

Reparations must be paid!

written by Stephen Millies

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SLL photo: Stephen Millies

“They stole us, they sold us, they owe us!”

Those powerful and truthful words were chanted at the African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan on July 23 to demand reparations for slavery. The noontime rally was called to push the New York State Senate to pass the reparations bill already overwhelmingly approved by the State Assembly.

Omowale Clay of the December 12th Movement opened the rally by reminding everyone that the late Sonny Abubadika Carson stopped a bulldozer from desecrating that hallowed ground. It was only because of struggle that the U.S. government was forced to declare the site a national monument.

State Assembly Member Charles Barron explained how the reparations bill would set up a commission that wouldn’t just have members hand-picked by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. It would include two members each from the following community organizations: the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA); the Institute of the Black World; and the December 12th Movement.

The commission would determine how much the state would have to pay up to Black people.

Barron described how only Charleston, S.C., was more dependent on enslaved Africans than New York City. The city once operated a municipal slave market on Wall Street.

State senators and assembly members came to join Charles Barron in demanding this reparations bill be passed. They included state senators Jabari Brisport and Robert Jackson, and assembly members Khaleel Anderson and Stefani Zinerman.

Senator Jabari Brisport declared the bill “400 years overdue.” Brisport had been at

Charlottesville, Va., in 2017 to protest the fascist mobilization.

Hawk Newsom, a leader of Black Lives Matter in New York, declared that “the biggest terrorists are the white capitalists.” Newsome emphasized that the rally was being held on sacred ground.

That didn’t stop the National Park Service from initially locking the gate to the burial grounds. It was only because people demanded entrance to the public monument that the gate was finally opened.

New York City Council Member Inez Barron described her efforts in motivating the council to support the reparations bill in the state capital. A member of Operation POWER, a militant community group based in the East New York section of Brooklyn, demanded the reparations bill be passed.

People were urged to contact New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to urge that reparations bill S.7215 be passed by the legislative body. Her district phone number is (914) 423-4031, while her Albany number is (518) 455-2715. Stewart-Cousins can also be reached by email at scousins@nysenate.gov.

Reparations now!



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2021/07/28/reparations-must-be-paid/>