

# The Lesson of Haiti

by Dr. William Pierce

This month the last of the United Nations "peacekeeping" troops in Haiti will leave, and the Haitians will be given yet another chance to try to govern themselves. The "peacekeepers" occupied Haiti, along with 23,000 U.S. troops, three years ago, in order to force the government of General Raoul Cedras to resign so that a Clinton favorite, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, could be installed as president. The reasons presented to the American public for this interference in Haiti's affairs were that General Cedras was a "dictator" and that he didn't respect the "human rights" of the Haitians. Mr. Clinton's friend Aristide, on the other hand, was said to be a "democrat" and a respecter of human rights.

Actually, Aristide is a former priest turned Marxist whose idea of respecting human rights is to incite mobs of his supporters to murder his political opponents by breaking their arms, wiring a gasoline-soaked tire around their necks, and burning them to death — a procedure known as "necklacing." Well, that's about par for making a country safe for democracy the United Nations way!

However, the Haitians didn't care much more for Mr. Clinton's Marxist buddy Aristide than they did for General Cedras, and Aristide is out of office again and the Haitians are about to be allowed to run things themselves once more. Well, almost. Five hundred U.S. troops will remain in the country to keep an eye on things. They will call for more help if the need to "make Haiti safe for democracy" arises again.

The Clintonistas aren't bragging very loudly about the success of their latest effort in that direction, because the situation in Haiti is just about as grim today as it was before the United Nations stuck its nose into things three years ago. About the only significant change is that the flood of Haitian "boat people" washing up on Florida's beaches has slowed somewhat, but that flood was caused in the first place by an embargo imposed on Haiti by the U.S. government in an unsuccessful attempt to force General Cedras out, and the consequent damage to Haiti's already pitifully weak economy. When the embargo was removed, many Haitians decided to stay at home and share in the new goodies brought to them by the Clinton administration.

The U.S. troops built roads, schools, and clinics and pumped a few billion U.S. dollars into the Haitian economy, but a survey of the results of all this effort is not encouraging. The streets of Port-au-Prince still reek of garbage and human waste, political corruption is as bad as it ever was, and violent crime is on the rise. The new roads and clinics built by the United States merely add a superficial appearance of

improvement, so that the tourist industry is able to begin making a little money again, but the basic situation of Haiti and the lives of most Haitians remain unchanged.

This sort of thing has happened over and over again in Haiti. It seems that we would have learned something from it. In the 18th century Haiti, then called Saint-Domingue and ruled by the French, was the most prosperous colony in the New World. Its enormously fertile soil produced a great abundance of crops and drew thousands of White French settlers. Unfortunately, Black slaves from Africa were imported to help with the work.

In the late 1700's the madness of the French Revolution, with its truly nutty doctrine of racial equality, infected many Frenchmen, and the Black plantation workers were encouraged to revolt. When they did they brutally murdered every White man, woman, and child in the colony and declared Haiti a republic. What had been the richest and most productive part of the New World promptly sank back to an African level of squalor, misery, and poverty. The roads and cities built by the French fell into ruin. A peculiarly African mixture of anarchy and despotism took the place of French law and order.

A little over a century later, in 1915, following an especially chaotic and bloody period, U.S. Marines were sent into Haiti to force a semblance of order on the country. The reason for sending them was to safeguard American business interests in Haiti, although President Wilson told Americans that the Marines were being sent to "bring democracy to Haiti." The Marines remained in Haiti for 19 years. They not only enforced governmental stability there, but they also built schools and hospitals, a modern telephone system, and more than 1,000 miles of paved roads with 210 bridges. The U.S. government trained Haitian teachers and doctors. We really gave the Haitians the basis for a fresh start. As soon as the U.S. Marines pulled out in 1934, however, the Haitians returned to their own way of doing things, which is to say, to indolence, corruption, and Voodoo. Everything the Americans had built for them gradually returned to the jungle.

In 1958 the United States sent the Marines to Haiti again, this time with the aim of rebuilding the country's economy and infrastructure so that it would not succumb to Communist influences. We propped up the regime of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who had been trained in medicine during our first incursion into Haiti, but who was a practitioner of Voodoo as well. He was a brutal and bloody dictator. Again we spent hundreds of millions of dollars rebuilding what the Haitians had wrecked and training thousands of them in the skills needed to keep the country running. But when we pulled out again, the country immediately returned to its old ways: its African ways.

And in 1994 we tried the same foolishness all over again, claiming that we were "restoring democracy" to Haiti.

Why can't we accept the plain and simple truth that it is as impossible to make democrats out of the Haitians as it is to teach them how to maintain their own roads? Why can't we understand that the Haitians are fundamentally **different** from us, that they are Africans, not Europeans like us: that they are Negroes, and that left to themselves they must do things in the way Negroes always have done them, with indolence, corruption, and Voodoo?

I have in front of me a book on Haiti written by a British scholar, a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, following his extended travels in Haiti at the beginning of this century. The book was published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, with offices in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and New York. The author is Hesketh Prichard, and the title of his book is *Where Black Rules White: A Journey Across and About Hayti*. Prichard chose his title because he was especially interested in the fact that Haiti was a country ruled entirely by its Black population, without the White colonial domination that was present nearly everywhere else in the non-White world at that time. The only Whites in the country were a few hundred businessmen and their agents in the coastal cities. These Whites were not treated well by the government or people of Haiti.

Prichard was basically sympathetic to the Blacks and wanted to see how they lived when they had been introduced to civilization by Whites but were then left completely free to do as they wished, without White control. He writes of Haiti in the first chapter of his book: "There the law of the world is reversed, and the Black man rules. It is one of the few spots on earth where his color sets the Negro upon a pedestal and gives him privileges. The full-blooded African is paramount; even the mulattos and half-breeds are disliked and have been barbarously weeded out as time has passed."

One of the first things Prichard notes about Haiti is the pervasive filth. He was not expecting sanitation to be up to European standards, of course, but he was stunned by the degree of filth he actually encountered, not just in the villages but also in the capital city, Port-au-Prince. And he was struck by the caricatures of finery and elegance which thrived in the midst of this filth. For example, he noticed that every Haitian of any importance at all bore the title of "general" and was equipped with a gaudy general's uniform, replete with gold braid and all the other trimmings. When he inquired into the military establishment in Haiti, where the total population at that time was under two million, he discovered that the Haitian Army boasted 6,500 generals, 7,000 regimental officers, and 6,500 privates.

Prichard recounts a conversation he had one evening with three Haitian generals. It is a conversation with a surrealistic quality, as are many other things in Haiti. At one level the Black generals are able to converse with a semblance of knowledge of military matters, but at another level it is clear that they are completely out of touch with reality. One is reminded of the classical stereotype of the African cannibal wearing an opera hat and a loincloth.

Prichard's book is filled with fascinating anecdotes and with detailed descriptions of his personal experiences with various facets of Haitian life. He remarks on the good-natured, open-hearted character of the people, who could nevertheless commit the most blood-curdling atrocities at the least provocation. The extreme degree of corruption of the Haitian bureaucracy elicits special attention from Prichard, as does the utterly capricious way in which it operates. The dispensing of justice, in particular, is a caricature of European systems, in which many of the same outward forms are observed.

Prichard also comments on the religious beliefs and practices of the Haitians. The official religion, which they inherited from their former French masters, is Roman Catholicism, but the true religion of the people is Voodoo, a peculiarly African religion with Catholic touches. In religion as in other aspects of Haitian life there is a bizarre blending of White forms with Black substance.

Later in his book Prichard generalizes from many of his observations to reach a fundamental conclusion about life in Haiti: namely, that in all matters regarding their connections with the White world, with White civilization, the Haitians are more concerned with show than with substance, and their ability to mimic the characteristics of White people, both individually and collectively, persuades many people who observe them only superficially and who want to believe them equal that they really **are** equal.

Prichard writes: "What most astonishes the traveler in Hayti is that they have everything there. Ask for what you please, the answer invariably is, 'Yes, yes, we have it.' They possess everything that a civilized and progressive nation can desire. Electric light? They proudly point to a [power] plant on a hilltop outside the town. Constitutional government? A Chamber of Deputies elected by public vote, a Senate, and all the elaborate paraphernalia of the law: they are to be found here, seemingly all of them. Institutions, churches, schools, roads, railways . . . . On paper their system is flawless. . . . If one puts one's trust in the mirage of hearsay, the Haitians can boast of possessing all desirable things, but on nearer approach these pleasant prospects are apt to take on another complexion.

"For instance, you are standing in what was once a building, but is now a spindle-shanked ghost of its former self. A single man, nursing a broken leg, sprawls on the black, earthen floor; a pile of wooden beds is heaped in the north corner; rain has formed a pool in the middle of the room, crawling and spreading into an ever wider circle as the last shower drips from the roof. Some filthy sheets lie wound into a sticky ball on two beds, one of which is overturned. A large, iron washing tub stands in the open doorway.

"Now where are you? It would be impossible to guess. As a matter of fact, you are in the Military Hospital of the second most important town of Hayti, a state-supported

concern in which the soldiers of the Republic are supposed to be cured of all the ills of the flesh. . . .

"It was the same with the electric light. The [power] plant was here, but it did not work. It was the same with the [Army's] cannon. There are cannon, but they won't go off. It was the same with their railways. They were being 'hurried forward,' but they never progressed. It was the same with everything."

There are many more examples. What had dawned on Prichard is that the Haitians really don't care. To them the imitation of civilization is as good as the real thing. They believe that if they are able to dress like White men and speak the White man's language and mimic the White man's institutions, then they are as good as White men. And I believe what Prichard observed of the Haitians applies equally well to Blacks in the United States today.

Prichard ends his book with a chapter titled "Can the Negro Rule Himself?" And he answers his question:

"The present condition of Hayti gives the best possible answer to the question, and, considering the experiment has lasted for a century, perhaps also a conclusive one. For a century the answer has been working itself out there in flesh and blood. The Negro has had his chance, a fair field, and no favor. He has had the most beautiful and fertile of the Caribbees for his own; he has had the advantage of excellent French laws; he inherited a made country, with Cap Haitien for its Paris . . . . Here was a wide land sown with prosperity, a land of wood, water, towns and plantations, and in the midst of it the Black man was turned loose to work out his own salvation. What has he made of the chances that were given to him?"

Prichard then summarizes the century of Haiti's independent existence, running through a list of Black rulers and strongmen, of revolutions and massacres and disorders. He winds up his survey with these words:

"Suffice it to say that . . . [Hayti's] best president was Geffrard, a mulatto, and that the dictatorship of her Black heads of state always has been marked by a redder smear than usual upon the page of history. The better, the wiser, the more enlightened and less brutalized class has always been composed of the mulattos, and the Blacks have recognized the fact and hated the mulatto element accordingly. But to pass from the earlier days of independence to more recent times: we had not long ago the savage rule of President Salomon, a notorious sectary of snake worship, beneath whose iron hand the country groaned for years, and public executions, assassinations, and robbery were the order of the day. And at the present time? Today in Hayti we come to the real crux of the question. At the end of a hundred years of trial how does the Black man govern himself? What progress has he made? Absolutely none."

That's the way it was a century ago, when Prichard wrote, and that's essentially the way it is today, despite three large-scale efforts by the United States during this century to improve the lot of the Haitians.

Why is all of this important to us? A century ago Prichard was by no means an unusual man of his class. He went to Haiti, he carefully observed life there in great detail over an extended period, and he drew logical and reasonable conclusions from his observations. Other scholars of his day could have done the same thing. But it is **unimaginable** that a scholar today, whether from Britain or America, could make observations like Prichard did, draw similar conclusions, and then publish his conclusions in a book by a mainstream publisher. It is simply not possible.

In the first place, one would be hard pressed to find a scholar from any university in America or Britain today who would have the courage to write honestly about Haiti, because he knows that if he did he would be condemned as a "racist" by a numerous and noisy faction of his colleagues and would be drummed out of the academy. And even if someone did write a book with observations and conclusions similar to Prichard's, no mainstream publisher would touch it. That's how far downhill our civilization has slid in a century.

The Haitians have their Voodoo, with all of its disgusting and bizarre beliefs and practices. And we have our cult of Political Correctness, our cult of egalitarianism. It is a cult based as much on superstition and as devoid of reason and logic as the Voodoo of the Haitians. And it exercises as strong a hold on its adherents. A Haitian would as soon offend a Voodoo witch doctor and risk having a curse put on himself as one of our modern scholars would risk being labeled a "racist!"