

**From The Ramparts**  
Junious Ricardo Stanton  
**Why Is Haiti So Poor?**

*"From the standpoint of the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Haiti was the perfect candidate for this neoliberal facelift. The entrenched poverty of the Haitian masses could be used to force them into low-paying jobs sewing baseballs and assembling other products. But USAID had plans for the countryside too. Not only were Haiti's cities to become exporting bases but so were the countryside, with Haitian agriculture also reshaped along the lines of export-oriented, market-based production. To accomplish this, USAID, along with urban industrialists and large landholders, worked to create agro-processing facilities, even while they increased their practice of dumping surplus agricultural products from the U.S. on the Haitian people.*

*This 'aid' from the Americans, along with the structural changes in the countryside, predictably forced Haitian peasants who could no longer survive to migrate to the cities, especially Port-au-Prince, where the new manufacturing jobs were supposed to be. However, when they got there they found there weren't nearly enough manufacturing jobs go around. The city became more and more crowded. Slum areas expanded. And to meet the housing needs of the displaced peasants, quickly and cheaply constructed housing was put up, sometimes placing houses right 'on top of each other.'*

*Before too long, however, American planners and Haitian elites decided that perhaps their development model didn't work so well in Haiti and they abandoned it. The consequences of these American-led changes remain, however." What You're Not Hearing about Haiti (But Should Be) by Carl Lindskoog [www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca)*

Following the reports of a devastating 7.0 seismic earthquake on the Haiti side of the island of what used to be called Hispaniola and later San Domingo the corporate mind control and spin apparatus showed around-the-clock scenes of destitution and devastation accompanied by the refrain "Haiti is the poorest country in the hemisphere and one of the poorest nation in the world." Yes Haiti is poor, but have you ever asked yourself why? Keep in mind the overwhelming majority of the people of Haiti are of African ancestry. These Africans were kidnapped and transported to the whole island by Europeans who brought them there to be used as cheap labor beginning in the sixteenth century. But these African have a distinguished reputation for being fiercely independence minded. The Africans on the island originally claimed for Spain by Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) eventually became the crown jewel of the French colonies and was coveted by both the Spanish and British. The Africans were so obsessed with freedom they were able to defeat the British, French and Spanish to win their freedom and declare Haiti a free republic (the first African republic in the Western hemisphere) in 1804.

That monumental feat sent shock waves throughout the world and unnerved the US so much they refused to officially recognize Haiti until 1862! During that time the US instituted and maintained a trade embargo (which is an act of war) against Haiti and pressured France,

England and Spain to go along with it until the 1860's. Commerce is the life blood of a nation. When the US and its Western allies conspired to deprive Haiti of international commerce even though it had the potential to engage in trade and use its natural riches as a source of wealth, they severely undermined Haiti's economic viability. In a case of supreme hypocrisy the French demanded reparations for lost wealth when the Haitians kicked them out!

"After a dramatic slave uprising that shook the western world, and 12 years of war, Haiti finally defeated Napoleon's forces in 1804 and declared independence. But France demanded reparations: 150m francs, in gold. For Haiti, this debt did not signify the beginning of freedom, but the end of hope. Even after it was reduced to 60m francs in the 1830s, it was still far more than the war-ravaged country could afford. Haiti was the only country in which the ex-slaves themselves were expected to pay a foreign government for their liberty. By 1900, it was spending 80% of its national budget on repayments. In order to manage the original reparations, further loans were taken out - mostly from the United States, Germany and France. Instead of developing its potential, this deformed state produced a parade of nefarious leaders, most of whom gave up the insurmountable task of trying to fix the country and looted it instead. In 1947, Haiti finally paid off the original reparations, plus interest. Doing so left it destitute, corrupt, disastrously lacking in investment and politically volatile. Haiti was trapped in a downward spiral, from which it is still impossible to escape. It remains hopelessly in debt to this day."

[www.Wonkette.com](http://www.Wonkette.com) The DC Gossip 01-18-10

In addition to the US embargo during the 1800's, the US invaded Haiti in 1914 and stole the gold and money from the Haitian treasury and banks and transported it to the US for "safe keeping." Yeah they kept it safe in their safes and vaults! The US also imposed atrocious trade restrictions and a US influenced "Constitution" on Haiti. To make matters worse, the US propped up inept and pliant Quislings and puppets into late in the twentieth century and made loans to Haiti at rates that would make a loan shark blush with envy. Any time the Haitians resisted a Western neo-colonial agenda, the Europeans and US stomped on them even harder.

In 1996 the IMF, World Bank and USAID imposed draconian loan terms on Haiti. In 2001 the US pressured Western nations to withhold credit from Haiti. Western external pressure forced Haiti to abandon their own agricultural programs, lower tariffs and take in US rice and other imports. Years of deforestation first by the French and later by the Haitians themselves has caused massive soil erosion. This soil erosion has left a country that was once able to at least feed itself destitute and unequipped to sustain a national agricultural program.

"Virtually since 1492, when Columbus first set foot on the heavily forested island of Hispaniola, the mountainous nation has shed both topsoil and blood-first to the Spanish, who planted sugar, then to the French, who cut down the forests to make room for lucrative coffee, indigo, and tobacco. Even after Haitian slaves revolted in 1804 and threw off the yoke of colonialism, France collected 93 million francs in restitution from its former colony-much of it in timber. Soon after independence, upper-class speculators and planters pushed the peasant classes out of the few fertile valleys and into the steep, forested rural areas, where their shrinking, intensively cultivated plots of maize, beans, and cassava have combined with a growing fuel wood-charcoal

industry to exacerbate deforestation and soil loss. Today less than 4 percent of Haiti's forests remain, and in many places the soil has eroded right down to the bedrock. From 1991 to 2002, food production per capita actually fell 30 percent." Haiti Soil, National Geographic September 2008

The ever mischievous US government, on behalf of their corporate buddies, kept up the economic pressure and lobbied their European allies to curtail credit to the cash strapped nation. "The US convinces several European countries to suspend hundreds of millions of dollars in credit and aid and provide the IMF, World Bank, and European Union with 'vague instructions' to deny other lines of credit to the impoverished Caribbean country of Haiti. The resumption of aid and credit is made contingent on Haitian President Aristide coming to an agreement with the opposition party, the Democratic Convergence, which is controlled and financed by Haitian and US right-wing interests." US-Haiti (1804-2005) History Commons

These moves undermined President Aristide's program for revitalization and forced him to shelve plans for minimum wage increases, land reform, educational and infrastructure improvements. Eventually the Haitian mulatto "House Negroes" who collaborated with the US CIA and corporatist interests pressed the US to remove Aristide again, which the US gladly did. In 2004 the US literally kidnapped Aristide and took him to Africa amidst attacks on the country and his followers by US armed and trained death squads. The UN stepped into the breach supposedly as a "peace keeping" mission but has remained as an occupying force when it was the US that armed and trained the thugs and mercenaries who created a reign of terror in Haiti in their bid to oust Aristide.

Now there are credible rumors surfacing that there are oil deposits in the Fort Libertie and coastal regions. You know the US wants to get its hands on that. Is the US attempting to secure Haitian Oil? Is that why Obama is sending US troops to Haiti instead of aid workers, supplies and doctors? In the next few days, months and years we will see continued US-UN occupation, more misery and more dependency; in the name of stability, security and humanitarianism.  
**Now you know why Haiti is so poor.**