

Moonanum James: 'The Thanksgiving myth celebrates genocide'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019



Moonanum James, co-leader of United American Indians of New England. SLL photo: Greg Butterfield

Talk given at the 50th National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 28, 2019.

Once again on the fourth Thursday in November, [United American Indians of New England](#) and those who support us are gathered on this hill to observe a National Day of Mourning. Today marks the 50th time we have come here, in all kinds of weather, to mourn our ancestors and speak the truth about our history.

Those who started National Day of Mourning could not have envisioned that generations would still be here, year after year, carrying on this tradition. Many of the elders who stood on this hill and organized the first Day of Mourning are no longer with us, but we feel their spirits guiding us today. We are thinking today of so many, including Shirley Mills, a beautiful person who passed into the spirit world this fall. We mourn her loss here today.

Fifty Thanksgivings ago, my father, an Aquinnah Wampanoag named Wamsutta Frank James, was invited to address a gathering celebrating the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims. When asked by the organizers to provide an advance copy of the speech he planned to deliver, Wamsutta agreed. When they saw his speech, the planners told him he could speak only if he were willing to offer false praise of the Pilgrims.

According to the organizers of the event, “The theme of the celebration is brotherhood and anything inflammatory would be out of place.” The organizers even offered to write a speech for him, one which would better fit with their settler-colonialist narrative. He refused to have words put into his mouth, and National Day of Mourning came into being as a result of that refusal. Instead of speaking at the banquet, he and a group of allies from throughout the Americas gathered here, on this hill, and observed the first National Day of Mourning in 1970.

A tradition of struggle

That first year, my father never did get a chance to deliver his speech on this hill — although some who don’t actually know our history say he did. Maybe 100 or 200

Native people and allies gathered, depending on which person is giving their recollection of the day. Indigenous peoples from this region and members of the Boston Indian Center organized and were joined by others, including some famous members of the American Indian Movement. They spoke out about the Pilgrim invasion and issues throughout Indian Country, marched around Plymouth, boarded the Mayflower II replica, and even buried Plymouth Rock in sand — a tradition I am proud to say we continued well into the 1990s.

In the 1970s, UAINE demanded the return of Wampanoag artifacts, including bones, that were being held by the gravedigger settlers at the Pilgrim Society Museum. At the fourth National Day of Mourning, the bones were returned to my father and given a proper burial. In 1972, the police followed us around with police dogs, and a young woman, Judy Mendes, who had a U.S. flag draped around her shoulders, was attacked and arrested.

Over the years, we repeatedly disrupted the Pilgrim Progress parade, a tradition we continued until 1996. The following year, in 1997, we were blocked on Leyden Street and arrested without warning when we simply tried to march. The resulting defense of the Plymouth 25 led to the National Day of Mourning plaque you see here on Cole's Hill, and the Metacomet plaque we will visit when we march.

Consistently, our organization has not collaborated with the Pilgrims or their institutions, whether museums or the Mayflower Society or the Plymouth 400. We have our own story to tell, in our own way. Consistently, we have sought to present issues that Indigenous people are facing internationally, not just here, because we are indeed all related.

Pilgrim myth vs. Indigenous truth

So, what really happened at the first Thanksgiving — or what some of us call the first “thanks-taking?” According to popular myth, the Pilgrims, seeking religious

freedom, landed on Plymouth Rock. The Indians welcomed them with open arms, and then conveniently faded into the background and everyone lived happily ever after. The end.

Here is the truth:

First, the Pilgrims are glorified and mythologized because the circumstances of the first permanent English colony in North America, Jamestown, were too ugly to hold up as an effective national myth. There are efforts now to teach schoolchildren about the African slaves kept at Jamestown. But no curriculum seems to want to teach the kids about settler cannibalism. Pilgrims and Indians are a much more marketable story.

Second, the Pilgrims came here as part of a commercial venture. They didn't need religious freedom — they already had that back in the Netherlands. The Mayflower Compact was merely a group of white men who wanted to ensure they would get a return on their investment.

When they arrived — on outer Cape Cod, by the way, not on that pebble down the hill — one of the first things the Pilgrims did was to rob the Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and steal as much of their winter provisions of corn and beans as they were able to carry. The writings of the colonists themselves describe these actions taking place.

The next part of the mythology is true: Some Wampanoag ancestors did welcome the Pilgrims and save them from starvation. And what did we get in return for this kindness? Genocide, the theft of our lands, slavery, starvation and never-ending repression.

The first 'thanks-taking'

It is also important to remember that the first official Thanksgiving did not take

place in 1621 when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag. Instead it was officially proclaimed by Gov. Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut.

William Bradford of the Plymouth colony wrote of this event: "Those that escaped the fire were slain with the sword; some hewed to pieces, others run through with their rapiers ... they thus destroyed about 400 at the time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire ... horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them."

And yet the history books call us the savages.

So why does any of this matter? It is simple: When people perpetuate the myth of Thanksgiving, they are not only erasing our genocide, but also celebrating it.

But we did not simply fade into the background as the Thanksgiving myth says. We have survived and thrived. We have persevered. The very fact that you are here is proof that we did not vanish. Our very presence frees this land from the lies of the history books and the mythmakers. We will remember and honor all of our ancestors in the struggle who went before us. We will speak truth to power as we have been doing since the first Day of Mourning in 1970.

That first Day of Mourning in 1970 was a powerful demonstration of Native unity. It has continued for 50 years as a powerful demonstration of Indigenous unity and of the unity of all people who speak truth to power.

Capitalist crimes in Indian Country

Sadly, many of the conditions that prevailed in Indian Country in 1970 still prevail today. In 1970, our average life expectancy was just 44 years. Today, it is up, but for

Native men, it is still six years below that of white people. Native women's death rate has increased 20 percent over the past 15 years. In 1970, the average Native yearly income was \$4,347. In 2019, 20 percent of Native people still earn under \$5,000. In 1970, our suicide and infant mortality rates were the highest in the country. This has not changed.

We all know that racism is alive and well. All of us are struggling under the oppression of a capitalist system which forces people to make a bitter choice between healing and eating. We will continue to gather on this hill until corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the Earth. Until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration.

We will not stop until the oppression of our Two-Spirit siblings is a thing of the past. When the homeless have homes. When children are no longer taken from their parents and locked in cages. When the Palestinians reclaim the homeland and the autonomy Israel has denied them for the past 70 years. When no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care. When insulin is free. When union-busting is a thing of the past. Until then, the struggle will continue.

In 1970, we demanded an end to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is still a demand today. Native nations should not need federal oversight to govern ourselves or take control of our own lands.

I hope you will stand with the Mashpee Wampanoag and support pending legislation that would give Mashpee the right to petition for land to be taken into trust. And please tell your congresspeople that this legislation should also be applied to Aquinnah and other tribes that were federally recognized after 1934.

As we did in 1970, we mourn the loss of millions of our ancestors and the devastation of the land, water and air.

We condemn all acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by all governments and organizations against innocent people worldwide. Since the invasion of Columbus and the rest of the Europeans, Native people have been virtually nonstop victims of terrorism. From the colonial period to the 21st century, this has entailed torture, massacres, systematic military occupations and the forced removals of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homelands.

Let us not forget that this country was founded on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft. Let us not forget that under the pipelines, skyscrapers, mines and oil rigs, lie the interred bones, sacred objects and villages of our Native ancestors.

On our program will be only Indigenous speakers. This is one day when we speak for ourselves, without non-Native people, so-called “experts,” intervening to interpret and speak for us.

Today, on liberated territory, we will correct the history of a country that continues to glorify butchers such as Christopher Columbus, that makes slave-owning presidents such as Washington and Jefferson into god-like figures, and even carves their faces into the sacred Black Hills of the Lakota.

In 1970, very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today, many thousands stand with us in spirit as we commemorate the 50th National Day of Mourning.

In the spirit of Crazy Horse, in the spirit of Metacom, in the spirit of Geronimo. Above all, to all the people who fight and struggle for real justice.

We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever.



Cheryl LaBash: Lo que Fidel significa hoy para mí

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019

Discurso de Cheryl LaBash en un panel organizado por la Embajada de Cuba en los Estados Unidos como un homenaje a la vida de Fidel Castro. LaBash es copresidenta de la Red Nacional sobre Cuba.

Me siento muy honrada de estar hoy en este panel. No tengo una historia personal profunda como la que hemos escuchado en los últimos dos años sobre el trabajo en conjunto con el líder histórico de Cuba, Fidel Castro, cuya vida, trabajo y ejemplo recordamos hoy aquí. Realmente he sido la joven en la fila de atrás, que aunque ahora ya no es joven y a menudo ya no está en la fila de atrás, todavía trata de absorber lecciones de la revolución cubana, de entender el mundo y actuar para cambiarlo.

Mi trabajo de solidaridad con Cuba se interrumpió cuando comencé un nuevo trabajo en la década de 1990. Inspeccionar la construcción de carreteras de Detroit

me requirió trabajar horas extras de abril a noviembre, desde el amanecer hasta el anochecer, y también los fines de semana. Pero cuando supe que Fidel vendría a la Iglesia Riverside [en Nueva York] el 8 de septiembre del 2000, tenía que ir.

La gente que me conoce no se sorprenderá. En vez de ir a trabajar ese viernes por la mañana, me monté en mi auto y conduje por 10 horas a la ciudad de Nueva York. Luego conduciendo alrededor del bajo Manhattan con la esperanza de encontrar un lugar de estacionamiento gratuito para luego montarme en el metro hasta Harlem. La cantidad de personas que ya intentaba entrar era abrumadora, pero yo fui una de los miles de afortunados que entraron a la iglesia. Mi asiento estaba en lo alto del palco para escuchar hablar a Fidel.

Cuando Fidel nos dejó físicamente hace tres años, incluso en los Estados Unidos pudimos ver la caravana que devolvió sus cenizas a Santiago de Cuba. La transmisión en vivo de la televisión por Internet desde Cuba nos mostró las asambleas en La Habana y Santiago. Nunca olvidaré oír al presidente nicaragüense Daniel Ortega preguntar ¿dónde está Fidel? Y la multitud callada y enlutada respondió "aquí" comenzando una consigna que se convirtió en un rugido: 'Yo soy Fidel'.

No podía imaginar esa tecnología que me permitiera ver una transmisión en vivo desde Cuba cuando viajé allí por primera vez en 1985. En ese entonces, los discursos y entrevistas de Fidel explicaban que la deuda externa era una carga impagable para los países en desarrollo. Entonces parecía un tema muy extraño en la vida diaria en los Estados Unidos.

Pero hoy se ha vuelto algo muy cercano — no es sólo la deuda externa del FMI, la deuda extrae la vida misma de los trabajadores y las familias, la deuda estudiantil, la deuda de tarjetas de crédito, la deuda hipotecaria, los prestamistas de día de pago — todas impagables. Desde Puerto Rico hasta Detroit, hemos aprendido que nuestra deuda es muy parecida a lo que Fidel exponía.

Más interesante para mí en 1985 fue el sistema de salud de Cuba que demostró que era posible reducir la mortalidad infantil con pocos recursos pero con la máxima voluntad. Detroit era una noticia principal en ese tiempo.

Escandalosamente, en Detroit, una ciudad donde casi el 90 por ciento de la gente era afrodescendiente, los bebés morían a un ritmo de más del doble de las estadísticas nacionales de Estados Unidos. En 1990, un asombroso 23 por cada 1000 nacimientos y en 2017 aún un 15.5. Ahora la mortalidad materna para las mujeres negras también está aumentando.

¿Es un milagro que la mortalidad infantil en una Cuba en desarrollo y bloqueada sea de solo 4 por cada 1000 nacidos vivos? No, es la voluntad de Cuba de dar prioridad a los seres humanos, en Cuba y en todas partes a través del internacionalismo y un sistema económico que lo hace posible.

Fue allí, en la Iglesia Riverside, donde Fidel explicó cómo surgió la escuela de medicina latinoamericana y las becas para estudiantes estadounidenses. ELAM, el acrónimo en español de Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina, había sido fundada ni siquiera un año antes de que Fidel hablara esa noche. Señaló que había un 'tercer mundo' dentro de los EUA sin médicos.

Veinte años han pasado desde que la ELAM fuera fundada el 15 de noviembre de 1999. En esos 20 años, 29.749 nuevos médicos de 115 países se han graduado, incluidos 182 de los Estados Unidos. De los 466 médicos que se graduaron el verano pasado de 82 países, 10 eran de los EUA. [ir a ifconews.org/medicalschool] Los estudiantes estadounidenses de ELAM se ofrecieron como voluntarios y fueron a servir a Haití después del enorme terremoto de enero de 2010. Una graduada estadounidense recaudó sus propios fondos y se ofreció como voluntaria para luchar contra el brote del ébola en el África occidental.

ELAM es sólo una parte del internacionalismo de Cuba que abarca medicina,

alfabetización, deporte, cultura y mucho más. La Brigada Médica de Emergencia Henry Reeve se movilizó para salvar vidas cinco años después de Riverside, cuando el huracán Katrina azotó Nueva Orleans. Bloqueados por el gobierno de Estados Unidos, se fueron a las laderas del Himalaya después del terremoto de Pakistán. La herramienta de alfabetización 'Yo sí puedo' desarrollada por los cubanos en Haití también fue explicada por Fidel en Riverside.

Lo que Fidel significa hoy para mí.

Se está llevando a cabo una campaña ideológica contra Cuba. Su objetivo es poner en duda los ideales de Cuba tratando de reflejar los crímenes de explotación, racismo y trata de personas del capitalismo sobre Cuba. Es lo que Fidel llamó una Batalla de Ideas.

Esta campaña propagandística se centra en desacreditar los mismos puntos mencionados en el discurso de Fidel en la Iglesia Riverside — el internacionalismo médico de Cuba, que Cuba no tortura y desaparece a la gente, que Cuba realmente practica la igualdad de derechos para todos, independientemente de la identidad de género o color de piel, y que hay democracia para que todos participen en las elecciones y en la dirección de su país.

Está calculado y es intencional, un arma para justificar el verdadero bloqueo genocida. Es una campaña de propaganda para crear dudas, incertidumbre y dividir a las millones de personas que han llegado a conocer Cuba, su pueblo, su socialismo a través de visitar Cuba y experimentarlo por sí mismos.

Esta campaña regurgita las mismas mentiras que impregnaron la cultura popular estadounidense sobre Cuba después de la revolución, [pero] se ve refutada por el movimiento solidario, especialmente en las comunidades negras cada vez que las delegaciones y líderes cubanos llegaban a las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York.

Esas mentiras no pueden ser reinsertadas en la mente de las personas que han viajado a Cuba, que han estudiado en Cuba, que han observado que Cuba no tiene inversiones extranjeras, ni bases ni concesiones extractivas en ninguna parte. O en el movimiento de justicia climática que sabe que Fidel habló en Riverside sobre el peligro de la extinción masiva debido al cambio climático. Pero las mentiras pueden empujar a Cuba a la parte inferior de la lista de preocupaciones. Es por eso que en los Estados Unidos debemos actuar en todos los sectores y plataformas para #unblockCuba (#DesbloquearCuba).

Hay herramientas poderosas en la batalla de ideas, no sólo habladas o escritas, sino en hechos. ¿Por qué otra cosa los Estados Unidos restringirían las visas para que los profesionales médicos hablaran en conferencias; para que los académicos cubanos participen en LASA?

Las becas de la Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina, el desarrollo de medicamentos para mejorar la vida humana, por ejemplo, eliminando el horror de la amputación de las extremidades debido a las úlceras diabéticas que son costosas y rentables. ¿Hay una familia de clase trabajadora cuyo pariente o amigo no tenga diabetes y tema una amputación? Las mismas ciudades donde se han recortado los servicios humanos para pagar el servicio de la deuda a los bancos y donde los dólares de los impuestos [del pueblo] van dirigidos a alimentar al ejército y a la policía, están mirando hacia Cuba.

Los médicos cubanos vinieron a Chicago para ayudar a mejorar los resultados maternos e infantiles. Detroit está investigando la colaboración en salud. Y este mes Nueva Orleans firmó un memorando de entendimiento con Cuba.

Para mí, y humildemente sugeriría para nosotros en los Estados Unidos, participar en la batalla de las ideas es el mensaje importante para hoy.

Pero, ¿por qué Cuba? El ejemplo de Fidel, la revolución cubana y las generaciones

que se criaron para ser como el Che, son el poderoso antídoto contra la cultura deshumanizadora, divisiva y de consumo impulsada por el capitalismo y sus medios de comunicación de masas.

Es un legado de Fidel con el que todos podemos construir el mejor mundo que es posible y necesario.

Fuente: MinRex - Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, República de Cuba



20 years of fighting for the homeless in NYC

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019

New York — Picture the Homeless celebrated the 20th anniversary of their organization in the Harlem State Office Building on Nov. 25. Leaders of PTH called for a renewed commitment to their work of fighting for the homeless at a time when housing opportunities in the major cities are rapidly deteriorating.

Talks by members of the PTH board recounted personal experiences among a diverse group of all ages, many of whom had gone without housing. They recounted the solidarity of a couple of homeless founders who had recognized the desperate need to organize. Other members told stories of how the support they received enabled them to become active in building PTH. They chose the name “Picture the Homeless” because mainstream culture attempts to drive people who are struggling to survive into oblivion. They want to be seen and heard demanding: “Housing is a human right!”

An exhibit at one side of the crowded hall not only recounted PTH’s history but also explained their strategy on a variety of issues such as police abuse and the large number of vacant properties in New York City that the city could allow people to rehabilitate and live in.

PTH wages a battle for the homeless to speak in their own name and to be able to play a role in determining a solution to the myriad problems they suffer. Echoing the grim experience of being undermined by the administrators of social services, who are supposed to serve them, they repeated, “If you are not at the table, you’ll be on the menu.”

Picture the Homeless asks for help in strengthening the voices of those without housing.



NYC Dec. 7: ProLiberatad 25th anniversary celebration

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 4, 2019



Join us for ProLibertad's 25th Anniversary Celebration!

Join us for a night of **Culture, Solidarity, Fun, and Celebration!**

Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Nina Droz Francos is FREE!



Ana Belen Montes is scheduled to be released in early or late 2022. This fundraiser is to help raise money to help in their transition into Civilian Life! All the proceeds from this event will go to Nina and Ana's accounts!

We will be joined by AfroBoricua Folkloric collective *Bomb Yo* and incredible Poets, *Rafael Landrón, Bonafide Rojas, Not4Prophet, and More!*



The People's Forum
320 West 37th Street
(between 8th & 9th Avenues)
New York, NY 10018

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Instagram: @ProLibertadFC



Designed by César Omar Sánchez

The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign Is excited to announce that Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Nina Droz Franco has been released from prison and is now in a halfway house in Puerto Rico!

Join us on Dec. 7th at 7pm at the People's Forum as we celebrate this victory! [#freeminadroz](#) [#anabelenesnuestra](#) [#freepuertorico](#)



24-30 March 2020, worldwide: International week of action to support the Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 4, 2019

GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION

GREAT MARCH OF RETURN · 24-30 MARCH 2020



Join Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip in a global mobilization on the second anniversary of the Great Return March to demand the right of return for Palestinian refugees and an end to Israel's siege of Gaza.

On March 30, 2018, tens of thousands of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip launched the Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege.

Israel's violent repression of it exacted a gruesome toll, with its occupation forces' live ammunition, tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets massacring 214 Palestinians participating in unarmed demonstrations and wounding 18,764 more.

But the demands of the Great Return March – an end to Israel's brutal closure of the Gaza Strip and the right of return for millions of Palestinian refugees ethnically cleansed from their homes – remain no less critical nearly two years later.

☒ Seven years after the United Nations first warned that the conditions imposed by Israel's siege would render Gaza unlivable by 2020, its crises of electricity, water, employment, and food security have already reached the breaking point.

This isolation of the Gaza Strip is part of Israel's strategy to displace the Palestinian people, fragment our society, and liquidate our national movement.

Its plan, which started with the ethnic cleansing of 720,000 Palestinians in 1948, continues today with the use of walls, checkpoints, and roads to divide Palestinian neighborhoods and communities; the demolitions of Palestinian homes and institutions in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and 1948-occupied Palestine; the seizure of Palestinian land for Israeli settlements; the targeting of Palestinian leaders for political detention; and the exclusion of Palestinian refugees from their occupied homeland with lethal force.

Yet Palestinians have never paused our legitimate struggles for return, self-determination, and national liberation, from the armed Resistance, to general strikes, to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns, to the Great Return March.

Since 2018, Palestinian refugees have persevered against unbelievable odds, braving Israeli occupation fire and risking injury and death to demand our right to return to the homes from which Israeli occupation forces drove us at gunpoint.

As the second anniversary of the Great Return March on 30 March - Palestinian Land Day - nears, we call on its supporters worldwide to join an international week of action to support its demands between 24-30 March 2020.

- 1. Have an activity to support the next Freedom Flotilla**, which will sail in 2020 to challenge Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip.

2. **Build a Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign** against a target complicit in Israel's violations of Palestinian rights and international law.
3. **Hold a screening** of a documentary on Israel's crimes against Palestinian refugees and the Gaza Strip and their struggle for liberation.
4. **Rally in solidarity** with the Great Return March in a public area.
5. **Host a speaker** on the Great Return March and its demands.
6. **Target political officials** in your country to demand they publicly oppose Israel's crimes against Palestinians and impose meaningful sanctions for them.

In all your efforts, we ask that you visibly support the Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege and our just demands.

Please send announcements of your events, as well as pictures, videos, and reports from them, to samidoun@samidoun.net, or message them to [Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network](#) on Facebook.

On this, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we call on the world, its people and movements to escalate their support for Palestine and our century-long struggle for national liberation.

Higher National Commission

Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege

Gaza, Palestine

29 November 2019



Protest at Baltimore Amazon Warehouse on Cyber Monday

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019



Monday, December 2, 2019 at 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM EST

2010 Broening Hwy, Baltimore, MD 21224

Informational Picket Line at Baltimore Amazon Warehouse

Tell Bezos: Stop enabling ICE raids
Support Amazon workers
Cyber Monday, December 2,
5 pm to 6:30 pm
@ BWI 2 Fulfillment Center
2010 Broening Highway, Baltimore, MD 21224

For more information call: 410-218-4835

Despite horrific conditions at detention camps and racist war on migrants and refugees, especially children, one of the richest people in the world Jeff Bezos continues to consolidate his wealth by profiting off of deportation and detention and exploiting Amazon workers.

Amazon is helping ICE, the immigration police, track, detain, and deport immigrants. Amazon's servers host Palantir, the company that provides ICE with "mission critical services," such as its case management software. But it turns out Amazon's role in the deportation machine goes deeper than that. Through intense lobbying, Amazon and Palantir have secured a role as the backbone for the federal government's immigration dragnet.

Support Amazon Workers

We also want to send a strong message of support for Amazon workers who nationally have been demanding the right to organize and to reduce inhuman production rates and demand safe working conditions.

Called by the Peoples Power Assembly which has been organizing a "Workers & Peoples Union" WPU for more information call or text 410-218-4835.

On [Facebook](#)



A blueprint for rebellion: C.L.R. James and the politics of 'Black Jacobins'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 4, 2019

Published in 1938, “Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution” became C.L.R. James’ magnum opus, though fans of the sport of cricket might beg to differ. “Black Jacobins” was printed by the British publishing house Seckel Warburg as addressing “the only successful slave revolt in history.” Though this claim has been countered by successive historians, it should be argued that the Haitian Rebellion was truly the first social revolution in modern world history.

Defying the capitalist and racist historiography on Black rebellion that had defined academia and even radical intelligentsia, James displays how it was, in fact, Saint-Domingue/Haiti which resulted in the greatest shift in social relations. For, despite the French overthrow of the Ancien Régime, which left the bourgeoisie in power, the uprising on what was once known as “the Jewel of the Antilles,” when the dust

settled, the ownership of the land rested in the hands of the formerly enslaved.

As one historian quaintly notes: the paradox of the Haitian Revolution is in the end, Africans defended ideals of the French Revolution against the French themselves. What the radical historian Robin D.G. Kelley says of the James' abbreviated account of the Black radical tradition, "A History of Pan-African Revolt," is certainly true of "Black Jacobins": "What made this book even more subversive is that James places Black people at the center of world events; he characterizes uprisings of [people previously described as] savages and religious fanatics as revolutionary movements; and he insists that the great Western revolutionaries needed the Africans as much as the Africans needed them."¹

The dialectical materialism of James as well as [Toussaint L'Ouverture](#) and the other revolutionaries in "Black Jacobins" altered the way we all came to the process of Black internationalist struggle for the last 200 years. It also alters the erasure of the Black Radical Tradition amongst the other great social revolutions. No longer just "France, Russia and China," as Theda Skocpol writes about, Haiti, Jamaica, the Reconstruction American South, Cuba and South Africa, are indispensable for our study of global revolutions.

"Black Jacobins" is the result of C.L.R. James' ideological and political development as James moved from the liberalism of West Indian society to revolutionary socialism, pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism.

Culture and anti-imperialism

Cyril Lionel Robert (C.L.R.) James was born in 1901 in Tunapuna, Trinidad, about ten miles east of the nation's capital, Port of Spain, to a family of Barbadian descent. Affectionately known as Nello by his friends, James was raised in a middle-class and religiously conservative household, where he was deeply impacted by British culture from classical to Late Victorian culture, namely theater and literature.

James read everything from William Shakespeare to William Thackeray and developed a deep interest in the humanities and social sciences. James writes, "I laughed without satiety at Thackeray's constant jokes and sneers and gibes at the aristocracy and at people in high places. Thackeray, not Marx, bears the heaviest responsibility for me."² James completed his secondary education at the prestigious Queen's Royal College (QRC) in Port of Spain. Excelling in academics and athletics, James became a club cricketer and an accomplished track and field athlete, setting the Trinidadian record in the high jump. It was there that James also developed his love for writing.

In his first act of resistance, James rebelled against the Puritanic Christian beliefs of his parents and the trappings of bourgeois Caribbean culture. James' love for carnival, calypso, jazz and cricket literally moved him beyond the trappings of his class privilege and racial subjugation in colonial Trinidadian society.

It would eventually be his works as a sports journalist and biographer that influenced his migration to England in the early 1930s. Yet, after his completion at QRC, James had decided to remain in Port of Spain, where he served as a schoolmaster teaching English and History.

At QRC, James taught the radical scholar and future Trinidadian prime minister, Eric Williams. As a teacher and part-time journalist, James joined two groups that expanded his love for literature and began the process of advancing his political ideology. Now a liberal Trinidadian nationalist, James became the secretary of the Maverick Club, an elite social club free of white colonial participation: "For the most part we were Black people and one brown," James noted.

James also participated in an anti-colonial literary society called the Beacon group. James' love for Victorian literature became the counterpoint through which he began to attack colonial British society through what has been defined as his cultural activism.

With the Maverick Club, James staged operas and other theatrical performances. With his class at QRC, James put on a fully public rendition of "Othello." James's production of the Shakespearean classic undoubtedly anticipated his chronicling of the man that Abe Reynal defined as "The Black Spartacus": Toussaint L'Ouverture. Understanding the centrality of art and cultural production to radical scholarship and social movements, at the climax of "Black Jacobins," James notes, "There is no drama like the drama of history." It was not enough just to tell the truth. One must make it fun.

C.L.R. James and the Black radical tradition

In 1958, the Caribbean American radical Cyril Briggs was red-baited by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Cold War U.S. strategy had sought to blame the surge of Black communist activity in the United States on outside agitation, removing any form of Black agency.

In his retort, the founder of the African Blood Brotherhood and former Communist Party member Briggs stated, "I don't know what Communists or communism have to do with my position, because this has been my position since 1912, before there was, as I understand it, a Communist Party in the United States. It will continue to be my position despite any attempt by this committee to intimidate me."³

Briggs' story is true of James and many other Black Marxists since. Communism did not bring them to Black liberation politics. Black liberation politics brought them to communism. Though many would like to remove this context from the production of "Black Jacobins," it would be ahistorical. "Black Jacobins" is the result of James' movement towards revolutionary socialism and African liberation politics upon his migration to England in the early 1930s as he fell into Trotskyist circles.

"Black Jacobins" is not just a historical text but also a Black manifesto — a declaration of revolutionary independence. In the preface to the 1963 version of the

book, James writes that “Black Jacobins” was “intended to stimulate the coming emancipation of Africa” but “only the writer and a handful of close associates thought, wrote and spoke as if the African events of the last quarter of a century were imminent.”

As well, he intended his second edition of the book to attempt “for the future of the West Indies, all of them, what was done for Africa in 1938.” Both of James’ editions proved to be prescient adventures seen as an independence movement emerged in the Caribbean in the 1960s as it had in Africa during the 1940s — and let us not forget the social and cultural revolutions taking place in Black North America as well.

“Black Jacobins” has become not just a blueprint for revolution, but a blueprint for writing about revolutions. The text stands out because of the fact that it is not simply a historical analysis but also a historiographical analysis in which James engages the traditional historian critique of the Haitian Revolution as well as the overall discourse on Black agency.

“The only place where Negroes did not revolt is in the pages of capitalist historians,” James wrote in 1939. Notably, James did not simply say “conservative” or even “white supremacist.” Instead, he states “capitalist historians,” which expresses the limits of conservative and white supremacist scholarship. Conservative historians such as Ulrich B. Phillips had penned apologies for slavery. Yet, it was the liberal scholar that attributed Black freedom to well-intentioned European and white American reformers.

In a remarkable line in the preface, James says that the traditionally famous historians were more artists than scientists: “They wrote so well because they saw so little.” This trend-his critique of traditional historiography-continues later in the text; he criticizes French historians’ patronizing and critical views of Toussaint while lacking major critique of Laveaux (Etienne Laveaux). As well, another instance of

historiographic critique is in his explanation of the destruction of the white population of Saint-Domingue, which James describes as being caused by voluntary white emigration to the United States of America in the late 18th century. In James' critique, historians seemed more interested in apologizing for white racism than actually intensely critiquing the actions of the Black revolutionaries.

It is worth noting that James also departed from Marxist scholarship of the moment, including that of his childhood friend Malcolm Nurse, who had by the 1930s assumed the nom de guerre George Padmore. At that moment, in stark contrast to James' Trotskyism, Padmore was a Stalinist. Yet, despite the anti-vanguardist position taken by some adherents to Trotskyist socialism, the difference between Padmore's "The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers" (1931) and James' "Black Jacobins" was not whether a vanguard party would emerge to lead the cause for Black liberation, but exactly how that revolutionary leadership would emerge.

The question of power

This became the essence of what James would later call "The Question of Power." Very similar to James in his text, Padmore chronicled the exploitation of Black workers, condemning slavery, colonialism and the exploitation of the Black masses by opportunist reformists. Yet in the end, Padmore saw it as the role of the progressive white working class to educate "backward" Black workers.

In an obituary to the historian and revolutionary, Walter Rodney, C.L.R. James recalled a conversation he had with Leon Trotsky about Vladimir Lenin's leadership and political analysis. Trotsky told James, "Lenin always had his eyes upon the mass of the population, and when he saw the way they were going, he knew that tomorrow this was what was going to happen."⁴

Far from a submission to spontaneity, revolutionary leadership came from within, "This defined Toussaint's leadership. A formerly enslaved coach driver, Toussaint had

risen to the level of a well-read landowner. But once the revolution began, Toussaint committed what the Guinean-Cape Verdean revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral, called “class suicide.” Toussaint abandoned his wealth and privilege, fled to the hills and built amongst the rebels.

Throughout the text, emphasis is placed on the collective organization of the slaves as well as the remarkable sense of justice and restraint repeatedly shown towards mulattoes, big whites (“grand blancs” — the planter class) and the small whites. Common identity and place of origin as well as religious commonality emerge as signifying factors in “Black Jacobins.”

“Voodoo was the medium of the conspiracy. In spite of all prohibitions, the slaves travelled miles to sing and dance and practice the rites and talk.” The first leader of the conspiracy was a head slave and high voodoo priest named Boukman. James describes Boukman as following in the tradition of a maroon slave revolutionary, Mackandal, who attempted to lead an overthrow of slavery in Haiti a generation earlier.

African slaves poisoned their masters, broke tools and destroyed crops. Obviously, James attempts to explain the role of slaves in the destruction of capitalism; henceforth, he compares them to “the Luddite wreckers.” As stated earlier, even amidst the remarkable white-on-Black violence that takes place throughout the text, the slaves and Toussaint are repeatedly described as practicing restraint.

Distinction is placed on this being an organized revolution and not merely a slave riot, as it was repeatedly described. “The slaves had revolted because they wanted to be free,” James writes. But as the famous adage goes, without struggle there can be no progress, and progress for Haitian revolutionaries took over a decade. Toussaint led the fight against the white and mulatto slaveholders, the Spanish, the English and the French before the Black slaves of Saint-Domingue were able to declare complete independence in 1804.

The lessons of Saint-Domingue

Besides Toussaint and Boukman, major players in this text are:

- [Jean-Jacques Dessalines](#), who is described as a fearless ex-slave who was willing to be more violent with whites;
- [André Rigaud](#), a mulatto revolutionary and French loyalist from the South;
- [Jean François](#), a native of San Domingo who was good looking and very proud;
- [Georges Biassou](#), a Black revolutionary “fire-eater”;
- [Léger Félicité Sonthonax](#), a French abolitionist and Jacobin; and
- [British Col. Thomas Hedouville](#) and [British Gen. Thomas Maitland](#), English dispatches to Saint-Domingue.

The story plays out as a struggle between the most privileged of the population versus those seen as grassroots leaders. The whites and mulattoes are treated with the most suspicion throughout the book. They are even treated with more skepticism than metropole white's Sonthonax, the right-wing Jacobin.

Seemingly critiquing his contemporary times, James goes back and forth with his critique of French liberal efforts to end slavery — such as the efforts of the “Friends of the Negro” society. While they had very well-intentioned rhetoric, they are depicted as powerless early on in the book and unwilling to take extra steps to eradicate slavery later on in the book. At the points where they do find legislative success in France, it is because they were aided by the revolutionary actions of slaves back in the Antilles.

Recalling his love for drama, “Black Jacobins” is told in acts. James begins with the conspiracy of the island's maroon societies led by François Mackandal and ends with Jean-Jacques Dessalines' final thrust towards Haitian Independence.

Toussaint's central leadership, in "Black Jacobins" is defined by his keen sense of strategy. Toussaint successfully united various forms of Saint-Domingue's society: Free and enslaved; Christian and Vodun; African and mulatto.

Unlike almost every other African slave rebellion, the rebels in Saint-Domingue solicited foreign support for the cause of the rebels and not the slave owners, as Toussaint played European nations against each other. However, Toussaint's organizational strength in the end became his weakness. Captured by the French and imprisoned in a cold prison in the French Alps, Toussaint fell victim to his own Eurocentrism.

His "failure was the failure of enlightenment, not of darkness," James wrote. Comparatively, Toussaint's successor, Jean Jacques Dessalines "could see so clearly and simply ... because the ties that bound this uneducated soldier to French civilization were of the slenderest." The path towards freedom for people of African descent now is just as it was in Haiti, James believed: Clear your mind of any negative ideas of Africa. Turn your head away from Europe and towards Africa to find freedom.

"Black Jacobins" was the final leg in a three-part chronicling of the Haitian Revolution and the Black Radical Tradition. First, James produced a play on the life of Toussaint starring Paul Robeson. Second, James produced the pamphlet, "A History of Negro Revolt," later retitled "A History of Pan-African Revolt," and lastly, was the masterpiece: "Black Jacobins."

With three distinct forms of media, James altered Black consciousness and world history. Accompanied by W.E.B. Du Bois' "Black Reconstruction in America" and Herbert Aptheker's "American Negro Slave Revolts," no longer could it be said that freedom was something given to African people. Subsequent authors like Cedric Robinson, Robin Kelley, Walter Rodney, Angela Davis, William Martin and Michael West, Vijay Prashad, Robin Blackburn, Steven Hahn, Gerald Horne, Hakim Adi and

others have followed in James' stead. But James' work remains the pinnacle of Black radical scholarship.

1. Robin Kelley, "Introduction" to "A History of Pan-African Revolt" by C.L.R. James, 17.
2. James in "Beyond a Boundary" quoted in Cedric Robinson's "Black Marxism, 70.
3. [HUAC](#), tinyurl.com/v3oru7s
4. "[Walter Rodney and the Question of Power,](#)" C.L.R. James, 1981, tinyurl.com/thvngp9



Native Truth and Healing, The California Genocide Conference

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 4, 2019



“Native Truth and Healing,” the California genocide conference of 2019 at San Diego State University (SDSU), was held Nov. 21-24. The formal title of the event was [“The Genocide, Oppression, Resilience, and Sovereignty of the First Peoples of California.”](#)

The focus of the conference was on the genocide committed against the California Indigenous population by the U.S. federal government, the state of California government and the settler colonists that started coming to California in large numbers following the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in 1848.

The first governor of California put a price on the heads and scalps of Indigenous people as part of a campaign to exterminate the Indigenous people of California. The U.S. government reimbursed the state of California for the expenses related to this campaign. Spain, through its conquistadors and missionary priests, had previously started its own campaign of Indigenous genocide before the so-called California Gold Rush.

The conference began with a daylong film festival that consisted of a series of documentaries, including “Native America,” “The Doctrine of Discovery,” “Gold, Greed, and Genocide,” “Native Veterans and Genocide Studies” and “Tribal Justice.”

The documentary [“The Doctrine of Discovery”](#) was followed by a discussion with the lawyer Steven Newcomb (Shawnee, Lenape), who was featured in the film and is the

author of “Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery.”

Newcomb compared the Papal Bull of May 4, 1493—Pope Alexander VI’s decree authorizing Spain and Portugal to colonize the Americas and enslave the Native peoples, as well as justifying the enslavement of African peoples—with the still-current U.S. law called the Doctrine of Discovery, which Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg used to deny a land claim of a Northeastern tribal nation in 2004.

The showing of [“Native Justice”](#) was followed by a discussion with the two tribal judges who were featured in the documentary, Honorable Judge Claudette White (Fort Yuma Quechan IndianTribe) and Honorable Judge Abby Abananti (Yurok Tribe). Both judges shared their moving personal and professional struggles to keep Indigenous children from their respective nations under tribal jurisdiction.

Most of the presenters spoke of the role of capitalism, capitalist imperialism and settler colonialism as being among the root causes of the genocide that occurred throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Dr. Anthony R. Pico (Viejas Band of the Kumeyaay Nation), who is a past tribal chairman of the Viejas Band, gave an inspiring keynote address.

Following Dr. Pico, presentations included:

- “The Free and Independent Existence of the First Peoples in California Before Invasion”;
- “The Doctrine of Discovery and the Code of Domination”;
- “Glory from Pre-contact to the 21st Century”;
- “Ninis’*a*:*n-na*-*ng’**a*/The World came to be lying there again, the World assumed its present position: California Indian History, Genocide and Native Women”;

- “An American Genocide: The California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873”;
- “Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas”;
- “Resisting the Myths of Discovery and Erasure of Genocide”;
- “Genocide: Indigenous Nations and the State”;
- “VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), Resiliency, and Empowerment”;
- “MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women)”;
- “Reevaluating Junípero Serra’s Canonization: Inverted Meaning, Modern Myth, and Human Rights Violation”;
- “The Branding of Genocide, the California Mission System, and Dispelling the Spanish Fantasy Heritage”;
- “Fausta and Sarafina: Indigenous Women and the Preservation of Power”;
- “Boarding Schools and the Contemporary Understandings and Oppressions of Native School Children”;
- “Child Welfare and ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act): Healing Our Children, Families, and Communities”;
- “Native Language Restoration and Native Stories”;
- “Land Restorations & Retelling of California Indian Histories”;
- “The Possibility of Compensatory and Non-compensatory Reparations in the Context of the California Genocide”; and
- “Tribal Chairwomen Leadership: Indigenous Women Continuing the Protection and Safety of our Tribal Communities”.

The speakers connected the dots from the Papal Bull of May 4, 1493, which called for the non-Christian “heathen” peoples of the world to be conquered and subjugated—taking their lands and resources—and enslaved. This Bull was the third in a series related to the reconquest of most of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabel of Castile from the Muslim Moors who were then expelled from Spain along with the Jews.

Most of the focus of the conference was on the real history of what occurred and the incredible resistance and resilience of the Indigenous peoples.

Several of the presentations began with the violent conquests that precipitated the Mission System and the resistance of the Indigenous nations to these attacks, and tracked on through the land grants and ranchería system that followed the end of the missions.

The most horrendous attacks with the largest number of people massacred occurred during the [California Gold Rush years from 1848 to 1855](#), followed by the period of the [Indian “Wars”](#) of the Reconstruction era — mostly blatant massacres of Indigenous peoples in their camps and settlements.

Then came the horrors of the boarding schools, the intentional kidnapping of Indigenous children, sending them hundreds of miles from their people for the express purpose of “[killing the Indian to save the man.](#)” These institutions were about training the girls to be maids and the boys to be field workers as the only type of “education.” The children had their hair cut, their clothing changed to European styles, and they were brutally punished if they spoke their native language or tried to follow any of their Native customs.

The presentations made it clear that California Indigenous people were faced with only two possibilities: to assimilate and serve as the lowest class of laborers or to be exterminated. The U.S. Congress passed laws like the Dawes Act of 1887, ending communal ownership of reservation land, transferring traditional systems of land tenure into government-imposed systems of private property by forcing the Indigenous peoples to “assume a capitalist and proprietary relationship with property” that did not previously exist, and opening the “excess” reservation lands to white settlers and corporations for agriculture, ranching and corporate business development.

Following the period of the boarding schools, the federal government instituted the policy of termination of tribal reservations where Indigenous peoples were induced to move to cities to find work, after years of not being allowed to leave the reservations without written permission. The people were promised there would be support systems to help them find places to live and work. The reality was that they were transported to cities and left on the streets. The government's next effort was to assimilate Indigenous peoples into white, settler society and break their ties with their traditional cultures. More recently, the U.S. government has made numerous attempts to open Indigenous lands to mining, energy and resource development by capitalist monopolies.

On the second day of the conference, an apology from Gov. Gavin Newsom on behalf of the state of California for the past actions of harm done to the Indigenous peoples and cultures by the state was heard. Speakers on the following days said that the apology as an acknowledgement of the genocide committed against the California Indigenous nations was a good step in the right direction. However, as Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy (Hupa/Yurok/Karuk) said on the third day, when people asked what they could do now, she told them to return the land to the Indigenous nations.

Dr. J. Angelo Corlett, a speaker on reparations on the fourth day, said that before the apology could be accepted, concrete actions like the payment of financial reparations and the inclusion of the real history of the Indigenous peoples in California in the public education system needed to happen.

The closing ceremonies on the fourth day of the conference included the raising of a Kumeyaay flag on the SDSU campus and the display of a collection of Silent Witnesses, appropriately dressed cardboard human figures to represent the hundreds of thousands of Indigenous peoples murdered during the campaign of California genocide.

The personal accounts of the women dedicated to the healing of their Indigenous

communities — children, elders, women and men — and the documentary films revealing the genocide of California’s First Peoples committed by the European settler/colonialists in the name of spreading “civilization” — Western capitalism — can only strengthen one’s resolve to become part of the change leading to the liberation and self-determination of all oppressed people, which can only really occur in a socialist society.



New York City remembers Fidel

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 4, 2019

Nov. 25 — On the third anniversary of Fidel Castro’s passing, people came to the Cuban mission to the United Nations to celebrate his life. The historical leader of the Cuban revolution, who was loved by poor people around the world, died on Nov. 25, 2016.

A film showed scenes of Castro and his comrades during the guerrilla war to defeat the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Twenty thousand Cubans were killed by Batista’s secret police.

Those were the “good old days” for U.S. corporations and organized crime that exploited the Caribbean country. Their immensely profitable \$2 billion investment — worth almost \$18 billion today — kept Cubans poor.

The Cuban Revolution changed that forever. In one year, volunteer teachers abolished illiteracy. Despite Wall Street’s cruel economic blockade, Cuban children now have a lower infant mortality rate than kids do in the U.S.

Fidel Castro Ruz was also a teacher. The film showed Castro speaking to a 1992 UN conference in Rio De Janeiro about how capitalism was destroying the environment.

Helping poor people in the U.S.

Jorge Luis Cepero spoke for younger Cuban diplomats. “Fidel turned into a symbol of the anti-colonial, anti-apartheid and anti-imperialist struggle,” he said. Castro was able to combine “the thinking of Simón Bolívar, José Martí and Karl Marx.”

Ike Nahem spoke on behalf of the New York/New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition that fights to end the U.S. blockade.

Dariel and David, two young brothers from Santiago de Cuba, read the poem “Ronda de la fortuna” by the Cuban poet Nancy Morejón.

Gail Walker, executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO)/Pastors for Peace, reminded listeners that when Africa called, Cuba answered. Cuban volunteers fought alongside African soldiers that defeated the fascist army of the apartheid regime that then ruled South Africa.

Dr. Damián Suárez graduated in 2015 from the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana. Twenty years ago Fidel Castro founded this institution that has trained 30,000 doctors from 115 countries.

Among them are 200 hundred doctors from the U.S. who didn't have to pay a dime in tuition. They're helping poor people from Maine to Mississippi to Los Angeles. Cuban-trained doctors work in 10 New York City hospitals.

Her Excellency Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, was the last speaker. She quoted the German playwright Bertolt Brecht: "There are people who struggle for a day and they are good. There are people who struggle for a year and they are better. There are people who struggle many years, and they are better still. But there are those who struggle all their lives: these are the indispensable ones."

Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution are indispensable.



Black Solidarity Day 2020 - Begins Now!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 4, 2019



Planning and organizing for Black Solidarity Day 2020 starts now. Fifty years ago, the Monday before election day, November 3, 1969, under the visionary leadership of the late Dr. Carlos Russell, the New York City Black Community launched the first Black Solidarity Day. In that same spirit and determination, the Black Solidarity Day Coalition will begin organizing 'A Day of Absence' for Black people in NYC. **No work! No school! No shopping! Shut Em' Down!**

On Monday, December 2, 2019 at 7PM, the first organizing meeting will be held at Sistas' Place, located at 456 Nostrand Avenue (corner of Jefferson Ave), Brooklyn NY. Meetings will be held on the first Mondays of every month thru November 2020. Black Solidarity Day 2020 organizing will be reflection, debate, and effective direct

actions for a way forward for all of us.

“Black Solidarity Day 2020 is just as necessary as it was in 1969”, Omowale Clay, spokesman for the Black Solidarity Day Coalition of organizations stated. “This year we are facing tremendous contradictions politically and economically. In 1969 Black Solidarity Day’s purpose was to take direct action against the genocidal conditions affecting our community through the rise of police terror, mass judicial injustice and incarceration, the destruction of housing and health care, the assault of Black education and culture. And the fight for reparations, and the economic and political power of Black unity. To make an historical point, we must demonstrate our unity and power outside the electoral process, **nobody owns our vote.**

Today we must respect the power we have, be counted in the 2020 Census, and bring NYC to a halt.”

For more information contact the Black Solidarity Day 2020 Coalition / December 12th Movement at (718) 398-1766 or email D12M.com, or #BLACKSOLIDARITY2020.

