Jackson Rising Redux
Lessons on Building the Future in the Present

Kali Akuno & Ajamu Nangwaya • Foreword: Richard Wolff

Mississippi is the poorest state in the US, with the highest percentage of Black people and a history of vicious racial terror. Black resistance at a time of global health, economic, and climate crisis is the backdrop and context for the drama captured in this new and revised collection of essays. Cooperation Jackson, founded in 2014 in Mississippi’s capital to develop an economically uplifting democratic “solidarity economy,” is anchored by a network of worker-owned, self-managed cooperative enterprises. The organization developed in the context of the historic election of radical Mayor Chokwe Lumumba, lifetime human rights attorney. Subsequent to Lumumba’s passing less than one year after assuming office, the network developed projects both inside and outside of the formal political arena. In 2020, Cooperation Jackson became the center for national and international coalition efforts, bringing together progressive peoples from diverse trade union, youth, church, and cultural movements. This long-anticipated anthology details the foundations behind those successful campaigns. It unveils new and ongoing strategies and methods being pursued by the movement for grassroots-centered Black community control and self-determination, inspiring partnership and emulation across the globe.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kali Akuno is a cofounder and codirector of Cooperation Jackson. He was the director of special projects and external funding in the mayoral administration of the late Chokwe Lumumba of Jackson, MS. His focus in this role was supporting cooperative development, the introduction of eco-friendly and carbon reduction methods of operation, and the promotion of human rights and international relations for the city. Akuno has also served as the codirector of the U.S. Human Rights Network, and the executive director of the Peoples’ Hurricane Relief Fund (PHRF) based in New Orleans, after Hurricane Katrina. He was a cofounder of the School of Social Justice and Community Development (SSJCD), a public school serving the academic needs of low-income African American and Latino communities in Oakland.

Ajamu Nangwaya, PhD, is an educator, organizer, and writer. He is a lecturer at the Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of the West Indies Mona campus. Ajamu is coeditor with Dr. Michael Truscillo of the anthology Why Don’t the Poor Rise Up? and a former vice president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Nangwaya was a columnist of the weekly Toronto newspaper Share, serving the African Canadian community.

Richard Wolff is professor of economics emeritus, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a visiting professor at the New School University in New York. Wolff’s recent work has concentrated on analyzing the causes and alternative solutions to the global economic crisis. His groundbreaking book Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism inspired the creation of Democracy at Work, a nonprofit organization dedicated to showing how and why to make democratic workplaces real. Wolff is also the author of Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism and Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do about It. He hosts the weekly hour-long radio program “Economic Update,” which is syndicated on public radio stations nationwide, and he writes regularly for The Guardian and Truthout.org.

ACCOLADES

“Cooperation Jackson is one of the most encouraging, fascinating, important social experiments that is taking place in the United States today...a model for the emerging struggle against the corporate state. Jackson is one of the epicenters of resistance for all of us to emulate; Kali Akuno and Ajamu Nangwaya lay the scene.”

—Chris Hedges, journalist, Presbyterian minister, and Princeton University lecturer; author of War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning