



**BOUKMAN AND THE VOICE OF FREEDOM:  
STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH HAITI**

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In a real, moral and meaningful sense, we are all Haitians, rising up in revolution and resistance in the deep hope and defiant defense of human freedom, justice and good in the world. At our best, we identify with and support them in their persistent writing of pages of hard and heroic struggle in the ongoing history of humankind, defying the superior weapons of their oppressors, refusing to be defeated, dispirited or diverted in their quest for good for themselves, humanity and future generations.

Indeed, we remember with reverence when the Houngon (High Priest) Papaloi Boukman stood up in the midst of the Holocaust of enslavement on August 14, 1791 and called on the Haitian people to free themselves and build a realm of freedom and good works throughout the land. He said to them “The God who created the Sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden beyond the clouds, He watches us. He sees all the White man does. The god of the White man inspires him with crime, but our God calls on us to do good works. Our God who is good to us commands us to avenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the Whites who have so often caused us to weep; and listen to the voice of freedom which speaks in the hearts of all of us.”

Once again, the voice of Papaloi Boukman speaks to us about freedom and the need to defy the weapons and wealth of our oppressors, for these are their real gods. Indeed, the dollar is their deity and the gun is their god, and they worship them with war, robbery and oppression throughout the world. And we who love freedom, cherish justice and have hope for the future, must resist their reign of pillage and plunder, called globalization, in the world. As Frederick Douglass stated, Haiti’s struggle and victory reflected a great mission in the world, to teach “the world the danger of slavery and the value of liberty,” the hypocrisy and inhumanity

of White Christianity in its sanction and savage practice of slavery, and the admirable and unbreakable will of Africans to be free. Furthermore, Haiti contributed massively to the liberation of Latin America, sheltering Simon Bolivar and aiding him with weapons, provisions and soldiers, asking only that he liberate enslaved Africans in the process.

Having won its freedom by defeating four European armies—France, Spain, Britain and the colonial French, Haiti incurred the undying hatred of the oppressors of the world. For years the U.S. would not recognize or mention the name Haiti in its official discourse. And its allies in Haiti outlawed the name of Jean Jacques Desalines, whose uncompromising campaign for liberation finished the fight Papaloi Boukman and Toussaint L’Ouverture had begun.

In recent times, they have engaged in a systematic and sustained campaign to undermine democratic government, to break the will and unity of the people, further impoverish them, and create chaos. And on February 29, 2004, during the celebration of independence, they kidnapped and forcibly exiled the democratically-elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide. Moreover, specifically the U.S., Canada and France have decided to forestall and divert the hard and heroic march toward democracy and justice for the people and an expanded independence for the country. And they have sent marauders masquerading as peacemakers and police, to subdue and terrorize the people, to punish, imprison and kill them for daring to be free, daring to stand steadfast in the defense of their right to rule themselves, to elect their own president and parliament and to forge a future worthy of the name Haitian and human in their most meaningful form.

They have brought Brazil along pawn-and-puppet-like in its pursuit of a permanent place at the Security Council table and perhaps some under the table promises for approved performances. They have placed them along side thugs

released from jails and prisons to augment their assault forces. And they have given them U.N. uniforms and official permission to prey on the people, hunt down, kill, capture and lock up all those loyal to Lavalas and to the idea and practice of a free, independent and developing Haiti. Moreover, they have helped form and let loose paramilitary auxiliaries to aid them.

Those who claim to bring peace to the country have only made war against the people to an unprecedented level in the whole of Haitian history. Those who claimed to restore law and order, have actually disrupted it, increased crime, and are busy capturing, killing and imprisoning without charge or trial those who resist reoccupation. And those who came promising to improve the lives of the Haitian people began immediately to diminish and destroy them, engaging in human rights violations of the grossest kinds, committing massacres against peaceful demonstrators and sleeping children, raping and terrorizing, catering to the rich and crushing the poor, and surrendering to the anti-people and debt-and-dependency-inducing requirements of international financial institutions.

February 7, 2007 has been designated as International Day of Solidarity with the Haitian People. It is a time for all freedom loving and justice cherishing people to stand up and support the urgent and just demands of the Haitian people. These include:

- (1) the end of U.S./U.N. occupation and respect for the sovereignty of Haiti;
- (2) the end of the assault on the poor by the U.N. troops, "police" and paramilitary groups, i.e., their killings, rape and sexual abuse, massacres and collective punishment;
- (3) freedom for political prisoners and an end to illegal arrests and detentions;
- (4) respect for the Haitian constitution and the return of President Aristide to Haiti;
- (5) the bringing to justice of the leaders and participants in the coup of February 29, 2004, and the massacres of the masses;
- (6) an independent inquiry into the coup of 2004 and the kidnapping and forced exile of President Aristide and support for Congresswoman Barbara Lee's HR 351 calling for this inquiry;
- (7) reparations for the victims of the 1991 and 2004 coups and post-coup violence;
- (8) total cancellation of Haiti's debt by international financial institutions and support of Congresswoman Maxine Water's H.R. 88 concerning this; and
- (9) the end of intervention in Haiti's affairs by the U.S., Canada, France and any others.

This is the least we can do; the best will come in the sustained battle we wage everywhere and on every front for the good world we all want and deserve and must pass on to future generations for Haiti, ourselves, and humanity.