

Dominican Republic: Behind the deportation of descendants of Haitians

Escrito por John McDevitt / Liberation News
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On June 17, the deadline expired for Dominicans of Haitian heritage to apply for resident permits after the 2014 law that revoked citizenship from any person of Haitian ancestry born after 1929. Up to 300,000 people could be expelled from the Dominican Republic.

Many of the Haitian-descendent population have come to the Dominican Republic as laborers, often being so oppressed as workers that their children, over the decades, never received birth certificates from the country where they were born. However, the majority of the Haitian-descendant population are survivors of the 2010 earthquake that killed approximately a quarter of a million people in Haiti, impacting every family on the Haitian side of the island shared with the Dominican Republic.

This racism against Haitians includes not even informing the impacted population of the “legal status” change, that they are not citizens of the country where they were born, nor setting up

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governmental offices to process them to “gain” Dominican citizenship.

This impacts the “Haitians” from going to school, accessing medical care, and getting legal employment. This population speaks Spanish rather than Haitian Creole, as their families have lived in the Dominican Republic for generations. Many who are expected to be deported to Haiti have never been there.

The conditions of these Dominicans of Haitian descent can be described as nothing more than the social relationship during overt slavery—and international organizations have documented many accounts of actual slavery among this population now in the Dominican Republic. Such conditions can only mean super profits for the U.S. corporations that rule the country.

White supremacy driving force behind anti-Haitian campaign

The Dominican Republic was central to the unveiling of the ideology of “Blanqueamiento” or the construct that the white population in Latin America who benefited from slavery must “whiten” the population to move into an amenable relationship with the former colonizers during the post-colonial era. This ideology prevailed to the extent that many Dominicans today appear by certain standards to be of “mixed race” or “whiter” than Haitians who liberated their nation of Haiti in 1804, forming the first Black Republic birthed from the earlier mass slave revolts.

“Blanqueamiento” went as far as becoming the official policy in many Latin American countries, encouraging European immigration to “whiten” the overall population.

The construct of “foreignness” in the Dominican Republic is synonymous with “blackness,” not with “whiter” peoples who came to various Latin American countries like the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Brazil during the post-colonial period.

Of course, Dominicans did not develop this racist ideology alone but were encouraged by the U.S. racist ruling class, which saw all of Latin America as its backyard. The U.S. imperialists used the Monroe Doctrine to intervene in the Dominican Republic to reorganize the government to make debt payments favorable to the U.S. in 1904. The U.S. occupied the Dominican Republic again from 1916 to 1924, and, then again in 1965 to install a pro-U.S. government after Juan Bosch from the Dominican Revolutionary Party was elected president in 1962 defeating the puppet Trujillo.

Lynchings of Dominicans who look “black” were commonplace throughout this history, as conditions in the country reflected nearly the exact image of the conditions of African American people in the U.S. South. The U.S. freedom fighter, Robert Williams, made this observation when as a Black U.S. soldier, he was part of an occupying army in a Black nation.

Today the Dominican government has an open door policy to U.S. imperialist interests.

Fighting back from the U.S. to Santo Domingo

“It don’t make sense. They act like we are animals—we’re not animals. It’s like here’s the

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boundary and that's it," said Marjorie St. Elie, a Haitian-American resident of Miami, Fla. "There's a thing like this going on in the Bahamas, and there's hate crimes going on all over like here (in the U.S.)."

St. Elie knows the racist history of the U.S. and the impact on Haitian-descendant people in the Dominican Republic.

In cities and towns across the U.S., the people are exposing this history of white supremacy through the popular articulation of mass action and rebellion. This movement in the U.S. must also take on the plight of Haitian-descendant people in the Dominican Republic to smash this ideology of murder, slavery and violence to win the true spirit of the Haitian revolution that began more than 200 years ago.