

EVERYBODY'S NEW YORK

ALICIA KEYS

GRAMMY

Award-Winner

Says "New Yorkers be Resilient Fill Out the Census and be Counted"

ROGER TOUSSAINT **FORMER TWU BOSS**

Says "Let's Organize and Build A Movement to Fight Back!"

SABRINA HOSANG JORDAN

Caribbean American

On Gov. Andrew Cuomo
Re-Opening Board

Spice Island Model

TEHERA CHARLES

Aiming for
the Stars

S. L. WHITE

A High School Senior
On COVID-19 Frontline





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**EVERYBODY'S
NEW YORK**



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SAINT LUCIA DOUBLE CELEBRATION

I always look forward to read your digital edition. I received the F/March issue on the Feb. 22, the day of Saint Lucia's independence and homeland of my parents. I was even more pleased to read your article about what happened in NY on Feb., 22, 1979. One of the persons you mentioned, the late Fred Cadiz, was a distant cousin.

J...@ Cam....
West Easton, London

INFLUENTIAL CARIBBEAN WOMEN

I was mesmerized when I read about "Top 5 Influential Caribbean Women" in your magazine. What a thrill. I feel good.

Jacqueline Jacobs,
Houston, TX

Congrats to your publication for profiling our female Caribbean leaders. Always remember, the lady who blazed the trail was our own Dominica's Eugenia Charles, my great grandmother childhood friend.

r...shillingford @...

HANSEL LEON WIFE SPEAKS UP

After EVERYBODY'S announced on its social media pages and web newsletter that Hansel Leon, a prominent Caribbean-Brooklynite, was a victim of COVID-19, scores of readers immediately reacted and Caribbean Life newspaper followed up on our news item.

EVERYBODY'S summarized his life: "Hanny" as he was popularly called promoted steelpan music in the U.S. for almost

four decades. He was once married to Jean Leon, well known Trinbagonian-New Yorker and former Director of Nursing at Kings County Medical Center.

Mr. Leon made his annual pilgrimage to Trinidad & Tobago carnival; he remained in his birth country to avoid wintry New York. He fell ill on March 13 and admitted at Couva Hospital, Trinidad. He expired on March 25 at the age of 77. Based on his early departure from NY, he may have contracted the deadly virus in Trinidad & Tobago.

He beat the iron in the rhythm section of several steelband orchestras in Brooklyn as they rehearsed for Brooklyn's panorama at the Brooklyn Museum grounds every Labor Day weekend and added "riddim" in most soca/calypso parties and concerts. A diehard fan of calypso, steelpan, carnival and other events that promoted the culture of Trinidad & Tobago, "Hanny" was a regular or "limer" at Sesame Flyers, the popular cultural and educational organization on Church Ave., Brooklyn. He attended calypso tents and shows presented by EVERYBODY'S Magazine.

We apologize to his widow, Mrs. Gemma Thomas-Ahyase, Esq., for not mentioning her in our obituary. She is an Attorney at Law and International Political Economy Specialist. Based on a phone conversation, we invited her to clarify the matter. Here is her letter:

Leon and I were best of friends for the first four years that we knew each other and later became each other's constant companion. We were married on September 29, 2017 secretly and quietly because that is what we came to both want. I later told my family and he told a couple people but not all of his family. At any rate, though, his family did not know that we were legally married, they knew fully well that we were always together, and they recently learned that we were legally married. It was therefore somewhat painful that that they did not bother

Continued on page 8

STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19! LEARN HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS AT HOME.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

- The most common symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat and shortness of breath. Other symptoms include feeling achy, loss of taste or smell, headache, and diarrhea.
- Most people with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) will have mild or moderate symptoms and can get better on their own.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS?

- People age 50 or older (people age 65 or older are at the highest risk)
- People who have other health conditions, such as:
 - Lung disease
 - Kidney disease
 - Asthma
 - Liver disease
 - Heart disease
 - Cancer
 - Obesity
 - A weakened immune system
 - Diabetes

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET SICK WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

If you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms, assume you have it. When you are sick:

- If you have trouble breathing, pain or pressure in your chest, are confused or cannot stay awake, or have bluish lips or face, call 911 immediately.
- Call your doctor if you are age 50 or older or have a health condition that puts you at increased risk, or if you do not feel better after three days.
- Always contact a doctor or go to the hospital if you have severe symptoms of COVID-19 or another serious health issue.
- Do not leave your home except to get necessary medical care or essential food or supplies (if someone cannot get them for you).
- If you must leave your home:
 - Avoid crowded places.
 - Stay at least 6 feet from others.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a bandana, scarf or other face covering.
 - Wash your hands before you go out, and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer while outside.
- Household members can go out for essential work and needs but should monitor their health closely.

If you or someone in your home is sick:

- Create physical distance:
 - Do not have visitors.
 - Stay at least 6 feet from others.

- Sleep head-to-toe if you share a bed with someone who is sick, or sleep on the couch.
- Keep people who are sick separate from those at risk for serious illness.
- Cover up:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a bandana, scarf or other face covering when you are within 6 feet of others.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your inner elbow.
- Keep it clean:
 - Throw tissues into the garbage immediately after use.
 - Wash your hands often with soap for 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze.
 - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if you are unable to wash your hands.
 - Frequently clean surfaces you touch, such as doorknobs, light switches, faucets, phones, keys and remote controls.
 - Wash towels, sheets and clothes at the warmest possible setting with your usual detergent, and dry completely.
 - Do not share eating utensils with others, and wash them after every use.

WHEN CAN I LEAVE MY HOME AFTER BEING SICK?

- If you have been sick, stay home until:
 - You are fever-free for three days without Tylenol or other medication and
 - It has been at least seven days since your symptoms started and
 - Your symptoms have improved
- Reminder: New York is on PAUSE. This means that even if you have been sick, you should only leave your home for essential work or errands, or to exercise, while staying at least 6 feet from others.

NEED HELP?

- If you are having a medical emergency, call 911.
- If you do not have a doctor but need one, call 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692). New York City provides care, regardless of immigration status, insurance status or ability to pay.
- For more information, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.
4.20



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to mention me at all. I am a big girl and I can take it, but since I am his widow now, I would like to give a statement.

We normally go to Trinidad every year around Carnival time and we had both been doing that long before we met each other. We did not know that this particular time would be the last. Several years ago, he had been hospitalized with an irregular heartbeat, but he never abandoned the typical non-abstemious always a drink-in-the-hand lifestyle of a lot of people. This lifestyle was the main reason why I did not let my family know that we were getting married, it became a source of conflict between us, and I believe that this lifestyle led to his demise.

I stayed in St. James with my sister and he was in San Fernando at his family's house when I realized that he was becoming sicker and sicker. We would talk every day, and he was telling me that he was hardly eating which I did not find unusual because in New York, he would always refer to his sparse eating habits and chastise me for eating too many different things. Little did I know that he had loss of appetite. That Wednesday March 11, he told me that his chest was tight and I urged him to go to the doctor or the hospital, but he did not go. That Thursday after we arranged to meet up in Port of Spain, he was unable to get himself packed up to come to town. I became really concerned and urged him again to go to the hospital. Next morning, I called his best friends, a husband and wife couple and urged the wife to please go to him and take him to the doctor or the hospital. My family members who would normally take us around all had to work and couldn't help me since this

was taking place during the week. A relative of his lived in the family house with him but under circumstances where he did not tell her that he was becoming more and more ill. When my relatives came to take me to see him that Friday night, they had a change of heart when they heard me coughing and heard that he was hospitalized. I went to the doctor and learnt that I had a cold and did not want to spread the germs so I returned to New York while remaining in contact with the aforementioned couple. The rest is history.

I am writing this because his daughters did not mention my existence, and because of many rumors such as that he fell down or came off a cruise ship. We did not go on any cruise. I have even heard that an old girlfriend of his is claiming that she was married to him and this is a total fiction. The date that she lists as their date of marriage is the date that he told me that they first got together. He is no bigamist and, she has no marriage certificate. It is a relationship that he left a long time ago.

Left to mourn his passing are not just the people mentioned by his daughters, but also myself who was his actual and legal wife and that dear couple who are his best friends. I would really like you to print a sliver of my statement.

Gemma Thomas-Ahyase, Esq., Brooklyn, NY

Letters to the editor are always appreciated. No phone calls please. We regret that owing to limited space we cannot publish every letter. We do not publish what readers post on the magazine's social media pages. Email preferred. editor@everybodyismag.com

POSSIBILITY TRUMPS IMPROBABILITY

By Herman Hall

How I Entered a Pageant and Wound Up Making History

By Jennifer Hosten
Foreword Gugu Mbatha-Raw
200 pp. Amazon
Hardcover \$22.95; Kindle \$9.99
© Sutherland House Books

Miss World of 1970 Jennifer Hosten's, **How I Entered a Pageant and Wound Up Making History**, is much more than reflections or reminiscences of an historic or watershed moment in international beauty contests. This easy-to-read and informative book is about positiveness conquering negativity; optimism prevailing over pessimism; fortitude dominating weakness; possibility trumping impossibility; and confidence overcoming timidity. In short, it's the modern-day story of David and Goliath.

Let's digress and think about a calypso, soca, or panorama competition. Fifteen contestants are gathered for the last rehearsal at the venue where the finals will be held. Suddenly and shockingly, the producer names five who are allowed to rehearse and says to the other ten they can remain and watch. If you are in the ten, you will conclude that there is no chance of winning the competition because the producer is favoring five.

That was the scenario at The Miss World pageant dress rehearsal held at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on the evening of November 19, 1970 where the 58 contestants gathered. Eric Morley, the organizer, announced the names of 15 contestants who would be permitted to rehearse. Most of the other 43 contestants were in tears knowing they had no chance of winning the title. They felt cheated. Back at the hotel around 11pm, the unfortunate 43 girls were given the option of going to Royal Albert Hall the next morning to rehearse on their own without any assistance from tutors who assisted the chosen fifteen.

Six women of fortitude, including Jennifer Hosten, accepted the challenge. Ms. Hosten representing Grenada was determined to highlight Grenada, a colony or Associate State of England. She vowed nobody will prevent her. She observed the night before how the coaches worked with the chosen 15 on poise, timing and other winning strategies. In her hotel room that night, she practiced what the coaches stressed and by 8:30am the next day she left for Royal Albert Hall to rehearse by herself.

That was grit on Hosten's part exhibiting positiveness to overcome barriers. This is one reason why her book must be read especially by young people of the Caribbean and beyond.

While Hosten was making history on November 20, 1970 becoming the first black woman to win the Miss World title, members of the fledgling Women's Libera-

tion Movement were inside and outside the Royal Albert Hall demonstrating against the pageant's objectification of women and they were joined by opponents of the Vietnam War and racism. It was these external factors which inspired a movie producer to make the pageant of 1970 into a major motion picture, *Misbehaviour*, which premiered in Europe on March 13, 2020.

This year also, the BBC presented a suspenseful documentary about the pageant. There are interviews with Hosten and Pearl Jansen 50 years later. Jansen, who is also black, represented South Africa as Miss Africa South and emerged runner-up. Hosten has aptly included South Africa's apartheid drama at the contest in her inspiring book. Unfortunately, the pandemic has partially suppressed the public celebration of the movie, the documentary, and the book.

Hosten goes beyond penning the drama of that evening. How she became a contestant is an example showing Caribbean integration is not a farce. As a flight attendant on the now defunct airline, BWIA, Hosten met Miss Guyana who was representing Guyana in the competition. She encouraged Hosten to enter. A few days later Hosten went to Grenada where she was invited by Gertrude Protain to enter her beauty contest (as it was then called) and was informed that the winner will be representing Grenada in The Miss World Pageant.

From a Grenadian perspective, Gertrude Protain was one of Grenada's most progressive women of the 20th century. Today in Grenada, local history is not a priority and there is still no sanctioned national heroes list and no holiday commemorating those who gave their lives in the process of building Grenada. Consequently, Gertrude Protain, who can be dubbed the mother of broadcasting, the mother of tourism, organizer of pageants and early feminists, is all but forgotten.

It is those subtle references that make Hosten's book a must read to foster a deeper appreciation of history.

Today, some Grenadians say Ms. Hosten did nothing for Grenada and the Caribbean except to win The Miss World title. As the saying goes, people who don't know their history are doomed for failure. Hosten's book will enlighten us all. Ms. Hosten was Grenada's Ambassador in Canada under two administrations, the Eric Gairy Government and the People's Revolutionary Government of Maurice Bishop. After her diplomatic life, she went on to work for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community (Caricom). There are many more "I did not know that about Jennifer" in **How I Entered a Pageant and Wound Up Making History**. Indeed, Hosten's life-work is one to celebrate and her book adds to our self-knowledge by fashioning an uplifting narrative thru its spellbinding pages. Read the book!

Owing to COVID-19 and social distancing autograph sessions to meet Hosten may not happen. The book is available from amazon.com.

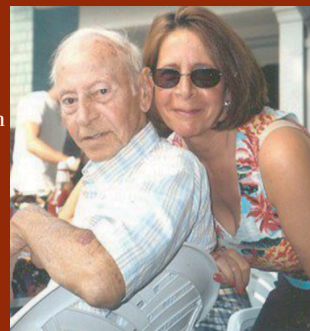


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ALICIA KEYS

Encourages You To Be Counted in The Census

By Rosa Edwards

GRAMMY winning sensation the beloved Alicia Keys is urging all New Yorkers, especially those who live in minority and immigrant neighborhoods, to participate in the U.S. Census. Last days for answering the census are almost here. "To my NYC family, I know you are strong, resilient and proud to be a New Yorker - now more than ever, it's super important that every New Yorker counts so why not be counted in the census today!" declares Keys.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting us all, but it is affecting our black and brown communities the most. The only way to get the programs and funding that we deserve is to fill out the census." Keys understands that the amount of funding for New York State and New York City given by the federal government during the next ten years will depend on how many New Yorkers are counted in the census of 2020.

The City of New York is in the middle of an extensive campaign to ensure that historically undercounted communities are counted this time.

Alicia Keys, a global music icon, was born and raised in New York City. "Just like Alicia Keys sings in 'Empire State of Mind,' there's nothing we can't do in New York," explains NYC Census Director Julie Menin. "Alicia Keys embodies the spirit and determination of New Yorkers and we are so grateful to add her voice to our campaign. Now is not the time to be invisible - now is the time for every New Yorker to fill out the census and be counted." Other personalities with strong ties to New York City encouraging everyone to self-respond to the census online form include rapper Cardi B, Lin Manuel-Miranda, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer and Dr. Slinger Francisco known worldwide as the Mighty Sparrow.

The census determines whether New York City receives its fair share of hundreds of billions distributed



Music icon Alicia Keys

To my NYC family, I know you are strong, resilient and proud to be a New Yorker - now more than ever, it's super important that every New Yorker counts so why not be counted in the census today!"

by the federal government every year for important programs and services. The census also leads to direct investments in New York City's health care system. For example, census data determines allocations for funding for hospitals. What's more, it's how public health officials get the foundational data that public health experts use to plan for and manage situations like the pandemic. By New Yorkers filling out the census, the more money the city receives for schools, hospitals, transportation, job training, and so much more. The census also determines each state's fair share of representation in Congress, as well as how local, state, and federal legislative district lines are drawn.

New Yorkers can complete the census form in 12 languages in addition to English, and each of these languages have their own dedicated, unique phone number that speakers of these languages can call to receive direct assistance. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau has published an "Explainer Guide" in 59 languages.

The next census will be in 2030. To ensure you provide resources for your children, grandchildren and their friends for the next ten years, it is imperative you play your civic role by filling out the census today.

Kindly visit EVERYBODY'S website for a direct link to New York City Census 2020: www.everybodysmag.com.

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NEW YORK

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SABRINA HOSANG JORDAN

Caribbean American Entrepreneur

On Gov. Andrew Cuomo Re-Opening Board

By Wendy Gomez

"We have been focusing on employee safety and health as we continue to operate during this pandemic ... It is important for all businesses to follow the CDC guidelines after reopening to make sure the number of cases do not get out of control again."



Sabrina HoSang Jordan,
CEO, Caribbean Food Delights

Sabrina HoSang Jordan, CEO of Caribbean Food Delights (CFD), is a member of Governor Andrew Cuomo Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board. Ms. HoSang Jordan and other board members are recommending various timetables to the governor for reopening businesses across New York. Reopening the Empire State commenced on May 15 in specific regions of upstate and specific sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, everyone is still required to wear mask.

Cuomo has no idea when the entire state will reopen since as he says, "This virus has misled us in every step of the way." It is anticipated by the governor's Advisory Board that downstate, specifically New York City and its suburbs of Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties, will be the last to reopen due to population density.

Other Reopening NY Governor's Advisory Board members include Jeff Wilpon, COO, NY Met, Bill Thompson, Chairman, City University of New York, James Dolan, CEO, Madison Square Garden and Jane Fraser, President, Citigroup. "Although Cuomo did not select anyone based on religious, ethnic, immigrant and cultural status, it is good to know that an active person within the New York-Caribbean community is on the board," remarked Trinbagonian E. Reid, a limo driver from Queens, NY who is referring to Sabrina HoSang Jordan. There are other leaders of Caribbean back-

ground such as Bill Thompson who are members of the governor's advisory team.

"I'm representing from a food manufacturer standpoint. It could be that I was invited to join the board based on my heavy involvement in the community. However, I believe that I was chosen based on my industry and where my business is located (Rockland County)," HoSang Jordan explains.

She directs the enterprise her parents, Vincent and Jeanette HoSang, established in 1978 as Royal Caribbean Bakery specializing in Jamaican patties and pastries. The principal retail outlet of RCB, as the popular bakery is called, is Mount Vernon whereas CFD manufacturing

plant is in Tappan. CFD brands are visible in many mega warehouses such as Costco and in supermarkets across the U.S. The story of the HoSangs is outlined in Vincent HoSang's autobiography **Change of Fortune**.

The Governor's Board is very large but "each board member has a chance to contribute," HoSang Jordan discloses. "We have been focusing on employee safety and health as we continue to operate during this pandemic, and are sure this is a concern that other businesses will face as the economy begins to re-open. It is important for all businesses to follow the CDC guidelines after reopening to make sure the number of cases do not get out of control again." According to her, the public can provide suggestions regarding reopening. One can e-mail ideas to: NYF@exec.ny.gov or visit <https://forward.ny.gov>.

A release from CFD/RCB states, "Royal Caribbean Bakery and Caribbean Food Delights continue their support of their communities, especially during this difficult time. Since March, the companies have been supporting local restaurants, and making donations to hospitals, and other essential service providers."

Spice Island Model

TEHERA CHARLES

Aiming for the Stars

July 24-August 2 would have been marvelous for Model Tehera Charles and her homeland Grenada. She was scheduled to represent Grenada at the 24th World Championship of Performing Arts (WOCPA) in Long Beach, California. The event is a gathering of singers, dancers, jugglers and models participating in a performing arts competition. Very similar to the Olympic games, only qualified competitors represent their countries in the quest for gold medals. WOCPA calls the competitors "World Stars." More than 60 countries were scheduled to participate in this year's event. Last year's top female model was Berite Labelle of Switzerland.

Then came Public Enemy No. 1 Covid-19 bringing cancellation to the gathering of the 2020 event. All is not lost. WCOPA is hosting the event virtually. The virtual production will nevertheless provide participants a fun-filled atmosphere to test their abilities, to learn from coaches and to interact with other participants around the world as well as making the event exciting for viewers. The virtual event is July 24-August 2. The producers have announced the date for the 2021 gala, July 30-August 8 and Tehera hopes to participate.

Continued on page 14



PHOTOSHOOT:
Lance aux Epines, Saint George, Grenada
MAKEUP ARTIST:
Mia Belfon.
WARDROBE:
Tricia Grant
PHOTOGRAPHER:
Michael Straley of Straley Photography.com



PHOTOSHOOT:
 Chaperone Lisda Sawney and
 Eugene Sawney residence, MD
MAKEUP ARTIST:
 Mia Ottey
WARDROBE:
 Jewel Shannon
PHOTOGRAPHER:
 Lance Curry – lancecurry.com



Charles has been in the modeling and fashion industry for five years focusing mainly in print modeling and other creative projects. In 2016, she embarked on a program called Beauty Has No Skin Tone. "My program gives inspirational lectures to young people and is about encouraging them to appreciate themselves regardless of their skin tone," she proudly states.

She was named model of the month for December 2017 by Caribbean Styles and Culture, a Maryland based organization. The following year, Tehera visited Washington, DC to receive the Caribbean Style and Culture Print Model of the Year Award.

The Spice Island model has graced the pages of the i-Fashion Magazine and walked the runways of Vogue New York Fashion Week, Vogue DC Fashion Week and Walk Fashion Show.

"It is always exciting when one can go out in the world to represent one's country especially in the art and modeling industry. How honored am I to be representing my beautiful country Grenada," remarked Tehera.

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 Ammandale Falls, Saint George, Grenada
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WARDROBE:
 Designer@TriciaGrant
PHOTOGRAPHER:
 Photographer@ReynaldoBernard





PHOTOSHOOT:
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MAKEUP ARTIST:
Mia Belfon
WARDROBE:
Lydia Smith, Sabrience Resort Wear
PHOTOGRAPHER:
Michael Straley of StraleyPhotography.com
An internationally known photographer
residing in Grenada
His studio is at Lance aux Epines, Saint George



COVER
PHOTOSHOOT:
Le Phare Bleu, Saint George, Grenada
MAKEUP ARTIST:
Mia Belfon
WARDROBE:
Lydia Smith, Sabrience Resort Wear
PHOTOGRAPHER:
StraleyPhotography.com



PHOTOSHOOT:
Sandy Point State Park, MD
MAKEUP ARTIST:
Mia Ottey
PHOTOGRAPHER:
Lance Curry – lancecurry.com

COVID-19

Let's Organize and Build A Movement to Fight Back!

By Roger Toussaint

Even if you have been around the block a few times, or you are a serial cynic – you are still left shaking your head, not so much at how the US government is using the pandemic to inflict further pain on working people but more at the fact that, thus far, they seem to be getting away with it. Shaking our heads that too many workers still have that ‘wait and see’ attitude to this real threat, not just of the pandemic but even more gravely, the government’s callous disregard of our rights and lives. Too many are still willing to entrust our existence to groups that would rather exterminate or lynch us, in a heartbeat.

Indeed, the battle lines are being drawn. Believe your own eyes! The government and the rich are *weaponizing* the crisis of the corona pandemic to accomplish their political, economic, and social objectives, by reshaping the U.S undoubtedly, to ‘Make America Great Again’. These include cutting Social Security for its almost 10 million recipients, privatizing the US Post Services to make it solely profit-driven, defunding Medicaid/Medicare, and all public services which the president and his neoliberal enablers, have derisively labeled as “entitlements”. All of the above have been inserted into the COVID-19 conver-

Interestingly, “right-to-life” rightwing conservatives are singing a new tune: ‘Oh well, death is part of life! Let them die!’



Roger Toussaint former Transit Workers Union President.

sation. Interestingly, “right-to-life” rightwing conservatives are singing a new tune: ‘Oh well, death is part of life! Let them die!’

So, which side will win out: theirs or ours?

These bizarre developments provide a peek behind the curtain into the thinking and actual conversa-

tions taking place among the rich and powerful. *The economy* (read profits) *being more important than people’s lives is winning the fight* though it is wrong and short-sighted, even from a purely economic standpoint. But the elite see working people as superfluous and expendable – enough that a couple million could be disposed of, if need be, for the sake of the market, for their personal profits and their unquenchable thirst for power and control over the lives of those who labor. In the darkest of times, they look for and see pathways to securing their permanent power over our lives.

To them, it’s all about money and power. They have plenty, more than they know what to do with, and, yet, they want more! So, they seize the opportunity to lower standards, weaken labor contracts and protections, grab up as much taxpayer dollars as they can, defend *privilege and entitlement, and crush all opposition to their predatory thirst.* Our choice: *Either stand and fight or go like lambs to the slaughter....*

The Man in the Mirror & the New Normal

In the middle of this pandemic, attacks on our families and communities, and the reshaping of this society and of our futures for the worse

With 80% to 90% of all food consumed by the Caribbean Community’s 15 nations and 18 million people coming from outside the region primarily (94%) from the U.S, the deadly dangers of dependence and lack of food sovereignty (as well as of course, dependence on tourism) have become as clear as it has become potentially deadly.

are all taking place rapidly, though at times imperceptibly, because the attacks are so many and so much is going on. Nonetheless, the connections between the policies being adopted and the long-term goals of those ruling the country are slapping us in the face, every day, and from every direction. The bodies are on the ground in plain sight, while over a million infected are queued up as in death’s waiting room. They consist of the old, the infirm, the young, and most hardworking and dedicated workers. At-risk are our children, the apple of our eyes. Day after day the government and its agents tell us, to our faces, that we are expendable, disposable. They tell us, and we still don’t believe them. We pontificate, hesitate, rationalize or justify in order to avoid a hard look at the shame and fragility of the ‘Man In The Mirror’. That’s the “new normal”.

This is an urgent call to Wake Up! As working people, as black people, as immigrants, we are not ‘all in the same boat’ with the rich and powerful. They have fully weaponized the virus pandemic to further their economic, political, and social interests. From the spread of this virus to the “remedies” being applied, to the distribution of \$trillions\$ in taxpayers’ money that is being furnished to supposedly mitigate the effects of



President Donald Trump and Surgeon General Jerome Adams during a White House coronavirus news briefing. Regardless to COVID-19, the president continues to deport undocumented Caribbean immigrants even to one of his staunchest allies in the region, Jamaica.

the pandemic, to liability for reckless endangerment of workers and consumers lives; to putting in place measures for the future running of the society – in all these respects, they are winning and we are sleeping, sheltering in place.

Sadly, we have failed to weaponize our own interests, our own needs in this pandemic war whose lasting effects are going to shape all our futures and our lives for a long time to come. We seem to be waiting on THEIR permission to move! It’s as if we forget that we don’t need any ‘Permission To Mash Up The Place’.

As late as it is and even though we would be coming from behind, we need to take to the battlefield, in ev-

ery arena, to turn this situation around. We must repurpose all the existing structures from; the parents’ councils and school boards to the congress of the U.S; our places of work to the communities, the military to the other security services; and, cyber tactics to hand to hand combat. We need to put aside selfish, childish, things, and work towards true solidarity and common action. And we need a bold, transformative vision along which to create a fairer and more equitable system and society. Our situation cries out for new organizations and for a movement.

We can no longer wait on or rely on others to do this. Certainly not on the Democrats and the organizations tied to them who all promote reliance on the Democrat Party and on their legislative “actions” which just concedes more and more ground which seem to embolden the rich and powerful, while applying band-aids, here and there, to pacify, disarm, and paralyze us. Thus far, they have succeeded and the enemy, both the virus and the rich, has gotten more emboldened.

The weapon that we do have, happens to be the weapon that has driven change throughout the whole of human history – which is mass, organized, power with the capacity for joint action to bring about social change. Use it!

Organize! Reach out and reconnect on this with your co-workers, neighbors, family, and friends. Set up networks and build capacity that covers all our other needs for this fight. Cooperate to take joint direct action. Actions, that are bold and fearless, yet sophisticated, sweeping and determined, forceful yet targeted and well-calibrated enough to match the ferocity of the attacks we and our families are faced with.

We are in real trouble people. Let’s Move Forward and Build Our Movement!



CARICOM Chairperson, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, at a press conference during a visit to Guyana early this year when wearing a mask was not yet mandatory. Participating was the CARICOM Secretariat team. The Caribbean Community headquarters is in Guyana.

COVID-19 and Caribbean Americans

For decades Caribbean-born workers in NY, as around much of the US, have heavily populated the health care sector, as well as the service economy, and have, from the onset of the pandemic, been among the first to die and in disproportionate numbers. Many are now facing the perils of working in, what authorities are prematurely calling, the post COVID-19 public sector, and still with questionable protective gear.

In addition, hundreds of thousands of generally hard-working Caribbean nationals eke out an existence “off the books” and are among the self-employed and many in below minimum wage jobs receive no health care, no food stamps or other public benefits, and certainly no \$1,200 “stimulus” checks. Incidentally, many of these workers can now be expected to be deemed “essential” and compelled to go out to work, with little or no rights nor benefits.

By extension and in the midst of the Cov-19 virus pandemic, the US president has moved to weaponize the crisis by flooding the Caribbean Sea with battleships intimidating the region and surrounding Venezuela with military might to foster unrest inside the country and threaten an invasion in order to force regime change and place the government there into the hands of the most right-wing Venezuelans.

The US has also intercepted and rerouted deliveries of medical supplies headed to the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and Barbados’ ventilators from Rihanna. What makes this particularly disturbing is that the US, working with their local cohorts, has worked hard at shutting down local manufacturing, compelling dependence on US goods and products, and strictly controlling and regulating the supply chains.

Now the US is using that dependence to strangle any country it chooses to. The US has also been using monetary “aide” earmarked for fighting the pandemic, to punish those countries and governments unwilling to surrender their inde-

pendence and self-respect to the U.S, while rewarding others with improved funding in exchange for bowing before Trump. The outcry across the Caribbean ought to be “Never again!”

With 80% to 90% of all food consumed by the Caribbean Community’s 15 nations and 18 million people coming from outside the region primarily (94%) from the U.S., the deadly dangers of dependence and lack of food sovereignty (as well as of course, dependence on tourism) have become as clear as it has become potentially deadly. Imported food sources, supply chains, shipping, pricing coupled with foreign exchange shortages across the region, all point to severe crises ahead.

Good thing is that now more than ever, Caribbean people (along with the rest of the wider region) are taking up the challenge of reshaping their futures and economies by looking for solutions within and among.

***Roger Toussaint, former President of the Transport Workers Union, Local 100, who led the 2005 NYC Transit Strike, is a founding member of the Caribbean Awareness Committee, NYC.*

EVERYBODY'S
NEW YORK



Samaritan's Purse Field Hospital in the world's famous Central Park when New York City was the epicenter of COVID-19.

PHOTO Leonard McKenzie

A High School Senior

On the Covid-19 Frontline

I'm the only person in my family that is working. My mom is disabled and my little brother can't work, making me the overall breadwinner of the house.

By S. L. White

As an essential worker I put myself at risk almost every day on the front lines. The dictionary defines essential as something or someone that is “absolutely necessary and extremely important.” Although, this pandemic has made me feel more important than ever, I understand the danger I put myself in. I am pleased that I help people get things they need to get by and survive. Being regarded as an essential worker is a great tribute to what I do. It also reflects the responsible role I play as the main breadwinner for my family although it is very risky and dangerous.

Being an essential worker is not as amazing as everyone seems to think. Yes, I still get a chance to save a little money even though it's not much. As an outsider looking in, I can see how that can be seen as a “perk” but I'm here to tell you, it's not all peaches and cream. One major issue with being an essential worker is transportation. Getting to work is very much a hassle and an anxiety-provoking experience. With all the concerns about germs and contagions, the trains all of a sudden seem absolutely disgusting and it's frustrating because it seems the government isn't doing much to help.

EVERYBODY'S
NEW YORK



Refrigerated tractor trailers with the dead parked in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn. After the gruesome discovery of bodies were found in a funeral home and nearby trucks on Utica Avenue, the dead was placed in a tractor trailer and moved to Red Hook. The funeral home was owned by a Caribbean-New York family.

PHOTO Leonard McKenzie

When I'm on my way to work on the bus it's weird being a New Yorker and seeing so many empty streets and roads in the city that literally doesn't sleep. I see more homeless than anything walking the streets. Sometimes I still see people without masks. I even see people in the neighborhood parks pounding and playing, with no regards to social distancing, as if we're not going through a global crisis. It's frustrating to see people of the community putting themselves and others at risk especially for non-essential things. I see many people going for walks which I think is very understandable as a lot of people probably feel caged in their homes.

In addition, homeless people seem to have no choice but to make the subways their homes. They are taking over trains and the buses barely run and are never on time. Even when they are not present their smell and stench still lingers and haunts the train--it's horrible. They aren't wearing masks and some of them come on the subway terrorizing passengers. As a young female sometimes, I feel targeted by the homeless men who take the train along with me. A lot of times I'm the only one on the train with one of them--this can be a very uncomfortable and a scary experience for me. Even for regular people it's an issue while taking the MTA. Many people aren't following social distancing guidelines while taking busses especially because they aren't running as frequently as they should. Busses become packed quickly and it also has to do with people wanting to avoid the train.

My job as a supermarket employee during this time is a bittersweet experience. Sweet because I go out of my way to help others and some people are very grateful for

me and my other coworkers putting ourselves in jeopardy. Others don't seem to be so grateful. Some people come to the store with a very nasty spirit which can make a day at work unpleasant. Some people come and don't follow rules; they take things in bulk which isn't fair to other customers. They'll take very long while shopping which can be a bit of a problem because the store only let a certain amount of people in at a time. In addition, many customers don't follow some of the rules that are put in place during this time to make it a healthy environment for everyone. This can be concerning because nobody wants to get sick from the virus.

Every day lines to get into my job typically wrap around the entire block no matter the weather or time of day. Due to this a lot of workers are working a lot more hours than usual. I used to work part time and every now and then I'd work a regular eight-hour shift on the weekend if I could. Now, a lot of times I end up working 10 hour shifts nearly every day. This messes up my sleep schedule and the time I get to spend with my family and even myself.

Many people are out of jobs at this time and it's sad to see because so many people have a family to feed. Some people have the grace of being able to work from home while I see many people are getting dropped from their job and are being told to file for unemployment which nine out of ten times isn't enough to feed one's family. It's so sad. When this pandemic is over a lot of people won't even have jobs.

I'm the only person in my family that is working. My mom is disabled and my little brother can't work, making me the overall breadwinner of the house. I use

As a young female sometimes, I feel targeted by the homeless men who take the train along with me. A lot of times I'm the only one on the train with one of them--this can be a very uncomfortable and a scary experience for me.

money from my long shifts to help pay bills and because I work at a supermarket, I am able to buy food from there at a discount. I try to do what I can to help out as much as possible at home. It's giving me much responsibility and little free time. I try not to complain much because I know it's for the good and I'm not only able to help my family but also shoppers by ensuring that they get essentials.

Overall, even though I know I'm putting my health on the line, sometimes when I'm at work it doesn't feel like it. At work it's smooth sailing between the customers and my overall shift, sometimes not. Managers at my job work very hard to make sure employees are happy and feel safe every day at work even though sometimes the customers do create a hard time.

We get wellness checks as soon as you clock in. This is to ensure that you're okay for the day and your overall health is fine. They ask simple questions like: are you experiencing COVID symptoms and/or have you been around anyone that could've been exposed? In the event that you said yes to anything--which, they're hoping that you don't, lol--you get paid for the day and are sent home.

The job really cares for their employees and our overall health even besides this virus. They put many things in place to help us help everyone to be safe. They gave us plexiglass at the registers as a safety precaution because some people don't listen to the 6ft rule. We clean a lot more often than usual and we get cleaning crews as well which is mandatory by the State, I believe. So, it's good to know that there are people out there helping us and we all work together to help the community.

Remember when New York had just 11 cases a few weeks ago and now we're at hundreds of thousands? I guess we should've taken the virus more seriously. Sometimes it seems like it all just happened overnight.

I went to school on March 13 and at that time I never thought that was going to be my last time being there and seeing my friends. There was a little noise that they

were going to close school but no one truly believed it. But Monday, March 16, was a rude awakening that continued for the rest of my senior year as my normal life was taken away when schools were closed.

Sadly, I got my prom taken away, even though I longed for it the most. It would have been one of my favorite things for my senior year. I've been through so much throughout my high school career that sometimes it started to feel like there were barriers trying to prevent me from graduating so I wanted the prom to be my official celebration.

This virus is also affecting me and my mental state especially because I can't be outside. I hate staying in and sometimes I feel caged so work is my only escape from my home. I deal with a lot at home. And oftentimes I would go out on days and when I didn't have work to escape the at-home stress and now I'm forced to be around it when I'm not at work and there are many others dealing with the same situation. Many people come from toxic households like myself and are now forced to be home. Luckily, I have a job and it's the thing helping me through it. I can't enjoy my normal teenage days because of the danger from this virus.

Everyone is scared. It could be you; it could be anyone. Sadly, one of my friends has tested positive and has caught the coronavirus even after following all safety precautions and as that person expressed their experience to me: The biggest concern was their parents, all while still being scared for themselves. It's a scary experience for anyone.

There's limited testing; people are dying. I lost a beloved family member to it and I'm sorry for anyone reading this and knows someone with it as well. I haven't spoken to a lot of my family because they're dealing with their struggles as well as bills, food and trying to keep together and keep their sanity.

I feel more separated from not only my family but my environment. Often it feels like it's everyone for themselves at the same time people are trying to stay together. It's a confusing period. I don't feel like anyone was prepared for this and everyone is taking things differently.

Many people are focused on shortages. A man came into my job and bought 7 twelve cases of water. Many people have been buying meat, canned goods and frozen foods - and as many of us have seen, toilet paper. Some people are buying ridiculous amounts and some people respect moderation. I've realized that local markets are putting limits on how much people can buy but bigger markets like Wegmans, BJ's, Trader Joe's don't have limits on what customers can buy which would most likely be why we see so many people buying crazy amounts of items. I like the local market rule better. I feel it's better for the community. We're all going through this so it's better if people aren't selfish.

*S. L. White is a graduating senior from The Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design.

Bacchanal Time in Grenada and St. Vincent

Not Only Trump Loves Mélé

Letter from Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves



St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves.



Grenada Prime Minister Keith Mitchell.

When the pandemic reigned supreme, Caribbean prime ministers, emulating President Trump, held press conferences and gave confusing addresses almost daily to their respective nations. In early April Grenada's Prime Minister Keith Mitchell shocked Grenadians, Vincentians and the region when he accused the St. Vincent and the Grenadines government of inviting people from the islands of Carriacou and Petit Martinique, both part of Grenada, to go to the St. Vincent island of Union Island to buy food in violation of the World Health Organization COVID-19 protocols. At that time people in Carriacou and Petit Martinique claimed they were starving and not getting enough food from Grenada.

Even before Mitchell ended his casual statement, social media, in both nations and amongst their nationals abroad, went wild. Prime Minister Mitchell's statement and Prime Minister Gonsalves' various responses are what the media thrives on around the world – sensation.

Trinidad & Tobago media tried to bait Prime Minister Keith Rowley into the brawl and so were media in other Caricom states but those prime ministers, for the first time in a longtime embraced a virtue - too often lacking in the region - commonsense, and stayed out of the mélé.

The numerous islands between mainland St. Vincent and mainland Grenada are known as the Grenadines. Thirty-two belongs to St. Vincent. Islands such as Mustique, Palm Islands, Tobago Cays and Bequia are the homes of the rich and famous. From the 16th century when European nations decimated the aboriginals and colonized the islands, those islands close to St. Vincent linked commercially with St. Vincent and those closer to Grenada became associated with Grenada. Later, Eng-

land, who owned them formally, allowed islands closer to Grenada to become part of Grenada's jurisdiction and the others to become constitutionally part of St. Vincent. As a matter of fact, a few acres of land in Carriacou belongs to St. Vincent. To verify Vincy ownership, one will have to dig up long forgotten documents buried in a British archive.

When sailing or flying to and from the two main islands one never loses sight of land. The view is sheer magnificent.

When there are concerts in Carriacou by visiting world renowned and regional entertainers, it is not unusual for lovers and fete-people to row to Carriacou from a Grenadine islands for the event and row back at sunrise. And, people on Carriacou and Petit Martinique sometimes do their shopping on mainland St. Vincent – customs and immigration are informal within Grenadine islands except for the importation and exportations of herbs and bootlegging.

Therefore, when Prime Minister Keith Mitchell, evidently imitating President Trump, threw the first rock across the still-pristine seas, the splashes were seen and felt across the region. Mitchell and Gonsalves are the longest serving prime ministers in Caricom and both flung pebbles at each other on radio, television and in print. Many even wondered if both have been in power too long and now need forced retirement, if not banishment, from their fiefdoms.

Towards the end of May, Gonsalves may had had the last laugh. A mega tourist ship with stranded Vincentian crew members and two Grenadines dropped off the Vincentian workers in St. Vincent but the captain said he was not going to Grenada "just to carry two persons" but

Continued on page 29



Your Contribution Is Appreciated

Owing to requests by Caribbean immigrants of the 1970s for a nationwide Caribbean-American magazine, I established EVERYBODY'S Magazine in 1977. Today, 43 years later, EVERYBODY'S is still around although not as frequently as before.

During the 43 years many publications folded. I miss my Ebony and Jet, two of the greatest Black magazines ever. Do you want EVERYBODY'S to continue?

I thank readers across the U.S. who voluntarily send contributions to sustain this magazine.

Can you kindly send a contribution to receive or continue receiving it? Please send what you can afford. Most readers send \$15 while others send far more. Whatever you send will be appreciated.

Make check payable to EVERYBODY'S Magazine, 1630 Nostrand Ave., Brooklyn, NY, 11226. (You can reach me at herman@everybodysmag.com or direct (718) 930-0230

Sincerely,

Herman Hall

Herman! I'm tired of my friends and family **BORROWING** my EVERYBODY'S that they **NEVER RETURN** so I'm enclosing a bit more so you can send it to one of them.

Enclosed is my contribution for \$ _____ towards the longevity of EVERYBODY'S

MY NAME _____ ALSO SEND TO _____

ADDRESS _____ APT _____ ADDRESS _____ APT _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



L to R: Dr Vonnie John, Pastor of the Isiah Temple of Mount Hope in Brooklyn and Shelton Rose take a break during a delivery of Grace food products.

GraceKennedy

Worldwide Pandemic Assistance

"We are providing food to those in need in the community as a result of COVID-19," remarked Derrick Reckord, President & CEO, GraceKennedy Foods (USA). Reckord reacted to the leadership of Congresswoman Yvette Clarke and Jamaica's Consul General Alison Roach-Wilson who are assisting Grace to deliver food to community groups in New York City.

GraceKennedy is one of the world's largest manufacturers and distributors of food. Popular Grace and La Fe brands include Grace Tropical Rhythms, corned beef, ackee, soups, pasta, porridge and sardines.

Mr. Reckord hopes to continue helping individuals and family in need for at least two or three months because as he says, "We know this is a difficult and challenging time."

The donation of Grace products is handled by religious bodies who distribute them to persons in need.

Pastors of Beulah Church of Nazarene and Calvary Community Church in the New York metropolitan areas are thanking Grace Foods for the company's "selfless donations." So are church leaders and community organizations in Florida and other states.

In addition to the U.S., GraceKennedy subsidiaries in Europe, Latin America and Canada are providing help to families stricken by the pandemic. It is a worldwide effort by GraceKennedy to help in a global catastrophe.

GraceKennedy Foods (USA) has sent gift cards to assist Caribbean students across the US who have been displaced by their colleges closure and are unable to get back to their respective countries. Established in Kingston, Jamaica, 98 years ago, the company has been a vanguard in fostering education.

Jamaican-Born Designer D'Marsh Couture Contributes Masks

Healthcare workers at Brooklyn Hospital are in awe after receiving a donation of masks from Glenroy March, founder of fashion brand D'Marsh Coutre. It was the independent fashion designer way of thanking frontline workers for risking their lives to save others. "I hope I'm helping them and others brighten their day," says March who is acclaimed across the U.S. fashion industry.

March career was propelled when his designs were exhibited during Fashion Week of 2003 in Kingston, Jamaica.

D'Marsh Coutre continues to assist frontline workers. The company's mask and head covering designs are fashionable and available to the public at modest prices. For each item purchased, D'Marsh Coutre is donating one at no cost to a healthcare provider.

The designer products can be seen at www.dmarsh-couture.com/store



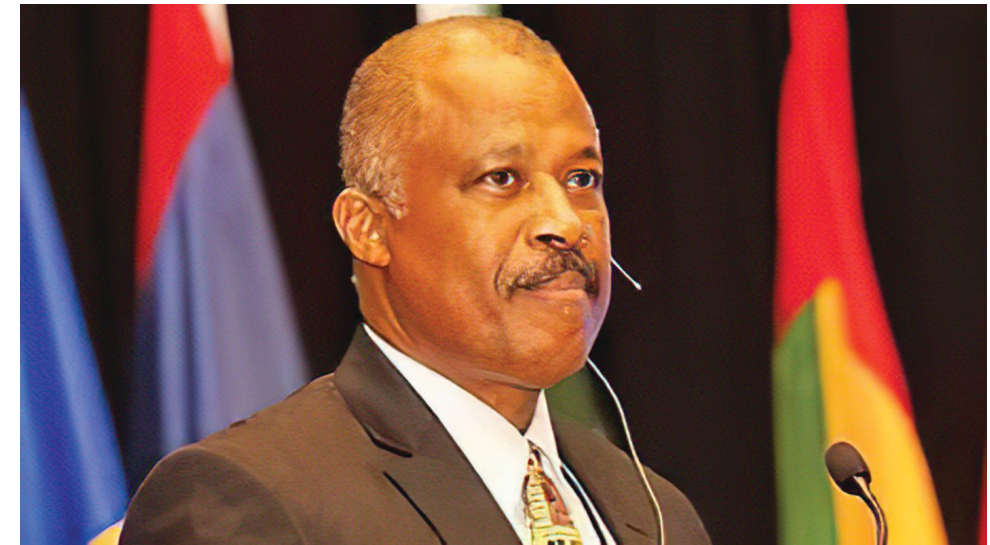
Designer Glenroy March (in black) and frontline workers at Brooklyn Hospital.



L to R: Shelton Rose, Business Development Manager, GraceKennedy Foods (USA) LLC, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, Brooklyn District Director Anita Taylor, and Pastor of the Calvary Community Church Cecil Henry.

COMMENTARY REPARATIONS Not on COVID Fatality List

By Martin P. Felix



Professor Sir Hilary McDonald is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Committee.

*When will this payday be? Mr. Bigman
When will this payday be?
When will this payday be?
For all these retired slaves*

*My forefather worked down here
On this great plantation
True he didn't get no pay
For all their wasted days
Culture "Payday"*

It was an interesting contrast to see luxury Caribbean real estate offered in the April 29 New York Times sandwiched between servings of morbid COVID-19 news, which included the effects of the pandemic on tourism-dependent Caribbean countries. African Americans are reputed to be the worst affected by the pandemic, with predominantly black counties around the country reporting highly disproportionate COVID deaths. Coincidentally, Caribbean countries are among the most vulnerable countries in the crisis, as underlying factors compound already unsustainable models. Yet, picturesque adverts invite sales of super expensive properties in prime Caribbean destinations with price tickets unreachable to most locals. How can the pandemic inform

the on-going efforts to redress economic, social, and political inequality in region as expressed in the heightening demands for reparatory justice?

The unevenness in which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted different demographics has laid bare the inequalities that prevail within and between countries. Already made vulnerable by small size and adverse environmental factors, Caribbean countries are simultaneously in the midst of an already existing public health crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant economic storm. The situation is one of a new pandemic upon an older one because, according to global health agencies, people of African descent in the Caribbean have the world's highest incidence of chronic diseases, such as hypertension and type two diabetes. As if matters could not have been even worse, the 2020 hurricane season is already being forecast to be "an unusually active hurricane season." Every year, at least one Caribbean state economy is completely destroyed by adverse weather conditions. The conversion of these factors are raising deep existential questions about the Islands in the Sun and the inherited historical legacy.

Tourist-dependent economies, like many in the Caribbean region, are heavily impacted by adverse weather and economic shocks because of their limited social safety nets. Upwards of 70% of revenues in many territo-

ries is derived from the tourism sector. But because of the present crisis, throughout the region, airports and hotels are shuttered, unemployment is soaring, without a clear end in sight. According to the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with a projected -5.3 per cent drop in activity in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in the worst economic contraction in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. Stakeholders around the region are asking for a reset of economic priorities, developmental refocus, and a revisit of sustainable goals, etc.

Caribbean microstates face the disadvantage of embarking on their 4th, 5th, and 6th decades of independence following a legacy of 500 years of colonialism. And the COVID-19 pandemic has coincided with heightened demands for reparations in the middle of the decade designated by the United Nations as the International Decade for People of African Descent, 2015–2024.

In 2017 the CARICOM reparations committee, sent letters demanding payment from France, Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Norway and Sweden – the region’s main erstwhile colonizing countries. The committee, with representatives and coordinating bodies in all the countries commonly impacted, are clamoring for at least an apology, and at best material compensation, for centuries of slavery and colonialism in the region. Pointing out that the present assistance from the former colonizers is presently merely in the form of aid, and not as development assistant, proponents of reparations are arguing for a Marshall Plan-like set of initiatives, funded by these benefactors of enslavement, to help in the development of the Caribbean.

It is very important that this new momentum towards this long-delayed but morally sound reparatory justice plea is not eclipsed by COVID-19, the impact of which is even made worse by an already disadvantageous plight caused by historical injustice. We have been there before. The recommendations for reinvigorating the struggle against racism following the conclusions of the UN conference of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa was overshadowed by the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, leaving key agenda items that could have advanced the drive for reparative justice out of the limelight.

The Durban Declaration and Program of Action, that concluded the conference, highlighted the notion that “...Historical injustices have undeniably contributed to poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability and insecurity [and are negatively affecting] many people in different parts of the world, in particular [post-slavery] countries. [It] recognized the need to develop programs for social and economic development of these societies.”

The Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) has come up with a proposed 10-Point Plan for Reparative Justice aimed at repairing the harmful damages caused

by European colonialism. According to University of the West Indies Vice-Chancellor Hilary Beckles, Chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, the plan is aimed to account for the forced displacement of over 12 million people from the African continent by European colonial powers, and over 350 years of enslavement and unpaid labor by them and their descendants. This population transfer and accumulation of wealth led to the transformation of European nations through an industrial revolution, spurned private corporations and enriched individual families through generations.

In a recent teleconference on the impact of the pandemic on the region, Vice Chancellor Beckles pointed out that containment measures such as social distancing have exposed the class stratification in the region, particularly the varying ways in which the state apparatus treats members of different classes. This situation mirrors problems reported daily in US.

What form of compensation is being demanded? Is it just about individuals getting money in their pockets? Contrary to the stereotype advanced by detractors and critics of the reparation’s movement, the CARICOM 10-point agenda is broad in scope and intent. The proposal ranges from a full formal apology, to an option for those who may choose repatriation back to Africa, a Caribbean indigenous peoples development program, the building of cultural institutions, relief to target the region’s public health care crisis, illiteracy eradication, a necessary African knowledge/education program, psychological rehabilitation for descendants, a debt cancellation demand, and technology transfers.

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 in the United Kingdom that preposterously required the compensation of £20 million to slave owners on account for loss of “property”, left the formerly enslaved landless, homeless and uncompensated, setting future generations and emerging societies such as the Caribbean, at a significant economic and social loss.

We have to be careful that we don’t repeat history. With the selling off of prime real estate and many coastal properties – often outside of the economic reach of locals – in many Caribbean countries, the high indebtedness of many Caribbean countries, we run the risk of ending up in a similar situation of homelessness and lack of property in our own countries that typified the immediate post abolition era. We may well end up in a situation in which the deserved reparation for centuries of our ancestor’s toil and suffering result in a similar post-emancipation situation of dispossession. Indeed, reparations may come back to the very ones that disenfranchised our people in the first instance. Increased awareness of these issues, in schools, civil society, as well as in the wider social sphere, will not only break the chains of this cyclical tragedy, but also advance the momentum for reparative justice.

Martin P. Felix is a visual artist and educator living in New York City. He is co-editor of Big Drum Nation, a Caribbean journal of arts and culture.

the buzz on social media declaimed that the Grenada Government refused to accept its nationals. Gonsalves graciously accepted the two Grenadians, “treated them as Vincentians” and quarantined them—in keeping with the WHO protocol-- before sending them to his once-in-a-while-friend, Keith Mitchell.

Letter from Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves to Prime Minister Keith Mitchell:

April 14, 2020

**Dr. The Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
St. George’s, Grenada**

Solidarity greetings from the government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines!

I regret that you were wrongly advised or badly misinformed on the facts and the issues, including those arising from my recent statement on Good Friday, regarding the movement to our Southern Grenadines (especially Union Island) of Grenadians who belong to Carriacou and Petit Martinique.

Your statements on the matter-at-hand contained several inaccuracies but I shall only mention the two which are the most egregious. For ease of reference I state below, respectively, the twin falsehoods and the corresponding facts:

FALSEHOOD: That the borders of St. Vincent and the Grenadines were, and are, open at the time of COVID-19.

FACTS: From the very beginning, the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines placed certain explicit restrictions on entry to St. Vincent and the Grenadines of persons who originated from other countries substantially afflicted by COVID-19. These restrictions were tightened, extended, or ramped up on an ongoing basis as the circumstances merited. Indeed, from ten days ago — before your statements — anyone originating from a CARICOM member-state was required, among other things, as a condition of entry, to be quarantined for 14 days, whether or not he or she had symptoms of COVID-19. Further, in none of the Grenadines’ Islands has there been a port of entry for yachts or pleasure boats for over two weeks now; and there was in place, before your statements, a controlled regime for a trade in goods. Please note, too, that the last international flight to St. Vincent and the Grenadines was on March 28, 2020 — long before your statements.

FALSEHOOD: That the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines encouraged or invited residents of Carriacou and Petit Martinique to enter St. Vincent and the Grenadines in defiance of your country’s closure of ports, curfew, and “lock down”.

FACTS: The Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines specifically stated that given the history and culture of “free movement of persons” between the islands of the Southern Grenadines (respectively parts of Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines offered to as-

sist, if assistance were required, with food, medicine, and cooking gas “but in a structured and organised manner”. This genuine and helpful offer was in response to the residents of Carriacou and Petit Martinique arriving in Union Island — despite your government’s curfew and “lock-down” — to purchase or to arrange in the purchase of the said commodities in more than modest quantities.

After all, Grenadians are our dear brothers and sisters divided only by miniscule degrees of latitude and longitude. I thus find it quite amusing and ironical that some who are egging you on in your blast against me are agitating to raise aloft, swiftly, the fig-leaf of sovereignty against a friendly neighbour, yet the same persons oft-times, and easily, surrender it, in substance, to imperialism. I am sure that the distinguished Prime Minister of Grenada is not in that sort of ignoble company.

Underlying your comments, I sense an unstated assumption or implication that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has opted for a less focused approach than that of some neighboring countries in the fight against COVID-19. That imputation, too, is false! To be sure the authorities of St. Vincent and the Grenadines have not adopted draconian or near-draconian measures, but we have followed the science and the generally-accepted sensible protocols on COVID-19; and we have applied them efficaciously to our circumstances in their fluidity and evolution. Our approach, and its relevant details, were elaborated in my address to the nation on March 25, 2020. A copy of this address is enclosed. I do not in any way suggest that our approach is the preferred approach for any other country in the OECS or CARICOM.

It is to be noted that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has two broad draft plans of operational significance: (i) A National Health Disaster Plan; and (ii) A National Influenza Pandemic Plan (inclusive of COVID-19). These Plans are being refined on an ongoing basis. Our professionals have been doing excellent work, in every material particular, in the battle against COVID-19.

It is noteworthy, too, that St. Vincent and the Grenadines is the first country in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean to have instituted quarantine measures on COVID-19 in respect of 15 persons who entered St. Vincent and the Grenadines; this was way before St. Vincent and the Grenadines had its first confirmed case on March 11, 2020.

At the same time, the leadership of the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has not panicked and it will not panic in the face of the dreaded COVID-19; we are calm and focused; we have avoided the easy, alluring temptations of an excessive fear which paralyses and an hysteria which induces an unbalanced over-reaction. Equally, we have decidedly not been complacent in facing the monumental many-sided challenge of COVID-19; so, we have not under-reacted.

As at April 14, 2020, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has done 91 tests for COVID-19. Of this number, there are 12 confirmed cases, all of whom are directly im-

Continued on page 30

ported — 8 of these are Vincentian crew members from cruise ships; there is no local transmission; no one with COVID-19 has been hospitalised in St. Vincent and the Grenadines; none of the confirmed cases has been seriously ill, requiring ICU treatment; no doctor, nurse, other health worker, or police officer has been tested positive; no one in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has died from, or with, COVID-19.

We have carried out a relentless campaign against COVID-19 without recourse to a “lock-down”, curfew, or a state of emergency; we have used other levers at the disposal of the government to fight this dreaded infectious disease; we have taken the people into our confidence; and we have assured them that we are prepared to utilize the full panoply of constitutional and legal powers, if we consider their use reasonably required and justifiable in all the circumstances. Overwhelmingly, our people have been understanding and cooperative. We have preferred, metaphorically-speaking, to use the scalpel, not a chain saw; a carving knife, not a machete in our focused, scientific approach.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, like all other CARICOM member-countries, is not yet out of the proverbial woods. So, we remain vigilant and focused. In the process we know always that we can count on the love, grace, and blessings of Almighty God to see us through this terrible ordeal of COVID-19.

Please be assured that the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is not interested, and has never been interested, in initiating or engaging in any metaphoric village dog-fight with the Prime Minister of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique. Both of us

are the longest-serving Prime Ministers in CARICOM who surely must have better things to do with our time than to “throw words” across the Caribbean Sea!

There is, I believe, a settled certainty that your statements were not reflective of any malicious intent but that they had their genesis in wrong advice and/or misinformation. I suspect that a deliberately truncated audio of my statement, so doctored by those stuffed with political malice against me, has been brought to your attention and has gravely misled you; please note the vital omission from the maliciously-circulated audio in which I had emphasized that the actualization of the offer is to be effected in a “structured and organised manner”.

I feel sure that when you are seized of all the facts, including those which I have outlined herein, you are likely to reflect that your allegation of “irresponsibility” against me is wholly unfounded and wrong-headed. Accordingly, you may then grasp a measure of the honour which I know that you possess, and withdraw it. If not, it may be open to persons of objectivity to conclude that there is more in the mortar beside the pestle. I am sure, given our respective political histories, that you know what I mean.

So, I set the record straight in respect of this veritable storm-in-a-teacup and shrug my shoulders at it as nothing but water-under-the-bridge; I mix my metaphors in Caribbean candour and humour.

All the best to you, your family, the government and people of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique.

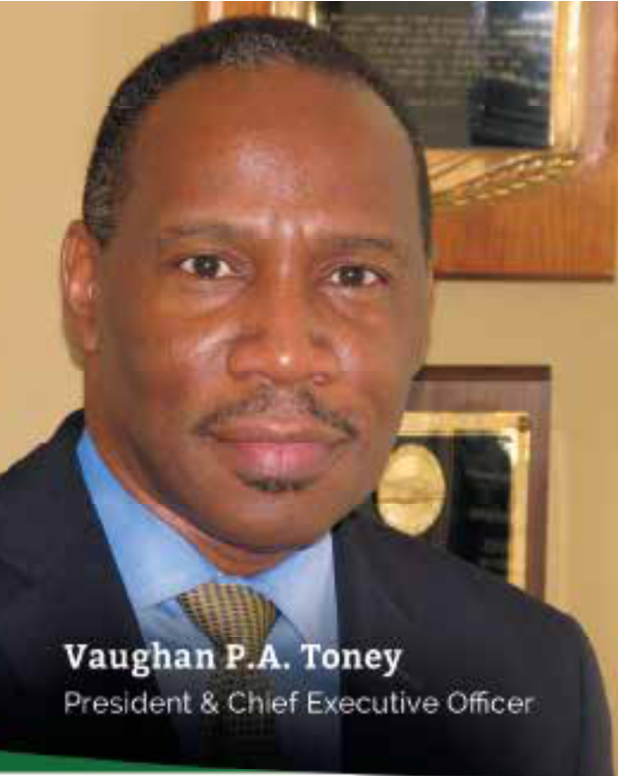
Sincerely yours,
Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves
Prime Minister

Caricom & other Caribbean States
COVID-19 Related Deaths as of late May, 2020


The Caribbean Community (Caricom) is an association of a 15-states and five associated states. It originally comprised of Anglophone nations; Creole-speaking Haiti and Dutch speaking Suriname have joined.

1. Anguilla	0	11. Guyana	10	NON-CARICOM STATES WITH COVID-19 DEATHS	
2. Antigua and Barbuda	3	12. Haiti	20		
3. Bahamas	11	13. Jamaica	9	1. Cuba	79
4. Barbados	7	14. Montserrat	1	2. Aruba	3
5. Belize	2	15. Saint Lucia	0	3. Stint Maarten	15
6. Bermuda	9	16. St Kitts. and Nevis	0	4. Saint Martin	3
7. British Virgin Islands	1	17. St Vincent. and the Grenadines	0	5. Curacao	1
8. Cayman Islands	1	18. Suriname	1	6. Dominican Republic	424
9. Dominica	0	19. Trinidad and Tobago	8		
10. Grenada	0	20. Turks and Caicos Islands	1		

Source: WHO



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