Bill Whitfield of the Black Panther party serves breakfast to local children in Kansas City, April 1969.

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Concerning the question of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the international significance of that war, we believe that US imperialism (and neo-liberal capitalism) is the primary enemy of people globally. The USA/NATO threat to the freedom seeking nations of the world is evident in its ongoing blockade against Cuba, its embargo against Venezuela, and the overthrow of revolutionary governments of Chile, Granada, and Haiti in the past. We call for an immediate abolition of NATO and its military forces.

“When Elephants Fight, Only the Grass Gets Hurt”

by

NAPO/MXGM
We condemn the alliance of the Ukrainian state with NATO forces which can only serve to tighten the hold of western imperialism on the colonized people of the world. We believe that the neo-liberal aspirations and courting of NATO by the Ukrainian government and its absorption of neo-Nazi militias such as the Azov regiment into its military and the influence of these fascists into the government must be condemned. It is also important that we condemn and refute the Ukrainian treatment of African and Indian immigrants and students which has been revealed during this war crisis. Additionally, as anti-colonialist supporting self-determination, we strongly demand that the Ukrainian government honor the plebiscite and vote for independence legally held by the people of the Russian speaking Donbas region of Ukraine since 2014.

With this understanding, we want to be clear that we believe that the present war in Ukraine is the result of an ongoing conflict between two State powers who have no interest in the welfare of the oppressed peoples of the world. An African proverb states, “when elephants fight, only the grass gets hurt.” We condemn the manipulation of Ukraine by NATO for the purposes of neo-liberal capitalist and imperialist expansion, and we recognize that NATO has no interest in the welfare of the Ukrainian people.

We also believe that the Russian regime has unjustly invaded Ukraine’s national borders. As a colonized nation struggling against imperialism and understanding that the Ukrainian government has aligned with neo-liberal capitalism, we stand firmly with the people of Ukraine fighting to maintain Ukrainian national sovereignty against Russian invasion. We call for an immediate end to Russian military aggression against the Ukrainian people and land. We condemn Russia’s aggression against a sovereign nation as well as ongoing Russian support of white supremacist and fascist movements globally which pose a threat to the people of the world.

We see the conflict between Russia and NATO as examples of big power imperialism at the expense of the world’s peoples which has historically led to two imperialist capitalist world wars, and which endangers the world’s people of being once again drawn into wars benefiting only our imperial capitalist colonizers.

We call on the peoples of the world to stand resolutely against military aggression and violation of the sovereignty of Ukraine, Palestine, the captive nations of the USA including our own New Afrikan nation, and all colonized peoples. We condemn imperialist war and call for a third force of anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist nations, peoples and social movements for true world liberation.
Section 2: International

VIETNAM: A REVOLUTIONARY SUCCESS STORY

by

Nyeusi Jami

Party hallmarks seen in every success of the Vietnamese revolution (Photo: VNA)
In 1887, the French officially established a colony in southeast Asia which they called French Indochina. That colony comprised the area that is known today as the countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The French initially exploited the population by charging high taxes on consumption of local goods like salt, opium, and rice alcohol. Once the local population’s wealth had been sucked dry, the colonizers began exploiting the area’s natural resources. What is now Vietnam became a rich source of zine, tin, and coal as well as cash crops such as rice, rubber, coffee, and tea.

In 1890, Ho Chi Minh was born into a fairly middle class family in Vietnam. At the age of 21, in 1911, he left home and began traveling the world working as a kitchen helper on a French steamboat. For the better part of the next decade he worked on ships and also had stints in Boston, Harlem, London, and Paris. Ho Chi Minh was especially fond of the message of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), having attended some of Garvey’s rallies in Harlem.

In 1919, in France, Ho Chi Minh became part of a group of people organizing for the self-determination of the nation of Vietnam. By late 1920, he became a founding member of the French Communist Party. Within the party he worked to bring his comrades’ attention to the struggle of the people in the French colonies.

Ho Chi Minh spent 1924 in Moscow, working for the Communist International. During that year, he published an essay detailing the suffering of New Afrikans within the United States entitled “On Lynching and the Ku Klux Klan.” His work French Colonization on Trial was published in 1925 and exposed the harsh treatment of Africans and Asians in the French colonies. His next work, The Black Race, a collection of essays written in 1924 and 1925 about the cruelties against Africans throughout the world, was published in Russian in 1928.

Ho continued to travel the world, organizing with people within the Communist International as well as the Vietnamese Independence Movement, until 1941. That year, during World War 2, the fascist government of Japan invaded French Indochina. The Nazi-allied French Vichy government handed over Indochina to Japan. This led to the creation of a guerrilla people’s army called the League for the Independence of Vietnam, or Viet Minh. The Viet Minh defeated the Japanese at the end of World War 2, issued a Proclamation of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and chose Ho Chi Minh as chairman of their provisional government.

From 1945 to 1954, the Vietnamese fought what is called the First Indochina War to resist the French attempt to re-colonize them. That war concluded with the defeat of the French at the decisive Battle of Dien Bien Phu, and the French gave up their claims to the former French Indochina through the Geneva Accord of 1954.

However, the United States immediately invaded Vietnam after that, seeking to prevent Vietnam from becoming an independent Communist country. That turned into another two decades of fighting in what is commonly called the Second Indochina War or the Vietnam War, or what is known in Vietnam as the American War.

As part of the 1954 Geneva Conference, North and South Vietnam agreed to hold elections in 1956 and unite the country under whichever government won the elections. Once it became clear that the Communists would win that election, the U.S. puppet Ngo Dinh Diem declared the South to be an independent country (the Republic of Vietnam) and opposed unification with the North. Thus began a process of civil war and of the United States spending twenty years heavily propagandizing the people of the South against their revolutionary brethren.
Once the war was over, the Vietnamese government, led by the people’s party (Communist Party of Vietnam), had to figure out a process of reunification. This process included removing some of their most staunch pro-West rivals and re-educating the people about the value of communalism rather than American style individualism. Mistakes were made, of course, but Vietnam’s current condition shows that their movement did an excellent job of handling that very precarious post-war situation.

After nearly 100 years of colonization and war, Vietnam’s land, people, and infrastructure were ravaged. Their country was one of the poorest in the world. In 1986, their movement enacted a series of reforms called “Doi Moi,” which is explained to mean a market economy with socialist orientation. The term doi moi itself is a general term with wide use in the Vietnamese language meaning “innovate” or “renovate.”

Between 2002 and 2018, GDP per capita increased by 2.7 times, reaching over US $2,700 in 2019, and more than 45 million people out of its 96.5 million total population were lifted out of poverty. According to the World Bank, from 1993 to 2017, the infant mortality rate decreased from 32.6 to 16.7 (per 1,000 live births). Between 1990 and 2016, life expectancy increased from 70.5 to 76.3 years, and is the highest in the region for countries at a similar income level. Vietnam has increased the number of its population with access to electricity from 14 percent in 1993 to 99 percent in 2016. Access to clean water in rural areas has also improved, up from 17 percent in 1993 to 70 percent in 2016, while that figure for urban areas was above 95 percent.

In 2000, less than 10 percent of Vietnam’s population was considered middle class, defined as consumers who spend at least US$11 a day in purchasing power. Today that figure has risen to 40 percent. By 2030, this figure is expected to be close 75 percent, or an additional 36 million people. About 2.75% of Vietnam is categorized as being in extreme poverty, defined as living below US$1.90 a day, as measured in 2011 prices. By 2025, they plan to completely eliminate extreme poverty. As an aside, China succeeded in completely eliminating extreme poverty in 2020.

90% of Vietnamese people have full healthcare coverage. 90% of Vietnamese people are homeowners. Their home loans take 5-10 years to pay off. A 2019 census found that only 39 families were homeless in Ho Chi Minh City, a city of 8.9 million people. It is also interesting that even the homeless in Vietnam tend to be attached to their families, not living as individuals.

Vietnam also has a robust democracy, while also having a single-party political system. Vietnam has five times more independents (not members of the Communist Party) in their national legislature than the United States does. The empire’s media speak of the Communist Parties of places like China and Vietnam and Cuba as if they hand-select every single member of the parliament, and elections are completely staged. In reality, the people of Vietnam have a beautiful dual-power system. The (Communist) Party is responsible for using the levers of government to benefit all the people. There is also a grassroots democratic formation called the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF), composed of many different people’s organizations, which is the highest level of Vietnam’s political system. The VFF is built on the principle of democratic consensus, encouraging the People to be actively involved in charting the direction of their movement and finding consensus in their decisions. The people have real oversight of the government and the Communist Party.

The people of Vietnam have shown us a most excellent revolutionary example for the past 100 years. From laying the foundations of their liberation movement, to resisting the Japanese then the French then the Americans, then undoing all of that destruction to build a nation on a new socialist foundation; their story is nothing short of amazing. Vietnam is far from a utopia today. Many problems still exist. But
their determination to build a high quality of life for all of their people, and to do it in a unified way, is a model that all of us can learn from. Salute.

For more quality information about Vietnam go to:
- Vietnam News: The National English Language Daily
- Communist Review: Organ of Political Theory of Vietnam Communist Party’s Central Committee
- Luna Oi Youtube Channel

Haiti and the Dominican Republic: Why Can’t We Get Along?

by

kwame-osagyefo kalimara

“Can’t We Just Get Along?”
Rodney King

On Thursday April 30th 1992 there were rebellions all over Los Angeles, a reaction to the Rodney King beating trial verdict where the white police officers were determined not guilty. Although there was video footage to show police criminality, white supremacist mentality blinded the jury panel from seeing the visual record. In the following days Rodney King on television attempted to quell the raging population, he said to the demonstrators “I just want to say, can't we all get along? Can't we all get along?”
Haiti and the Dominican Republic is one island with an unresolved past, unable to get along. The nexus which joins the aftermath of the Rodney King police not guilty verdict and the Haitian and Dominican Republic relationship is white supremacy. The denial of the humanity of “dark” peoples prevents harmonious experiences for both individuals and nations. Acts of genocide has been the most demonstrable experience of white supremacy.

The island of Hispaniola was established by Christopher Columbus as the first European settlement in 1492. Although Columbus was Italian, his colonial expeditions were sponsored by the Catholic Monarchs of Spain. Haiti and the Dominican Republic share this island through a history of colonialism, slavery, dictatorship, oppression and exploitation.

The history of Haiti is best known for its victory over French imperialism in 1804, establishing the first Black Republic in the western hemisphere. Moreover, the new nation was the first state to abolish slavery and delivered assistance to Brasil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama and Venezuela in their anti-colonial movements.

The successful insurrection by enslaved Afrikans in Saint Dominique (Haiti) began in August 1791. The clandestine Vodou ceremony at Bois Caiman led by Mambo Cecile Fatiman with the assistance of Boukman Dutty galvanized/nationalized the population into a revolutionary army. General Toussaint L’ouverture led the Haitian forces until 1802, when he was captured by the French. It was General Jean-Jacques Dessalines who was victorious militarily against France on January 1, 1804 declaring Haiti a free republic. The Haitian revolution challenged the notion of alleged black inferiority and the ability of former enslaved Afrikans to govern themselves.

In February 2022 the Dominican Republic began construction of a wall that will cover nearly half of its border with Haiti. The North-West part of the island is Haiti and its South-East portion is the Dominican Republic. President Luis Abinader of the Dominican Republic argues that the wall’s purpose is to stop Haitian migration and criminal activities (smuggling of drugs, weapons and goods) in the provinces of Abanico and Dajabon.

Haiti, once the crown jewel of the French economy, is one of the poorest nations of the Americas. The Dominican Republic has prospered economically, some argue, in part because it is an attractive tourist location. However, the stronger evidence supports the notion that Haiti remains vilified by European nations as punishment for its victory of 1804. The Dominican Republic has not been punished.

“If now isn’t a good time for the truth, I don’t see when we’ll get to it”
Nikki Giovanni

Haitian-Dominican Republic relations are complex, and the solution requires sifting through their collective histories.
1492 – Columbus lands on Hispaniola near the present-day Cap-Haitien, Haiti. However, Spain establishes its first colony on the East part of the island, present-day Santo Domingo.

1697 – France takes control of the Western portion of the Island because Spain ceded it. French pirates and colonists are more challenging than anticipated. France soon names it Saint-Domingue. This plantation colony becomes France's most lucrative resource.

1791 – Vodou is the impetus for nationalizing the island’s enslaved African population. The rebellion lasts for 13 years, marking the first time any enslaved people create an independent nation.

1821 – The Dominican people gains independence from Spain.

1822 – Under the leadership of Haitian President John Pierre Boyer Haiti occupies the entire island, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

1844 – The Dominican Republic wins its Independence for a second time, the first from Spain. It was under Haitian rule for 22 years.

1900s – The Dominican Republic’s economic prosperity grows because of its sugarcane industry. Thousands of Haitians work in these fields, even today. The Haitian communities are known as “bateyes” (sugar worker towns) and remain poor.

1915 to 1966 – The United States becomes involved in the affairs of both Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

1915 - U. S. Marines are sent to Haiti to protect their nation’s political and economic interests. A mob assassimates Haitian President Vilbruan Guillaume Sam.

1930 – Dominican Republic President Rafael Trujillo begins a 31-year rule of corruption and violence.

1937 - Parsley Massacre. The Dominican military slaughters thousands of Haitians near its border under Trujillo’s orders. Although Trujillo's grandmother was Haitian, he lightened his skin and engineers a program of "whitening" the predominantly mixed-race island.

1957 – President Dr. Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier rules in Haiti. He rules with the support of his Tonton Macoute (government death squad). President for life.

1971 – At the death of Francois Duvalier his son Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier is appointed president for life.
1986 – Haitian President Jean-Claude Duvalier flees the country.

2010 – Earthquake in Haiti. The 7.0 Mw quake reportedly kills about 220,000 people. It heightens the immigration issues resulting in additional waves of Haitians seeking better opportunities in the Dominican Republic.

2013 – Immigration Protests. Thousands of youth of Haitian parents born in the Dominican Republic protest after its High Court rules that they are not entitled to citizenship due to birth.

2018 – Present. According to the Center for Strategic & International Studies (2019), the resolution to the contradictions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is to harness systemic state corruption, reasoning that it is the fundamental threat to “democratic institutions,” thus promoting stability and prosperity. What their assessment completely ignores is the impact of racism/white supremacy and capitalism/imperialism.

“Nations reel and stagger on their way; they make hideous mistakes; they commit frightful wrongs..... And shall we not best guide humanity by telling the truth about all this, so far as the truth is ascertainable?”

W.E.B. DuBois

History cannot be ignored. The Dominican Republic has always been aligned with white supremacy. It has always followed United States immigration policies toward Haiti. In February 2022, the large sectors of the Dominican population began to commemorate the 176th anniversary of its independence from Haiti. The border wall is seen as keeping Haitian “invaders” out of the country. Dominicans, according to a March 9, 2022 North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) article titled “Making the Dominican Republic Great Again?,” see Haitians as “threats to national culture, identity, and independence.”

The NACLA article written by Lorgia Garcia-Pena continued to share significant historical information. “As early as 1845, one year after its independence from Haiti, an American commission gave the green light to Dominican self-governance while refusing to grant the same to Haiti. Though the United States viewed both countries as racially inferior and in need of “Big Brother”-type guidance, the Dominican Republic was perceived as less threatening and more progressive, in part because it had defined itself politically and culturally in contrast to Haiti.”

“Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible”

Maya Angelou

“Haiti and the Dominican Republic: Why Can’t We Get Along?” is the title to this writing and the initial question asked. The brutality of the relationship presented here is tepid in the interest...
of brevity. The border wall being created is real, tangible, it is a symbol of the divisive and destructive nature of a world controlled by white supremacy and its twin capitalism.

Dr. Barbara Smith (black feminist, co-creator of the Combahee River Collective manifesto) wrote an opinion for the Boston Globe in June 2020 titled “The Problem is White Supremacy.” She asks several relevant questions which need to be answered: “What would happen if we began an honest national dialogue about the disaster of white supremacy? What if we consistently used the words “white supremacy” so that everyone would have accurate language for conceptualizing what is actually going on? The way we describe this problem matters. . . ‘Systemic racism’ conveys the pervasiveness of racial oppression, but white supremacy goes further by indicating that there is a rigid nexus of power that protects and enforces it.”

The Haiti-Dominican Republic contradiction is not the only African ethnic conflict. We know of many more. The Oromos and the Amharas of Ethiopia, the Daroos and Hawiya of Somalia, and the Messiria and Maalia of Sudan are a few of the ethnic conflicts in continental Africa. We also know that any pre-colonial conflicts were exacerbated by boundaries drawn by Europeans. Traditional culture began to erode as Western beliefs were imposed. Slavery, colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy are factors which created existing poverty, human rights violations, bad governance and corruption, ethnic marginalization, and small arms proliferation.

“The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery”

W.E.B. Du Bois

The challenge for the Dominican Republic is to acknowledge its African heritage and embrace it. In so doing, there is recognition that African people, as the first people, created “high” civilizations in which Europeans were students in all areas of human and technological development. The start of the process of decolonization of the mind requires reimagining who we are along with study and training. Centuries of the erasure of African history for African people, and even Europeans, has been and is devastating, resulting in terrorism and genocide.

Haiti cannot escape relearning and purging itself either. The difference, although to some appearing minute, is that the overt colonization by the United States empire is more apparent. The Clinton Foundation of former president Bill Clinton and his wife, former Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton, are the most recent puppeteers.

The surveillance of history is not to romanticize African narratives. Such approaches and practices overlook internal weaknesses and contradictions. The absence of critical analysis of history will repeat negative outcomes. Hard criticisms and analysis are necessary if we are to change the material conditions in all areas of African/human life for the better. Without revolutionary action, re-enslavement and re-colonization will continue in new forms and will continue to deny authentic African sovereignty.
We cannot allow the African world, the world to retreat. The fight must continue. Freedom requires engaging our collective enemies (the systemic structures of oppression and exploitation), while confronting and healing from the internalized disdain of being African. This is Our kazi, this is Our work!!

Ancestral blessings. Free the Land!!

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Section 3: Political prisoners & Prisoners of War

When Political Prisoners Make It Home:
The Story Of Eddie Conway

by

Nyeusi Jami

By Any Means Necessary
For this issue of BAMN we are featuring a story of a former political prisoner who has been able to come home and make a positive impact on the community. As we continue to organize for the freedom of our current political prisoners, the forces of the state justify their imprisonment by claiming that they would be a danger to the community if they were released. We push back against that narrative and we present the story of Eddie Conway as an example of what happens when our freedom fighters are released from imprisonment.

Marshall “Eddie” Conway was born April 23, 1946. He grew up in Baltimore and joined the Army at the age of 18. At the age of 21, he was a Sergeant, stationed in Germany. When he read the news about the urban rebellions happening across the United States, he decided to leave the Army and come home to join the movement. After brief stints in the NAACP and CORE, he joined the Black Panther Party Maryland chapter. However, some of the founding members of that chapter were undercover police officers. The police and intelligence agencies eventually did a thorough job of imprisoning, or forcing into exile, most of the leadership of the Maryland Black Panthers.

A year later, Eddie Conway was arrested for a shooting that he was not involved in. He would spend the next 43 years and 11 months locked up. His legal team eventually won his release in March 2014. In 2011, while imprisoned, Eddie published his memoir titled *Marshall Law: The Life and Times Of a Baltimore Black Panther*. Also while imprisoned, Eddie founded the Friend Of A Friend program, designed to mentor young men in prison and help them avoid being involved in violence.

Since his release, Eddie has still been active in seeking to create better conditions for his people. He produces and hosts a series on The Real News Network called *Rattling The Bars*. Rattling the Bars offers an honest look at the lives of prisoners, returning citizens, their families, and their communities. With Rattling the Bars, by presenting hard data and real-life stories, they examine and seek to shift public opinion around the misconception that incarceration, punishment, and increased policing make cities safer—the truth of which has been disproven by countless studies.

Eddie Conway has stated how shocked he was to witness the conditions in Baltimore after his release from prison. Things were worse for Black people in 2014 than they were when he joined the Black Panther Party in 1968. In an effort to do something about it, Eddie works with *The Tubman House*. The Tubman House, founded in 2016 by Dominique Stevenson, is based on the core belief that all residents should have access to education, food, healthcare, and land. Eddie Conway is now the president of The Tubman House. Some of their current projects include the Fannie Lou Hamer-Sundiata Acoli Farm, the Ella Baker-Robert Williams Freedom School, the development of a neighborhood aquaponics/biocellar system, and year-round community activities including distributions of school supplies, food and clothes; homework help; and community movie nights, cookouts, concerts, commemorations, and town halls.

Eddie Conway is a valuable member of his community. He should have been able to spend his whole life doing this kind of work in the community rather than behind bars. All of us were robbed of his vision and his passion for his people for over four decades. The same can be
said for the communities who are missing the presence of Mutulu Shakur, Assata Shakur, Sundiata Acoli, Ruchell Magee, and many others. We encourage you to help The Tubman House to continue their work. We also encourage you to get involved in the efforts to Free ‘Em All - to gain freedom for all of our political prisoners and prisoners of war still locked behind the walls.

Section 4: Culture

George Floyd

by

Halima Olufemi

Part of me is like burn this place down
I really don’t care whose doing what we’ll figure it out later
I hate it…
Give me a sign a bullhorn or a gun

Trauma sitting in the back of the squad car waiting to take a mugshot but then they take him out

We watched a 10 minute clip of an 8 minute forty six seconds murder

A lifetime of pain becoming a catalyst for Black speak by white people who feel compelled to take to the streets and covertly destroy Black things, they are obsessed with destruction and pain and use Black skin as a backdrop for their hate

Another part of us died that day

And If it’s anything like the last time
When they finish teaching and raping our revolt

I will be reduced to slaves being put in their place sitting at their countertops begging to be fed with the dogs singing under the threat of water hoses and billy clubs.
Because they think...
If we walked back Black...

I mean Denmark Vessey, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Black Liberation Black
I mean Tulsa, Oklahoma, Rosewood, Florida, Harlem Renaissance Black
I mean Black Panther Party we all gone eat Black
I mean Hands Off Assata - Liberation in Action Black
I mean down for 36 years - Free Dr. Mutulu Shakur - them needles got the cure - Black

We’d second line on their necks and tell ‘em they ain’t shit

They’re afraid because revenge is their language
We always want to work it out
Build allies and integrate
Work with nonprofits that pretend like Black genius behind white faces is a new thing
Full-time revolutionary is more than a title on our business card

And please don’t get me started on politics this life just don’t work dressed in Black

Feels like they shoved a hand grenade in your mouth, with a gun to your head and said holla back —when I pull the pin

Black genius stay running toward ignorance and ignorance stay ahead of the game because they got a hell of a head start and keep recruiting

We get stuck in conversations about how the work should be done with folks that are on the sidelines who are well intending horrible ass cheerleaders; start ignoring them or pass them the baton

Because their arguments will have you like them, working concessions distracted by the fans,

“Ay, who you say you rooting for again; you sound just like this white boy I passed wearin a MAGA hat yelling run-nigga-run, beside this white girl smiling too gotdamn much, by a deputy sheriff wearing a white mask with holes in it”
We don’t burn crosses, we carry them
To gravesites around our necks
In diamond studded tombs to make sure death protects us before and after we die

I mean
My life, my life, my life, my life

Is a riot
Is a protest
Is a beautiful book of chaos
Like the Bible or the Quran or like owning Black business you renting from other
people this ain’t your land if you don’t own it

And I’m not justifying violence or belittling the sacrifice
I just don’t understand how they can expect us to be rational in an irrational place

One minute you had him in handcuffs on the ground
Two minutes your knee bowed on his neck like a devout Protestant minister
Three minutes your knee stayed there like a Catholic Priest after confession
Four minutes he begged for his life
Five minutes he begged for his life again
Six minutes he begged for his momma who been dead a couple years
Seven minutes he went to meet her
Eight minutes and forty six seconds later barely got him and his dog ass friends for
murder

A friend said, We charge genocide again
And again
We charge genocide again
And again
We charge genocide again?
I mean how many ways we gotta die of for you to see it

I heard protests don’t work but I also heard angry gets shit done and it might not be
liberation but it forced another arrest

By Any Means Necessary
So, until we come up with something else and they stop killing us wearing bullet proof vests, I say fuck them and meet us outside for some civil unrest

The End

Section 5: Labor: Black Workers UNITE! A Report on Our Conditions and How WE Fight Back

“The U.S. Givin’ Me Fever”: The Production and Decay of Temp Jobs

by

Gus Wood

Amid this Second Great Depression, Black Americans caught a nasty flu when the United States suffered the worst inflation uptick in almost half a century at the beginning of this year. With inflation at almost 8 percent and capitalists price gouging us on every commodity possible, survival needs such as food, water, gas, electricity, rent, and goods such as cars and transportation are virtually unaffordable for a majority of our people. To make matters worse, the federal reserve announced that it would raise interest rates every quarter of 2022, making credit cards, student loans, car loans, and mortgages too expensive. Thanks to the disastrous “Whip Inflation Now!” strategy from the 1970s, we know where this disaster is heading. Raising interest rates does not resolve inflation; it merely offsets the loss of profits due to inflation by granting capitalists more hard-earned dollars from working people.

For Black workers, our wealth is so weak that any higher costs force us to scramble for more work, regardless of quality or stability. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that the median net wealth of Black families is just $24,100, the lowest among any other racial group today. In comparison, white families’ median net wealth is $188,200! Thus, the Black working classes are forced to pick up as many temporary or unstable jobs as possible.

Similarly to incarceration, police murders, and low wage work, African Americans are overrepresented in the temp industry. A February 2022 report, titled “Temp Workers Demand Good Jobs: Survey Reveals Poverty Pay, Permatemping, Deceptive Recruitment Practices, and Other Job Quality Issues,” revealed that Black workers make up 12.2 percent of the American
workforce, but also nearly 25 percent of all temporary help and staffing agency workers in the U.S. In manufacturing and warehousing, 33 percent of temp workers are Black, double the overall full-time Black workers in the industry. Manufacturing’s reputation for having higher wages does not benefit Black temp workers. The report discovered that Black temp workers are on average paid 21 percent less than white temp workers in that specific industry.

One concrete solution to the growing crisis of temp work is the spread of Black worker centers. Particularly in the South where anti-union laws and de facto regulations crush any attempt to unionize Black workers, worker centers operate as clearinghouses for workers’ needs, advocate for employees in their workspaces, and combat wage discrimination and theft. Power worker centers also have community steward positions where they fight racist police, protest underfunded schools, poor housing, and most importantly, find ways to empower community members to make decisions on how they live.

Historically, Black worker centers have built considerable power for our people. Founded in 1981 in North Carolina, Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ) began as their leader, Saladin Muhammad stated, “a workplace-based community organization because the Black community in many instances understood community as a framework for a measure of unity, more than they understood the workplace in the same regard.” In the 1980s, the group built such power in Black working class neighborhoods in organizing department store workers that they opened the North Carolina Public Service Workers organization in 1990. Through an alliance with the radical United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, they grew to over 3000 members. Today, BWFJ organizes across public and private sectors and delivers resources to neighborhoods in the form of monetary grants, housing construction, free medical care, and job training programs. In essence, Black worker centers must be central to Black Power and proto-nationalism in Black working class neighborhoods. As this Great Depression continues into the decade, those who take Black worker centers serious will reap benefits for shoring leverage against capitalism and the growing white supremacist threat.

More industries over time will be exporting their full time work force towards platform-based temp work. Therefore, Black workers, the most expendable group in the United States, must develop community based intervention strategies that critique the material conditions and use that analysis to develop and sustain our own institutions like Black worker centers. The Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie have made their material interests clear and we do not have any space in their future plans. We must acknowledge these social relations and move forward with organizing ourselves internally. Otherwise this flu will worsen into incurable pneumonia.
Many years ago in the early years of my own participation in our people’s struggle for self-determination, I along with my brother Akinyele Umoja had the opportunity to visit our sister comrade Afeni Shakur in her small apartment in Oakland, California. Afeni along with Dr. Mutulu Shakur was coordinating the Cointelpro Research and Litigation Taskforce designed to expose and dismantle the U.S. government attempt to disrupt and destroy our movement through its Counterintelligence Program. While that meeting was many years ago and I don’t remember a
lot of details about a lot of our conversation, Afeni said something at that time stemming from our discussion about the current situation and the time we were in. Afeni said “This is the first time in our movement when we have not had a song. When we have not had music to carry us through the struggle.” Then I remember she began to lament all of her lost comrades. Some who were dead but many who had since the heady days of intense revolution in the ‘60s and early ‘70s were now struggling with alcoholism and drug addiction, and mental illness and alienation from their families. And Afeni told us that she believed that much of that pain and hurt and disruption was because we had lost our cultural and artistic center. There was no revolutionary culture to light our way.

That conversation affected me and stuck with me as I looked around the struggle at that time and saw how right she was. There was lots of activity, but it seemed to be soulless and without direction. Though she may not have used these words, Sister Afeni was teaching us that “Culture is the heartbeat of revolution.” I know that a lot of people listening tonight might agree with that thought, but it’s important to remember that that has not always been an agreed-on supposition.

Another respected elder comrade, Brother Askia Muhammed Touré in a separate conversation once reminded me that between the anti-African culture position of the Oakland based Black Panther Party for Self Defense and the cultural nationalism of the Los Angeles based Us Organization, there was a third perspective on culture and its role in our struggle [as] provided by the revolutionary black nationalism of the Revolutionary Action Movement.

And I need to make clear that as a mass movement, not all members of MXGM have moved to the political position of Revolutionary Black Nationalism, but never-the-less MXGM stands proudly in the political lineage of the Revolutionary Action Movement as it was shaped by Malcolm X, Queen Mother Audley Moore, and Robert F. Williams.

Differently from either the cultural nationalism of the Us Organization or the revolutionary inter-communalism of the Black Panther Party, the revolutionary black nationalism of RAM influenced by Amilcar Cabral’s analysis argued that cultural struggle is not a distinct stage which precedes the political struggle as the cultural nationalists argued, nor is culture an issue somehow largely insignificant to how revolution is waged as the Panthers believed. Revolutionary black nationalists agreed with Cabral (1973, 43) that “national liberation is necessarily an act of culture.” Revolutionary black nationalism in the USA in unity with Cabral saw that as a movement for liberation was waged in communities around police or for workers’ rights, or to challenge the legitimacy of the American political holidays like the fourth of July is in fact a struggle for the minds and hearts of the people. Cabral (1973, 45) wrote

A reconversion of minds – of mental set – is thus indispensable to the true integration of people into the liberation movement. Such reconversion – re-Africanization, in our case –
may take place before the struggle, but it is complete only during the course of the struggle, through daily contact with the popular masses in the communion of sacrifice required by the struggle.

Rather than imagining that cultural analysis was something unimportant to and distinct from political struggle, or that cultural revolution somehow could be waged prior to and again distinct from the political struggle, learning from Cabral, revolutionary black nationalism understood that day-to-day political struggle around the important questions and situations of black lived experience in fact was a process of re-Africanization and creating a national identity of black people distinct from the colonizing American identity under which they were oppressed. They agreed with Cabral that, “History proves that it is much less difficult to dominate and to continue dominating a people whose culture is similar or analogous to that of the conqueror” (1973, 48).

When day-to-day political struggle is engaged in acts of culture it becomes clear that culture is not about recreating ancient African traditions from all around the African continent (though these traditions may be helpful in redefining African identity) or about creating rigid definitions of what is or is not African. Cabral like Fanon believed that culture, understood as revolutionary action, was a living dialectical force within society. Cabral writes:

Culture, like history, is an expanding and developing phenomenon. Even more important, we must take account of the fact that the fundamental characteristic of a culture is the highly dependent and reciprocal nature of its linkages with the social and economic reality of the environment, with the level of productive forces and the mode of production or the society which created it (1973, ##).

In other words, unlike some cultural nationalists, Cabral and the revolutionary black nationalists of the RAM understood that culture is under constant reconstruction and recreation and is absolutely linked to social and economic forces in society.

When Sister Afeni Shakur made that lament over 35 years ago, she was hitting on a real truth! When people have a consciously African culture which separates itself from the culture of our oppressors and when they have traditions, rituals, observations and holidays which consciously contradict the propaganda of the colonizer. And when we have artists who produce art which is grounded solidly in the rhythm and the beat of our African culture of resistance, self-reliance, and self-determination, that culture begins to shape a new identity, a national identity and a revolutionary identity.

As we continue to wage this fight for human rights, against genocide and for reparations, we need some music to inspire us to move on up and keep on pushing! We need dances to inspire us to keep fighting to free our political prisoners and prisoners of war. We need poetry that reminds us that women hold up half the sky and that our fight is to free the whole black nation whatever its gender, or sexuality expression.
We need games we can play which teach our children how to fight to defend the nation and we need hairstyles and dress styles that scream our defiance against American colonialism and white supremacy! If we are going to keep up this fight to Free the Land, we need a revolutionary black nationalist African resistance culture that moves us to dance and sing and celebrate while we demonstrate and strike and defend ourselves and make ourselves ungovernable by our colonizer. Culture is the heartbeat of revolution and though back those thirty something years ago it might have looked like we had lost heart, I believe that this new generation of New Afrikans are showing us that they know how to make a Black nation rise. Agitate, Educate, Organize.

Simone with James Baldwin in the early sixties. Her intelligence and restless force attracted African-American culture’s finest minds.

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