

California is on the Verge of Economic Calamity

I was born in Oxnard, California. My parents migrated there from Louisiana during World War II. Most of my Black childhood friends' parents were from either Louisiana or Texas. Many of them grew up together back on those red clay roads and moved to the west simultaneously. We would have rival street games – Texans vs. Louisianans. In all, it was fun growing up around all the strawberry, tomato, carrot fields, etc and orange/lemon orchards. Fruit trees were commonly grown in front yards and you could walk down the street and pick luscious peaches, apricots and avocados while you strolled. Neither the farmers nor the neighbors would mind because it was all bountiful.

Blacks, Hispanics and Asians got along just fine; for the most part with whites also but a few of them had problems due to migrating from Texas and Louisiana also. One morning we woke up to a ten foot cross burning in our front yard. We got through that and my total recollection of growing up in Oxnard is enjoyable. Many of my best friends were Hispanic and Asian and they were native Californians also with several generations of heritage in the community.

“Cali” was the hip place and people from all over the nation started moving there. Oxnard grew from a 13,000 population to over 200,000 in about 25 years. Los Angeles, San Diego, etc. became “monsters”. In 1950, both New York and Pennsylvania exceeded California in population. Today,

California has a population greater than both these states put together.

I believe that is the biggest reason for California's economic woes today. It's not just the increased population but the new faces in leadership that have come into the state. There are 54 federally elected officials in California and 40% of them were born somewhere else. The Governor was not only born out of state; he was born out of the country. There is a lot of carpet bagging in their actions. If you look at some of the highest ranking elected officials you will see that their families or spouses profit handsomely from some of the onerous and outrageous laws and regulations they produce. Workmen's Compensation, public debt, wacko environmental rules, etc. has a profit side to it and coincidentally many of them are getting this profit as the state suffers. It's like a third world nation in that respect.

California is suffering from excessive regulations, high taxes, too much crime and an oppressive workers' compensation system that is driving hundreds of corporations out of the state along with hundreds of thousands of jobs. Even Wonder Bread has left. California's tax base is shrinking and its debt is driving up. The “Golden State” has a deficit of \$42 billion dollars. State government layoffs are plentiful and the credit ratings are sinking through the “floor”. At times, California checks are temporarily worthless.

Coupled with the bad leadership

coming from the greedy transplants, uncontrollable immigration from its southern border has mushroomed beginning in the 1980's. In 1993-1994, California's K-12 school enrollment was 42.3 percent white, 37 percent Hispanic and 8.7 percent Black. Today, Hispanics represent the largest block, 48.7 percent, whites, 28.5 percent and Blacks, 7.3 percent. The significance of this is that 1.6 million K-12 students require English learning. This costs an additional \$7,000 per pupil to educate them. The annual bill to taxpayers in 2009 exceeded \$10 billion which is 25% of the total deficit.

Also, Mexican immigrants alone send back to their country \$29 billion per year in remittances. That money is made in the US and sent out of the “recycle” permanently. It makes a difference on the local economies. We don't even need to get into the legal vs. illegal immigration debate to show the huge strain on California.

The future looks bleak for Californians. Their elected officials continue to apply adverse environmental regulations that will chase more corporations away and stunt any type of growth plans. They are seizing precious irrigation water from the farmers so that they can protect a variety of smelt fish. I say “Damn the fish, what about our groceries and the jobs that go with them?” Remember, farming is a major industry in this state. This is just one example that they have yet to get it.

Unions have a lock on all the



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major projects so that means that Free Enterprise will be blocked and excessive and unnecessary costs along with corruption will prevail versus good and economical government. Guess what? That high number of prisoners that result from all that crime out there; a good portion of them are about to be let out. You see the average salary of a California prison guard exceeds \$90,000 per year (due to union arbitration) and something is going to have to give.

Gone are the pleasant days of Oxnard and the golden aspect of California.

Since When Has Eating Become Looting?

It's like Yogi Berra said, “Déjà vu all over again.” We saw it in New Orleans, when the cameras caught the white couple in the act of “finding” food and the Black people in the act of “stealing” food. Now in Haiti, we see reports of “looting” by the citizens as they forage for food to survive. I wonder if those reporters have heard of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Not excusing criminal behavior, but c'mon, brothers and sisters. If you get hungry and desperate enough you will engage in what is deemed as criminal behavior.

Those of us who have been watching and studying Haiti for years, and those of us who really know the history of Haiti, also know that there is something beneath the surface of what we see on the evening news programs. The parallels between the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti and the aftermath of the hurricane in New Orleans are so obvious.

Those of us who are willing to acknowledge the disparities that always exist between how Black people and other groups are treated, locally, nationally, and internationally, are labeled “trouble-makers” and “agitators.” Although any reasonable person can see the differences, the powers of this world continue to shroud the truth by controlling the media messages pertaining to our plight. So I accept being called an agitator; isn't that what Frederick Douglass told us to do?

The overall situation in Haiti is too much for us to absorb, but the images of our brothers and sisters foraging for food and life-saving supplies is a microcosm of the reality of their horrible plight. To generally label their

desperation as “looting” and to use a broad brush to describe their attempts to stay alive is sad commentary coming from the media. It's called surviving – not looting.

The real looting of Haiti has been taking place for more than 200 years, by outside governments, including our own. The looting will continue now by shady charitable organizations, exploitative greedy contractors, and military organizations that decide who gets help and how much aid can come into the country. There will surely be yet another general takeover of Haiti by outsiders who, up until now, viewed Haiti as just “the poorest country in the western hemisphere.”

How could a country that has come to the aid of the U.S. and demonstrated the same willingness as the U.S. to fight for its independence and win, in spite of the odds, be ignored, exploited, corrupted, and allowed to become the “poorest” among us? Now that Haiti has been ravaged by the earthquake, it is in prime position to be ravaged by crooks, liars, and thieves – once again. It is ripe for exploitation by the Halliburton's, KBR's, Blackwater's, Bechtel's, and all of the other private contractors who found their fortunes in Iraq and New Orleans.

The scene is set, and the action has already begun. Limited entry into the country, lack of access to neighboring Dominican Republic, military control under the guise of protection, and created enemies of the State: looters, which give reason to bring in more troops. We saw this scenario played out before in New Orleans. Folks waiting for food and water that took days to deliver, innocent people shot down in

the streets by overzealous storm troopers, refusal by the adjacent communities to allow entry into their unaffected community, and contractors sweeping in to capture the spoils of tragedy.

When Haitian mothers were feeding their children mud pies just to fill their stomachs, a desperate act of survival, it was depicted as something to be pitied. Now as Haitians are in even worse shape, trying to find food to survive, it is called looting.

A couple of historical facts are in order here: In October of 1779, the largest contingent of soldiers of African descent to fight in the Revolutionary War converged on Savannah, Georgia to defend it from the British. The Siege of Savannah included about 700 brave, committed, dedicated, strong, Black men who fought, and some of whom died. They were from Haiti.

The other significant piece of history that connects us to Haiti is the defeat of Napoleon's army by the Haitians, which led to a deal that added 828,000 square miles of land known as the Louisiana Purchase to the U.S. Who knows what language we'd be speaking had Napoleon defeated those strong-willed Black men of Haiti?

So why haven't we taken better care of Haiti and Haitians? Why haven't we given them more financial assistance? Why have we disproportionately excluded them from entering this country? If we had been doing the right things for Haiti all along, their infrastructure would not be as fragile, their buildings would have been stronger, and their means of survival would have been more accessible.

Haitians have made significant contributions to the United States. Despite



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their willingness to sacrifice for this country, despite their bravery on the battlefield, despite their proud history of resistance to being enslaved, Haitian people are derided and cast aside as though they are little more than trash. What happened to “Give me your tired your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore”? I guess that didn't include Haitians, did it?

So, the next time you see scenes of Haitians searching for food and taking it from stores, or crowds of Haitians pushing and shoving to get their meager rations, don't be so eager to agree with the “looting” message by the media. Think about how easy it is for you to eat, and then remember that Haitians must eat too, by any means necessary.