

Emancipendence then Wine

Monday was Emancipation Day and Saturday coming is Independence Day. And as I reflect on the emancipendence week I feel a mixture of pride and shame.

I'm proud of the legacy of struggle, survival and success and the heritage of triumph-over-trials that we have inherited from our forebears. But I'm ashamed too. Shame, shame fi true! Mi shame fi know say not many of us really appreciate how our ancestors dem grab knife by blade, bleed black rage, rain blood on earth, and mould hot mud to shape testimony and create space so we can stand. Mi shame 'bout how we letting down our predecessors who stood strong against oppressors in their ships with shifts, slips and slants; fuelling fires and breeding wants, selling don't and cultivating can't, and telling who to reap and what not to plant on stolen land. Mi shame fi know that after wi great-great grand muma dem mek path, cut cloth, scratch straight weave wrath and patch hate, and claim the right to write rites, bring light and inscribe agony into memory with bleeding hand, many ah we still nuh really fully understand. After the blood, sweat and tears of colonial years, we've now become the weak and willing, cool and complacent under the killing, enjoying the deadly daggering. Is like wi just line out and wine out, all rights sell out, with soul submission to deadly division; honouring elected gangs and created clans, and making minor gods out of some mimic man. We're making a joke out of the whole idea of emancipation! Mindless combats Imagine, in 1978 our elder Trinidadian brother Black Stalin reminded us in his song, 'Caribbean man', that "we are same race, from the same place that take the same trip on the same ship". And 33 years later, ignorant young descendants of slaves are hurling insults at each other on a series of mindless combats in some stupid Facebook groups called 'Jamaica vs Trinidad' or 'Jamaica vs Barbados', etc. Another thing that stirred me to wrath on Emancipation day was also on Facebook. It was a post by a young university-educated Jamaican man. The post said "NDTC season of dance on TVJ - yuh mean seh if cable neva cum a Jamaica this is what we would have been forced to watch big, big holiday?" Well, I quickly reacted, perhaps even overreacted, with a post to him saying, "if you can't appreciate the value of watching an internationally acclaimed world-class Jamaican dance company that is as old as the nation, on Emancipation Day, then go ahead and absorb more of the neocolonial/imperialist cultural penetration that comes disguised as entertainment on cable. Feel free to indulge your ignorance". I was immediately advised that my response might have been a little heavy, and in retrospect, I agree. But as I asserted in my own defence, the matter of cultural sovereignty is not subject to LOL about. But OMG! I'm sorry for ranting so angrily. Mi sound bringle, don't? I definitely need to chill out. And I think I know just how to do it. I will catch the repeat of Ity & Fancy Cat show on TVJ at 11:00 tonight and liberate mi face with laughter. Then I'll get some strong rum for libation and some mi djimbe drum for vibration, and escape in some Kumina chant. Yeah, in the words of Garvey as popularised by Marley, 'none but ourselves can free our mind', but tonight I will give my overactive mind a break and try emancipating my waistline. box-mi-back@hotmail.com