



ESL MiniConference

The Meaning of Liberty

TESOL Statement by Jean Frantzzy Italien

This statement was submitted by Jean Frantzzy Italien, President and Founder of Miragoane Association of Teachers of English (MATE), based in Miragoane, Haiti, on the TESOL Affiliates Listserv, as part of a discussion regarding the wording of an official TESOL Statement on the immigration debate in the United States Congress. Jean Frantzzy Italien gave his permission for his statement to be reprinted in the ESL MiniConference Online.

Americans are a fortunate people. Four hundred years ago, the land was wilderness. Over two centuries have passed since the United States became an independent nation. Today, the country is one of the largest in the world, both in size and in population. It is one of the world's richest nations and the strongest military power. Its factories produce a large portion of all the goods manufactured in the world. The farmers raise such large crops that we are able to sell and give away millions of tons of food each year to hungry people in other lands. Thanks to its production, it has grown so wealthy in such a short time.

How did the United States become such a great nation in so short a time? The main reason for this nation's success, is a mixture of immigrants from many lands.

The United States is likewise rich in human resources. The country has over 230,000,000 people, more than any other nation except mainland China, India, and the Soviet Union. The American people are a mixture of immigrants from many lands. In early days, most settlers came to the US from northern and western Europe. The largest number came from the parent country, England, and also from nearby Scotland and Ireland. Another large group migrated from Germany, which was suffering from wars and other troubles. Colonies settled by the Dutch, Swedes, French, and Spanish also became part of the nation. In the past hundred years or so, millions of immigrants have come to the States from Italy, Poland, Russia, and other countries of southern and eastern Europe.

The largest percentage of the American people are of European descent. These include not just descendants of immigrants from Europe, but also those from Canada, Mexico, and other parts of the New World. Eleven percent are of African descent whose ancestors were brought in the US as

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slaves. Several million Americans are descendants of the Native Americans or Indians. Others are the descendants of later immigrants from Asia, such as the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. All - regardless of race, religion, or the nationality of their ancestors - are Americans.

The country has been enriched by the contributions of many peoples. English language is very rich because it contains many words from other languages. Its literature, art, music, and dancing are full of ideas from other cultures. Its industry and agriculture have developed rapidly because of the skills of immigrants from many lands.

Over 200 years ago, this Nation was engaged in a valiant struggle to gain freedom from the rule of England ; and on the fog shrouded morning of October 9, 1779, an assembled force of American, French and Haitian troops made an ill-fated attempt to recapture Savannah, Georgia from the hands of the British, resulting in one of the bloodiest losses of the American Revolution; and the five hundred Haitian Soldiers of the Chasseurs - Volontaires de Saint Domingue fought brilliantly and bravely to keep the British forces from overrunning a force retreating in disarray; and this legendary effort has served as an inspiration to citizens of Haiti and America for the past 200 years and is one of the highest examples of people of one land volunteering their time, efforts, and even lives to help the peoples of other countries.

Nevertheless, when the United States of America became a nation on July 4th, 1776, they put on sovereignty. From then on, they had the rights to be governed by their own laws and, today, one of such laws establish conditions as to who comes to the land and how. It is therefore the United States of America's right, today, to turn away, as a sovereign nation, anyone who, in transgression of such laws has found a way to cross its borders, to violate its territory, by land, air, or sea. Such a person is illegal. He or she has transgressed the laws of the land.

You are encouraged to share this statement with your members, colleagues, private foundations, educational institutions, corporations and government entities, anyone who believes in obedience to law and the rights of people to be sovereign.

May God always bless the most powerful country in the world the United States of America !

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