

Black and Brown Unity: An Alliance for Justice and Human Rights

Hurricane Katrina was a 21st Century snapshot of the genocidal direction of the US government. It exposed the reality of US democracy for working class African Americans and peoples of color. There has yet to be a massive upsurge that expresses the deep outrage of the African American masses against the US government for this crime against humanity.

The US government cut funding for the upgrading of Gulf Coast levees that could have prevented hundreds of majority African American deaths and the massive property damage and destruction from the flooding caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Yet it almost immediately granted funding for the construction of a 700 mile long wall along the US-Mexican border to prevent immigrant Mexican and Latino workers from entering into the US to search for work. In other words, no money for levees to act as "walls for life" but multi millions for the building of a "wall of death."

The upsurge among Latinos throughout the US against the criminalization and attacks on undocumented Latino immigrants and the political tone of resistance it is setting, must be seen as a direct challenge to the Bush

led government and corporate agenda that left thousands of African Americans to die in the Gulf Coast. The Reconstruction movement developing in the Gulf Coast and among African Americans nationally must embrace and unite with this growing movement as a call to action for all of the oppressed to boldly resist repression and genocide.

The efforts by the US government and corporate media to divide African Americans and Latinos are no accident. The system recognizes that African American—Latino unity would bring about a powerful working class challenge to the corporate rulers who super-exploit Black and Brown labor while denying both full democratic rights.

Our wages are the lowest; our communities are the most neglected by local, state and federal government. The regions where the majority of our peoples have lived since the founding of the US - in the South and Southwest - is where our peoples are most politically subjugated; systematically disenfranchised and suffered the most brutal racist treatment. The unity of these two communities would constitute a major political force in this country for human rights and global justice.

When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, it banned slavery throughout its country. Thousands of runaway slaves from the US went into Mexico. This set it at odds with the Southern plantation owners and the US government who declared that white supremacy should be the law of the land—promoting "Manifest Destiny" as its imperialist slogan. Its opposition to slavery was a factor leading to the US government's annexation of 1/2 of Mexico's country.

Mexico allowed Blacks to cross their border to escape slavery; African Americans must support the right of Mexican and Latinos to cross the US border without repression and criminalization in search of work and social needs to support their families.

US corporations have moved hundreds of companies to Mexico to exploit cheap labor and to impose economic policies on the Mexican government like NAFTA that has caused massive unemployment for many Mexican agricultural workers and small farmers. Unemployment in the North and Midwest especially African American workers due to corporate greed has also created a reverse migration back to the South since 1970. Both migrations result from US economic oppression of African American workers in the US and Mexican workers in Mexico.

The dispersal of thousands of mainly African Americans throughout the US from the Gulf Coast was a racist act using the disaster to carry out a form of ethnic cleansing—reducing the Black majority in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast in the interest of white political rule and corporate profits. The evacuees are experiencing government abuses—forced evictions, voting rights denied and racist treatment from FEMA.

The media has criminalized Hurricane Survivors, labeling them as "rapists", "drug dealers" and "con artists" invading other people's communities. This criminalization is done to hide the abuses of the government and to try and justify government repression against people instead of addressing their poverty and suffering that their corporate policies helped to create.

African American evacuees have become internal US migrants with an uncertain future.

As the two largest and super-exploited nationally oppressed populations inside the US, the fate of African Americans and Latinos are connected. They will be manipulated by corporate driven policies that force both to compete for low wage jobs, making concessions to either group to win their political allegiance; or they can become allies in a common struggle. Black and Brown unity would help to expose the deep racist nature of US democracy and raise the bar of the struggle against racism among those who really want radical change.

The struggle against the US system of oppression is not a competition between the oppressed to declare themselves as the leaders of the struggle. The initiative from any sector of the oppressed must be seen as an opening for all of the oppressed to come forward and intensify their struggles.

The May 1, 2006 national political strike and boycott of jobs and businesses was a major and historic protest against US policies of xenophobia that seek to make Latino immigrants a scapegoat for the economic crises facing US workers, including attempts to exploit fears caused by 9/11 by promoting undocumented immigration as a possible avenue for "terrorist" and thus a threat to US national security. It was a call to action for people to boldly challenge a government that criminalizes people for trying to work to support their families; that would leave its people to die in the Gulf Coast, and that spends billions for wars to kill and dominate the world.

May 1st, a day celebrated by millions of workers throughout the world to express the need for worker solidarity in the struggles for workers rights and human rights. It must also become a mobilization that launches a direction for building Black and Brown unity as a core foundation for the unity of people of color and workers.

**End African American and Latino National
oppression:
Reconstruction in the US Gulf Coast and Immigrant
Rights Now!**

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