invasions and Exploitation.

[4] Bwa Kay Iman is the site of the Vodou ceremony presided over by Boukman and Cecile Fatiman on August 14, 1791. It is widely accepted as the starting point for the Haitian Revolution. It is located in the northern Morne Rouge region of Haiti, southwest of Cap Haïtien. Some suggest that the site derives its name from the French "Bois Caiman" or Alligator's wood. Others suggest instead a Kreyol derived name "Bwa Kay Iman" or "woods by the house of Iman".

[5] There was the presumption of a divine legitimacy in the corporeal system of subjugation and oppression, a system which was motivated and maintained by greed and ignorance and only excused with Christianity, and sometimes even with the idea of, to some extent, Christianizing a "heathen" people. Some defenders of slavery in the United States' South in the antebellum period, for instance, argued that blacks in the United States were becoming "elevated, from the degrading slavery of savage heathenism to the participation in civilization and Christianity" (Conser, Walter H. [God and the Natural World: Religion and Science in Antebellum America. 1993, page 120.](#)). Cited on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maafa>

[6] "Cecile Fatiman, the wife of Louis Michel Pierrot, who led a black battalion at Vertieres and later became president of Haiti, took part in the Bois Caiman ceremony: she was a mambo [Vodou priestess]. The daughter of an African woman and of a Corsican prince, Cecile Fatiman was a mulatto with green eyes and long black silky hair, who was sold into slavery with her mother in Saint Domingue. The mother also had two sons who disappeared without a trace on the auction block. Cecile Fatiman lived in the Cape until the age of 112, in full possession of her mental ability. Source: Etienne Charlier's "Aperçu sur la formation historique de la nation haïtienne" (1954).

[7] Boukman (also Boukmann, Dutty Boukman or Zamba Boukman) was a leader of the rebellion in its initial stages. He had come to Haiti by way of Jamaica, then to become a maroon in the forest of Morne Rouge. Giant, powerful, fierce and fearsome, he was an inspiring leader.

[8] Proposed English translation of [Boukman's Prayer](#) on theLouvertureProject.org

[9] French General Donatien Rochambeau is infamous for his use of human (African)-eating dogs trained in Cuba. The animal were sent to to island without food rations with expressed order from Napoleon that they be fed exclusively human flesh. See *La férocité blanche: génocides occultés de 1492 à nos jours* - Amelia Pumelle-Urbe.

[10] William Wilberforce, who inspired the British Act of 1807 wrote a pamphlet in that same year in which he declared: "It would be wrong to emancipate (the enslaved Africans). To grant freedom to them immediately would be to insure not only their masters' ruin, but their own. They must (first) be trained and educated for freedom Truth be told, there were compelling military and economic imperatives that pushed Britain to adopt the 1807 Act, which merely rendered the so-called "trade" illegal but failed to abolish racial slavery on British territory. Over a million captured Africans were still regarded by the British Government as legal human property and forcibly held captive for over another two

decades. Following the 1807 Act, the British Navy imposed on slaving ship captains a fine of 100 pounds per enslaved person found aboard. This also meant that thousands upon thousands of Africans were thrown to the sharks by slavers who attempted to avoid the fine. How much did the British Government profit from these fines?

[11] It is remarkable that an obviously unsympathetic white missionary entered in his [“BRIEF HISTORY OF DESSALINES FROM 1825 MISSIONARY JOURNAL”](#) the little known fact that Dessalines published a proclamation, offering to the captains of American vessels the sum of forty dollars for each individual native or black man of colour, whom they should convey back to Hayti. The actual proclamation, dated January 14, 1804, reads as follows: « Liberté où la mort! Gouvernement d’Haiti, Quartier général, le 14 janvier 1804, première année de l’indépendance d’Haiti. Le gouverneur-général, considérant qu’un grand nombre de noirs et d’hommes de couleurs supportent, aux Etats-Unis, toutes sortes de privations, parce qu’ils n’ont pas les moyens de retourner en Haiti, décrète qu’il sera compté aux capitaines de navires américains la somme de quarante piastres pour chaque individu qu’ils pourront ramener dans le pays. Ce décret sera imprimé, publié, aussitôt expédié, et une copie en sera immédiatement envoyés au Congrès des Etats-Unis. Le Gouverneur Général, Dessalines»

[12] [The Charles X Ransom](#), initially established at 150 million Francs by the French was extorted at gunpoint from Haiti between 1825 and 1947.

[13] [MICHAELLE JEAN CALLED TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD](#): (British Crown to Pay Long Overdue Reparations) by Jafrikayiti, April 7, 2007

[14] In 1822, the murmur of freedom and equality circulating among Charleston’s black population turned to action, as [Vesey hatched a plot for a slave uprising](#). More than 9,000 slaves and free blacks were attracted to Vesey’s plot to “liberate” the city of Charleston. Denmark Vesey and his co-conspirators had been in touch with then-President Boyer of Haiti. Indeed, one of Vesey’s lieutenants, Monday Gell, had written two letters to the president of Haiti seeking support for the planned insurrection. http://www.ipoa.com/denmark-vesey__and_his_co.htm

[15] July 1861: Spanish gun-boat aggression against Haiti—At issue: Haitian support to Dominican generals Cabral and Sanchez who were resisting attempted Spanish annexation of Dominican Republic. Spanish Admiral Rubalcava collects \$200,000 ransom and 21-gun salute from Haitian President Fabre Nicolas Géffrard.

1861-1865: Spain annexes neighboring Dominican Republic by invitation of its white and mulatto minority: Fearing a return of slavery on the island, Haiti helps anti-Spanish forces to regain Dominican Republic’s independence.

1872: German gun-boat aggression against Haiti. Commodore Basch collects 3000 Sterling Pounds from the Haitian government and defames Haitian flag with German excrement.

1877: March: French gun-boat aggression against Haiti. At issue: resumption of payments on the 1825 ransom—balance then re-estimated at 20 million Francs-or. December: Repeat of Spanish gun-boat aggression against Haiti. At issue: Suspected Haitian assistance to rebels fighting to abolish slavery in Cuba.

August 1883: In the midst of popular riots in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, diplomatic representatives of France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Holland, Norway and Sweden sign ultimatum threatening Haitian President Lysius Féllicité Salomon of bombarding Haiti’s National Palace. See [Time to Stop Resisting Haiti’s Resistance](#) by Jean Saint-Vil, November 2002.

[16] During a recent August 2009 visit to Cuba, a Haitian friend informed the author that his Cuban host were proud to assert the little known fact that Haiti had provided a passport to the founding father of their nation, thus facilitating his struggle for independence (from Spain)

[17] “Souvenez-vous, mes chers enfants, leur disais-je, que quoi que vous soyez esclaves, vous êtes cependant chrétiens comme vos maîtres; que ... ceux qui ne vivent pas chrétiennement tombent après leur mort dans les enfers. ...Quels malheur pour vous si, après avoir été les esclaves des hommes en ce monde et dans le temps vous deveniez esclaves du démon pendant toute l'éternité. Ce malheur pourtant vous arrivera infailliblement si vous ne vous rangez pas à votre devoir puisque vous êtes dans un état habituel de damnation: car, sans parler du tort que vous faites à vos maîtres en les privant de votre travail... vous n'approchez point des sacrements....Venez à moi mes chers amis” . Pè Fauque de Cayenne ki ap preche, Les marrons de la liberté, p.504 Jean Fouchard, Editions de l'école, 1972.

[18] [The grave of Scipio Africanus](#)...Scipio Africanus (1702 – 21 December 1720) was a slave born to unknown parents from West Africa

He is remembered because of the elaborate grave, consisting of painted headstone and footstone, in the churchyard of St Mary's in Henbury, which is a grade II listed building.[1] Both stones feature black cherubs and the footstone bears the unusual epitaph:

I who was Born a PAGAN and a SLAVE
Now sweetly sleep a CHRISTIAN in my Grave
What tho' my hue was dark my SAVIOR'S sight
Shall Change this darkness into radiant Light
Such grace to me my Lord on earth has given
To recommend me to my Lord in heaven
Whose glorious second coming here I wait
With saints and Angels him to celebrate

It is thought that 10,000 black slaves and servants were in Britain in the early 18th century, but this is one of the very few memorials to them Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

[19] Not only were slaves disallowed legal marriage and forbidden any American religious and civil proceedings, but also their tribal ceremonies were not permitted or honored Children were not raised among their own parents, who were themselves never formally united in union; and children were often sold away. Boyd-Franklin, Nancy. Black Families in Therapy, Second Edition: Understanding the African American Experience. 2006, page 7-8

[20] [The World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance](#), Durban South-Africa – August 31, 2001 to September 7, 2001.

[21] Conventional western historical narratives have frequently been criticized as anti-African or Eurocentric, for instance in regards to viewing centuries of persecution and disenfranchisement as a side effect of commercial enterprise. Prejudicial accounts of African societies, cultures, languages and peoples by Western scholars abound, with African and African Diaspora voices often muted or relegated to the periphery. Until the 1960s, African Americans suffered from what one historian deemed “historical invisibility”. Fredrickson, George M. The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality. 1988, page 112.

[22] While Canadian soldiers stood guard over Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, the president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his wife Mildred Trouillot Aristide were put on an airplane by US officials before dawn on February 29, 2004. According to world-renowned African-American author and activist Randall Robinson, who interviewed several eye-witnesses, the aircraft was not a commercial plane. No members of the Aristide government and no media were at the airport as Mr. and Mrs. Aristide were effectively abducted and taken to the Central African Republic against their will, following a refuelling stop in the Caribbean island of Antigua. See [WHAT IS CANADA REALLY DOING IN HAITI ?](#) by Jean Saint-Vil, April 2009

[23] [Operation TRUTH 2007](#) is a Pan Afrikan, Afrikan led campaign to highlight objections to any activities which recognises and endorses the year 1807 as being positively significant to people of Afrikan descent.

[24] According to the historical record, "not only did Wilberforce disagree that enslaved Africans should be freed immediately, but he actively sought to undermine the Haitian revolution that led to the freedom of enslaved Africans". See 2008 online debate titled : [Was William Wilberforce a freedom fighter?](#)

[25] My protest was born of anger, not madness explains [Toyin Agbetu in The Guardian](#), Tuesday 3 April 2007

[26] [Paul Farmer out for USAID?](#) Several Hill and Washington foreign policy hands say they are hearing from the White House that Paul Farmer is out as a candidate to lead USAID, a decision that was said to have been made at the White House. It wasn't clear what the reason was, and a representative of Farmer's group, Partners in Health, couldn't immediately be reached.

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