

Abolish columbus day



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Columbus Day has regarded Christopher Columbus as a hero for his “discovery” of America. In parts of America there are big Columbus Day celebrations and parades; even the schools are closed so the children may experience the festivities. The fact of the matter is that Columbus Day does not celebrate the actual “accomplishments” of Columbus, but celebrates the PG story of Columbus that school teachers would tell elementary school children in the form of a rhyme or song.

The celebration of Columbus Day glorifies the colonial conquest, enslavement, and murder of indigenous people by Europeans and should be wiped off the books of American national holidays because Christopher Columbus is not a great Italian explorer who discovered America and Columbus’ exploration led the massive genocide of the indigenous people. All throughout America, Italian-American people celebrate Christopher Columbus as one of the great Italian heroes.

In reality, Columbus was not even Italian but Genoese, which is a person born in Genoa. Italy did not become a country until 1861 which is 355 years after Columbus died. While Columbus was alive he did not go on his famous trip across the Atlantic Ocean sponsored by Genoa but instead sponsored by Spain. Christopher Columbus set out on his exploration to find a faster trade route to Asia and so traveled East thinking that would have been a faster way; obviously this is not true.

In Howard Zinn’s essay, Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress, the writer states that Columbus would have never made it to Asia and, “One-fourth of the way there he came upon an unknown, uncharted land...” (Zinn). If Columbus was the great explorer that Columbus Day portrays him as, then

he would have at least realized that the land he discovered was not Asia but instead America. When Columbus died, he thought that he went to Asia even though an acquaintance of his, Amerigo Vespucci, had already realized that the land Columbus went to was not Asia but the New World.

Besides the fact that Columbus was not even close to getting to Asia, he did not “discover” America, but instead he informed Europe of the existence of the landmass. The land was already inhabited by millions of Amerindian that had been living in America for thousands of years. The Order of the Sons of Italy in America argue in their article, Columbus: Fact or Fiction, that Columbus did discover America by saying, “Even if others visited the continent sporadically before he did, their voyages had no historical significance.” The OSIA meant that even if anyone visited the New Land before Columbus; since their discovery did not have any grand importance or documentation that the other explorer’s discoveries do not matter. Even though Columbus never took credit for discovering America because he thought he was in Asia the whole time, Americans of today blindly give him the grand title of the “discoverer of America” when he actually just brought the land into the minds of the people of Europe.

When Columbus first arrived in the New World, there were more than eight million American Indian (Taino) living in the area where Columbus landed which was the Bahamas. Columbus did not see the Taino as a civilization of people but as stated in Zinn’s article Columbus wrote in his journal that, “... They would make fine servants...”(Columbus quoted in Zinn). With that Columbus began his subjugation of the Taino because he wanted gold that no one else was sure existed in the abundance that Columbus believed.

The Admiral's presence and interference with the Taino's daily lives caused disputes and separation of the Taino tribes as well as the destruction their lands which helped lead to their downfall. Juliet Ucelli argued in her article, Italian-Americans: Say Basta to Columbus, about how she did not want the Italian people to be like Columbus in the way that he would, "...go into other people's lands, take them over, and exploit labor and resources. " This exploitation leads Columbus to build mines in which he forced the Taino to arduous physical labor, which killed millions.

If a native man did not bring in enough gold at the end of the month, Columbus would have the laborer's hands cut off which caused massive blood loss and ultimately death. Mothers would drown their children because they had no way of feeding them and did not want their child to grow up in such conditions. In the essay " Thief, Slave Trader, Murderer: Christopher Columbus and Caribbean Population Decline" Mark Freeland and Tink Tinker, the authors, indicate that, "...Colon presided over the deaths of some seven and a half million people. " By the end of Columbus' voyage he killed almost all of the indigenous people.

By the time Columbus was carried away in chains, only 500, 000 of the original 8 million Taino's were left, and those were wiped out by the rest of the European explorers who were inspired by Columbus. A lot of Americans celebrate Columbus Day without ever knowing the true facts of what actually went on during his exploration. Nowadays more people have learned the truth about Christopher Columbus and started to protest the day dedicated to his wrongdoings. Columbus Day should be abolished and replaced

because of the acts of genocide and the overall sense that Columbus was not a great explorer.

Works Cited Freeland, Mark, and Tink Tinker. " Thief, slave trader, murderer: Christopher Columbus and Caribbean population decline. " *Wicazo Sa Review* 23. 1 (2008): 25+. General OneFile. Web. 28 Oct. 2012. Order of the Sons of in America, Columbus: Fact vs. Fiction. (2005): n. page. Web. 28 Oct. 2012. Ucelli, Juliet. " Italian-Americans: Say Basta to Columbus. " (2012): n. page. Web. 28 Oct. 2012. Zinn, Howard. " Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress" *People's History of the United States*. (2012): n. page. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.