



**STILL UNDER THE BROKEN BRIDGE OF IMMIGRATION:
FRAMING OUR FUTURE IN STRUGGLE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

NO ONE THINKING RATIONALLY AND RIGHTFULLY can honestly imagine that removing the Haitian immigrants from under the bridge at the border town of Del Rio, Texas, is actually a solution to the broken bridge politics and parties of America n immigration policy. The removal was improvement of optics for the administration not a long-standing solution to the immigration problems, especially those that relate to Haitians and other Black people, African peoples. Moreover, the removal was certainly one that was compelled by the righteous outrage, outcry and resistance o four people and others to the racist and savage treatment of the Haitians at the border clearly documented on the media.

The chasing down and charging with horses and the herding like cattle and whipping Haitian immigrants for simply seeking asylum in the U.S. as a human right and urgent need was cruel, inhumane, viciously savage and unsupportable. It conjured up so may interrelated images of the systemic and pervasive violence of the Holocaust of enslavement; the raw and visceral savagery of segregation and lynching; and the depraved and persistent disregard of Black life, Black people and Black rights demonstrated in the daily practices of American policing.

Regardless of the tendency, immediate urge and the psychological incentives to deny this, it is indeed a brutal reflection of a racist approach to immigration policy in which the dark peoples of the world, especially Black people, are seen as dirty, diseased, dangerous and deficient in human dignity and social worth and therefore, unworthy of acceptance in the U.S. for any reason. What is called for here is the Trumpian Nordics or something caucasiously similar as a model immigrant. Others with limiting racial classifications can come with small number and useful skills and worshipful amounts of money as compensation for their deficiencies in race. But for Black people, there is this problematic in the racist mind and especially for Haiti.

It is a concept borrowed from W.E.B. DuBois called “unforgivable Blackness.” I introduced it in an earlier article on Haiti in this paper called “Haiti and the Heavy Hand of History: Concerning Natural and Unnatural Disasters” noting that White Americans and other European peoples’ approach to Haiti is an attitude and approach of unforgivable Blackness. It stems, of course, from the victorious Haitian Revolution of 1804 and the Haitian peoples decisive defeat of all the European armies that dare to interrupt and reverse their national liberation struggle. It was not simply the defeat of France and the other European powers that joined later to crush the Revolution, it was also the fact that these were enslaved Africans who achieved what no other enslaved people had done, i.e., defeated their enslavers, freed themselves, and built a Republic.

Moreover, they also helped to foster the liberation of the peoples of Latin America contributing sanctuary for its liberation leaders, weaponry, monies, materials, soldiers and supplies. For this historic act of African liberation and its continuing efforts to expand the realm of freedom in the world, there was this sense among the White supremacists of the world that Haiti must be crushed, its victory made a victim of historical amnesia, and its people suffer in various vicious and savage ways. France’s forcing Haiti to pay reparations for defeating it and freeing its people; America’s repeated occupations of Haiti; its current control of Haiti with France, Canada and other members of the Core Group which dominates Haiti; and its current policy at the border are inseparably linked.

It is important, as I noted before, to realize that the concept of unforgiveable Blackness is tied to not only hatred and hostility toward the Black color of Black people, but also toward Blackness as excellence and as a defining feature of what it means to be Black. In the White supremacist mind, Blackness as color becomes a curse, but as excellence becomes a catastrophe that creates cognitive dissonance and increases

the already existent hatred and hostility. Haiti represents excellence, not only in its awesome historical achievement of the Revolution, but also in its excellence of human resilience and resourcefulness; its refusal to be defeated and its serving as a model and mirror of the human commitment to freedom and justice in the world; and a commitment fought for not only with weapons of war, but also with bare hands, bold hearts and an indestructible spirit.

Clearly, the savage and abusive treatment of Haitians at the Del Rio border crossing calls for vigorous disciplinary punishments and policy correctives. These policy correctives must not only address this particular form of anti-migrant brutality, but also end similar policies and practices and offer instead an immigration policy that is dignity-affirming, rights-respecting and a firm expression of equity and justice for Haitians, other Black people, and all peoples of the world. And this, of course, means first of all America's need to face this endemic anti-Black racism, both conscious and unconscious, subtle and savage, public and private. This would help the Biden administration explain to itself why with all its progressive talk and policies pursued in other areas, it would continue to unjustly deport Haitian peoples under the Trumpian Title 42, which is clearly racist in intent and impact, denying Haitians their international and human right to seek asylum.

Second, there must be an immediate halt to these denials of the right to make a claim of asylum and to have it heard and ruled on. Third, it is difficult for progressives to admit, but they must enlarge the arc of their moral concern and political practice in immigration so that it includes Haitians and others in equitable ways rather than simply focus on predominantly or exclusively on Latinas/os. This cannot be a policy of counting

and catering to numbers, but respecting each person's and people's equal human dignity and human right and acting in the just and equitable ways required.

Important also is that the Haitian people regain control of their country and are able to practice self-determination, a fundamental right and responsibility of every person and people in the world. And they cannot do this with the imperialist presence of the U.S. and its Core Group dictating the way the people live their lives, build and develop their country, govern themselves and determine their destiny and daily lives. The U.S. must stop imposing on Haiti its imperialist system of domination, deprivation and degradation using internal collaborators and hirelings and handmaidens in service and submission. With Haiti in control of itself and the people united and rebuilding their country, planning and forging a future in their own image and interest, Haitian immigration would assume a new meaning and level of numbers of those leaving the country.

FINALLY, THE STRUGGLE AROUND HAITIAN and the larger issue of Black immigration, as well as immigration as a whole, is part and parcel of our commitment to pan-Africanist liberation struggle around the world so that African people can be free and constantly rising wherever they are. And it is central to our own struggle here to be ourselves and free ourselves and to continually struggle to expand the realm of human freedom, justice and good in the world. Indeed, it is an ancient African moral imperative that speaks to us and reminds us, we are to bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place, especially among those who have no voice, i.e., the vulnerable, the devalued, the disempowered and yet the equally deserving of the shared goods of the world.▲

DR. MAULANA KARENGA, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of *Kwanzaa*; and author of *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture* and *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.