

# The One Year Anniversary Of *Katrina:*



## *A Time of Decision For African Americans And The Poor!*

The one year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina is a time of decision for African Americans and poor people in the Gulf Coast and throughout the US as it is a moral and political statement about the meaning of so-called American "democracy."

The act of leaving hundreds of thousands of Black and poor people to die in the richest country in the world and the treatment of those who survived as criminals and refuge to be discarded as a burden on society, is a crime against humanity.

The overwhelming destruction of the communities, including the unprecedented massive internal dispersal of Black people to all corners of the US, has almost totally occupied Survivors and their supporters in the Gulf Coast and throughout the country, with efforts to try and protect the immediate needs and interests of the Survivors—insurance claims, stopping forced evictions, stopping the demolition of homes, protecting renters, gutting of homes, establishing health clinics, defending existing healthcare institutions, prisoner rights and worker rights while trying to help Survivors reenter their communities.

Now is the time for the Reconstruction Movement to take on a stronger political character, as a movement for self-determination and human rights. It must become an international struggle where nations and people's throughout the world are called upon to become witnesses and judges of the actions of the US Government, demanding that they address this human tragedy which the policies of racism and greed was largely responsible for creating.

Without a movement to exercise power and to win public opinion and support at the national and international levels, the US Government won't feel the pressure to timely and adequately address the needs of the peoples in and dispersed from the Gulf Coast.

The upsurge by the Latino Communities on May 1<sup>st</sup> where millions stayed out of work in protest of the Sensenbrenner anti-immigrant rights bill, was an example of exercising power that should be followed by African Americans in the Gulf Coast and throughout the US demanding a Just and immediate Reconstruction, starting with the right of return with affordable housing, living wage and safe jobs, quality public education and public and affordable healthcare.

The people must build organizations in the communities, neighborhoods and workplaces throughout the Gulf Coast that become part of a constituent's assembly that fights for major input in all decisions related to rebuilding the communities, businesses and institutions in the Gulf Coast.

Black and poor people must organize and struggle for control of the levee boards, school boards, hospital boards, housing boards, police control boards, prisoner rights boards, historical and cultural boards and public authorities of Reconstruction financing, etc.

## **An Independent Reconstruction Party Is Needed**

Neither party—Democratic or Republican, have aggressively addressed the needs of the Survivors of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and US Government neglect and corporate greed. Both have been more concerned about big contracts to corporate friends, protecting the oil companies

and the affluent large white and wealthy neighborhoods.

Black, working class and poor Survivors need a collective voice that speaks for and represents the interests of those most impacted by this human disaster; a political organization and voice that organizes and expresses the power and will of the people, a Reconstruction Party.

Without political power, the most impacted Survivors and communities throughout the Gulf Coast will receive little to no resources to rebuild. The communities in the various states throughout the Gulf Coast will be divided and manipulated politically to cut their own deals and New Orleans will no longer be a majority Black city.

The Black majority can begin the initiative of building a Reconstruction Party, anchoring it while reaching out to all working class and poor communities regardless of race or immigration status.

The rebuilding of the Gulf Coast must not only be an architectural model, it must become a political model of building a zone of democracy that contributes to the spread of real democracy and social transformation throughout the country.

Not since the Reconstruction following the Civil War has there been such an opportunity to build democracy from the ground up in the US. This is an historical moment for African Americans and the poor to demand that the US Government use its resources to rebuild for democracy and human rights and not for war to destroy and divide.



The *Black Workers League* (BWL) is a political collective engaged in work in the trade union movement, Black political power movement and other social justice movements in North Carolina, parts of the U.S. South and a few areas throughout the country. For more information, write to BWL, P.O. Box 934, Rocky Mount, NC 27802.