

# Haiti: November 18, 1803, Remembering the First Successful Slave Revolution for Freedom

Slavery and the Gods of Dessalines and Napoleon

By [Jafrik Aayiti](#)

Global Research, February 29, 2024

[Forum Haïti](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [History](#)

In-depth Report: [HAITI](#)

215 years ago. Revolution in Haiti against Slavery. **Remembrance Day November 18**

*“As for your male and female slaves whom you may have: you may buy male and female slaves from among the nations that are around you. You may also buy from among the strangers who sojourn with you and their clans that are with you, who have been born in your land, and they may be your property. You may bequeath them to your sons after you to inherit as a possession for ever”. Leviticus 25: 44-46 (Word of the Judeo-Christian god, according to its chosen people’s religious books)*



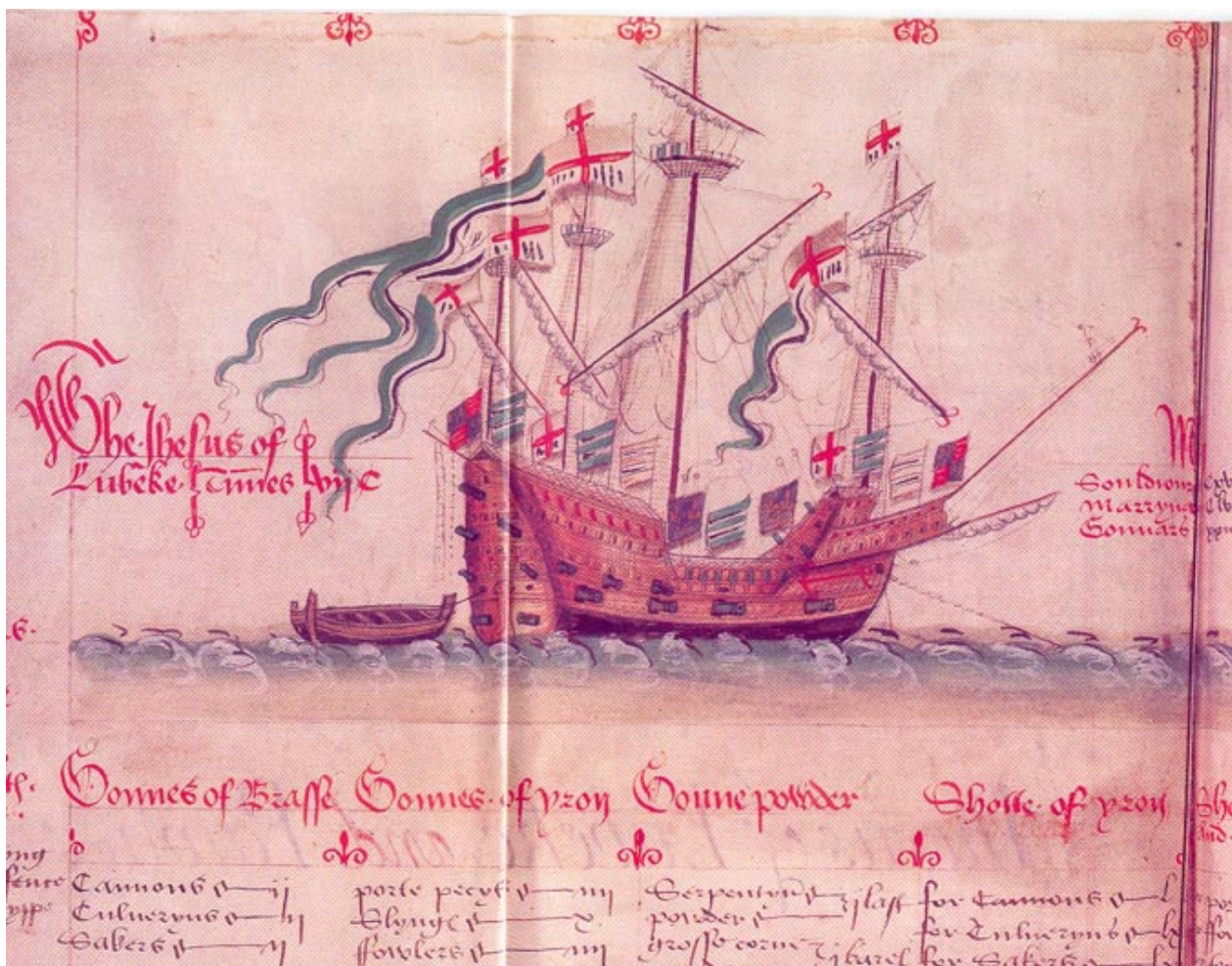
Endless slave caravans wound their mournful way through

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. From the 1444 Portuguese attacks against the coast of Africa, followed by the 1452 papal bull of pope Nicholas V 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.

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”.



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

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, 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.

Singular only in its successful conclusion, Bwa Kay Iman counts among its main leaders a lady named Cecile Fatiman and a gentleman called Boukman. 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.”

Thus, Boukman, the world’s first known liberation theologian evoked “Bondye”, a truly good and universal creator. Boukman admonished his people to throw away the portraits of the malevolent and deceitful god of Napoleon, Elizabeth and [John Newton](#) because he realized the damage these images were causing to the kidnapped and displaced African’s psyche. So, he invited them to instead listen to the voice of the true creator of the universe who sends a song of freedom to their hearts. His theology was very precise and was clearly diametrically opposed to EuroChristianity.

“Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the wicked. 19 For it is commendable if someone endures pain, suffering unjustly, because of conscience toward God”. 1 Peter 2:18-19 (Word of the Judeo-Christian god, according to its chosen people’s religious books)



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.

### **Remembrance Day: November 18**

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. [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.

### **Constitution of Haiti, 1805**

“The people inhabiting the island formerly called St. Domingo, hereby agree to form themselves into a free state sovereign and independent of any other power in the



universe, under the name of empire of Hayti” – Article 1

“Slavery is forever abolished” – Article 2

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.

[Dessalines](#) also offered Haitian citizenship to soldiers from Poland and Germany who were brought to Haiti as part of Napoleon’s army but who chose to side with the abolitionist African freedom fighters.

Contrast Dessalines’ benevolent behavior towards the Poles and the Germans with the ungrateful attitude adopted towards the Africans who, decades later, would help liberate several European cities of Nazi tyranny:

BBC’s Document programme has seen evidence that black colonial soldiers – who made up around two-thirds of Free French forces – were deliberately removed from the unit that led the Allied advance into the French capital.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7984436.stm>

As U.S., French and British troops were traveling to Rome, Pope Pius XII dispatched his Secretary of State, Cardinal Luigi Maglione to present an amazing query to the Ambassador of Great Britain to the Holy See, Sir Francis Godolphin d’ Arcy Osborne. “The Pope hopes that there will be no soldiers of color among the Allied troops to be deployed in Rome after the liberation “.

### **The God Of Dessalines**



“As well in our name as in that of the people of Hayti, who have legally constituted us faithfully organs and interpreters of their will, in presence of the Supreme Being, before

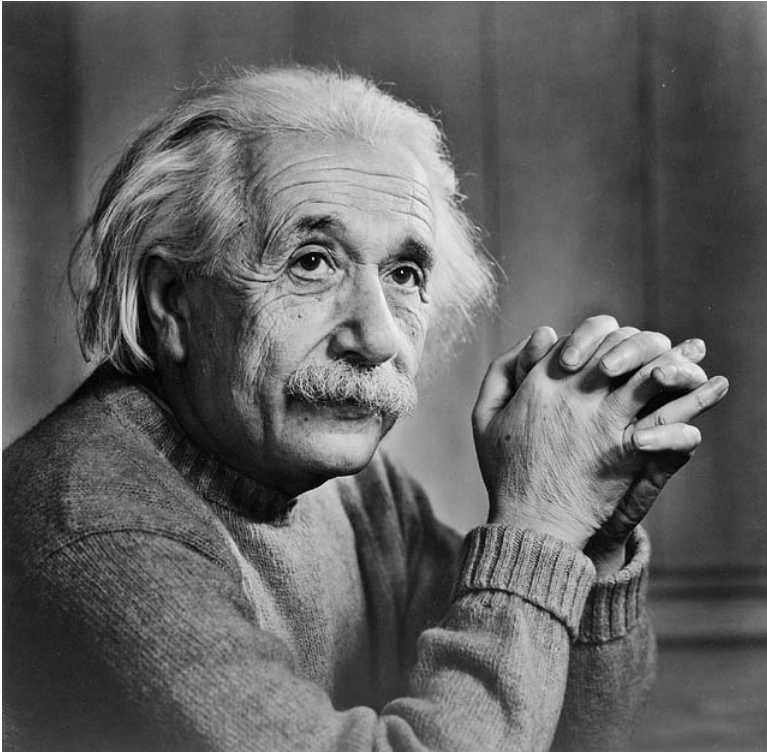
whom all mankind are equal, and who has scattered so many species of creatures on the surface of the earth for the purpose of manifesting his glory and his power by the diversity of his works, in the presence of all nature by whom we have been so unjustly and for so long a time considered as outcast children...

...Do declare that the tenor of the present constitution is the free spontaneous and invariable expression of our hearts, and the general will of our constituents, and we submit it to the sanction of H.M. the Emperor Jacques Dessalines our deliverer, to receive its speedy and entire execution...

...We recommend it to our successors, and present it to the friends of liberty, to philanthropists of all countries, as a signal pledge of the Divine Bounty, who in the course of his immortal decrees, has given us an opportunity of breaking our fetters, and of constituting ourselves a people, free civilized and independent.

In Haitian Kreyòl, there can be no ambiguity as to the nature of the creator of the universe, as envisaged by Boukman and Dessalines. She is inescapably good because she is BON-DYE! Therefore, by definition, she must always be on the side of good, not evil; freedom, not bondage; justice, not injustice. However, the same cannot be said of the gods of EuroChristianity (aka gods of Israel), be it Yaweh, Jehovah or [Elohim](#). As described for instance in the EuroChristian Bible, the god of Israel had forever been an ethnocentric deity who has no qualms siding with violent invaders of other peoples lands. Justice has never been a paramount value for this deity. The only thing that counts for it is the victory of its own clan - by any means necessary. That deity, rather than condemning slavery, gives specific directives to its preferred clan to enslave other human beings whom he considers less deserving of freedom ([Leviticus 25](#)) and he goes as far as joining them in barbaric acts of thievery ([Joshua 10](#)).

This is precisely why our beloved Boukmann felt it necessary to contrast the justice-loving Bondye of the surviving Africans in opposition to that other entity, the partial and ethnocentric god who enjoys injustice and greed and who thirsts for African blood and tears - as he had also enjoyed the tears and the blood of the Amorites, the Malechites or other victims of Abraham, Joshua, David, Moses...all violent invaders of other peoples lands and possessions.



Thankfully, the historical record also points us to intelligent human beings of all shades who have consistently denounced the utter stupidity of these dangerous, ethnocentric theologies. One such blessed soul is perhaps the most famous scientist of modern history, brother Albert Einstein.

In his “God letter”, Einstein describes the Bible as “a collection of honorable, but still primitive legends which are nevertheless pretty childish”. Brother Einstein continues...

No interpretation no matter how subtle can (for me) change this. These subtilised interpretations are highly manifold according to their nature and have almost nothing to do with the original text. For me the Jewish religion like all other religions is an incarnation of the most childish superstitions. And the Jewish people to whom I gladly belong and with whose mentality I have a deep affinity have no different quality for me than all other people. As far as my experience goes, they are also no better than other human groups, although they are protected from the worst cancers by a lack of power. Otherwise I cannot see anything ‘chosen’ about them.

[http://www.richarddawkins.net/news\\_articles/2012/8/15/albert-einstein-s-historic-1954-god-letter-handwritten-shortly-before-his-death](http://www.richarddawkins.net/news_articles/2012/8/15/albert-einstein-s-historic-1954-god-letter-handwritten-shortly-before-his-death)

Haitians were never xenophobes and shall never become so. However, we will always stand against white supremacist tyranny on this earth. That is our collective destiny and we have espoused it with courage and passion. Happy Remembrance Day to one and all!

**Jafrikayiti** (Jean Saint-Vil) self-describes as a devout student of things pertaining to Haiti, history, science and religion. The author of “LAFIMEN: Listwa Pèp Ayisyen Depi Nan Ginen” lives in Canada. He will be at Miami’s Liberi Mapou, December 8, 2013 to deliver a talk titled: “God and the devil in Haitian history”.

The original source of this article is [Forum Haïti](#)  
Copyright © [Jafrik Aayiti](#), [Forum Haïti](#), 2024

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Jafrik Aayiti](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)