

Thursday, December 1 -

A National Day of Absence and Protest against Poverty, Racism, and War

Fifty years ago – on December 1, 1955 – Rosa Parks sparked the modern Civil Rights Movement by refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus.

The whole country owes a debt to Rosa Parks and should commemorate this anniversary. The massive struggle of Black people in the U.S. against racism shook the foundations of the system. It educated and inspired the movements against war, for the liberation of women, for the end of LGBT oppression, and for every progressive cause, small and great. Just as the economic power of the US was built on Black slave labor, the political power of all existing progressive movements rests on the foundation of the life-and-death struggles of the Civil Rights movement.

Earlier this year, the Troops Out Now Coalition issued a call for a nationwide strike or day of absence to fight poverty, racism, and war and commemorate the 50th anniversary of Rosa Parks' heroic action. Hurricane Katrina and the criminal neglect of the government exposed the ugly truth that social conditions for Black people - especially in the Deep South - have not changed fundamentally since 1955. Katrina is being used as an excuse to disperse the Black population and to "develop" New Orleans and the Gulf coast without them. Immigrant survivors of Katrina have also been completely neglected.

Now FEMA plans to evict survivors from motels in January in the Gulf states, and on December 15 in states like Illinois! Private landlords are also beginning evictions in New Orleans on December 1!

The passing of Ms. Parks herself focused public attention on the 50th anniversary of her arrest and the Montgomery bus boycott. Politicians made speeches about honoring her memory while her body lay in state in the Capitol. But then they went back to work trampling on the poor and oppressed, turning "Katrina relief" into a corporate giveaway, and dispersing the Black population of the Gulf Coast, while carrying on racist war against Iraq and the world at large. The way to honor Ms. Parks is to do as she did – to struggle!

Here in Illinois, the Department of Justice is pressuring Southern Illinois University to abandon three fellowships for underrepresented minorities and women. This is a test case which threatens the stipends of thousands of women and oppressed minority students across the country. The "Minuteman Project" continues its Klan-style anti-immigrant organizing.

In this atmosphere, the December 1 protest has picked up steam in many cities and continues in the path of the Millions More march in Washington D.C. on October 14-16. City councils in Detroit, Baltimore, Boston, Oakland, Philadelphia, and Cleveland have endorsed December 1 and called for workers and students to be given the day off to attend activities; the city council in New York is expected to do the same on November 30. In New York, there will be a march on Wall Street. In other cities there will be teach-ins, protests, and other forms of remembrance.

Chicago activities:

Dec. 1 – 4 PM – Protest/leaflet at the Federal Building, Jackson & Dearborn.

– 5 PM – Street meeting / leafleting at State & Madison

Dec 2 – 7 PM – Public meeting, New World Resource Center, 1300 N. Western

(speakers' list in formation)

1 block north of Division; 6 blocks south of Blue Line stop at Western Ave. Street parking generally available.

Bring the troops home now! - Money for jobs, education, healthcare, housing, food, heat, and human needs – not war! - Say no to militarized schools! - Fight racism – defend affirmative action! - No deportations! Defend immigrant rights! - Justice for Katrina evacuees! Defend the "right of return"! Community control of money, contracts and jobs! Stop the evictions!

Troops Out Now Coalition – Chicago organizing center (773) 381-5839 Chicago1201@sbcglobal.net

For full national information and to endorse, visit www.troopsoutnow.org

Justice for Katrina evacuees!

A coalition of community organizers has established the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and is fighting for the "right of return" of the Black community of New Orleans and for the survivors to control their own relief effort. There will be a conference of evacuees in Jackson, Mississippi on Friday, December 9, and a caravan march to New Orleans on Saturday, December 10.

See www.communitylaborunited.net for more information.

Call (773) 381-5839 to ask about transportation from Chicago.

To listen to the talks from an important solidarity event, "Katrina: a Challenge to the Movement", go to this link:

http://www.workers.org/2005/us/oct22_podcast