

This Land Is Their Land
A Revolutionary Working People's History
of the United States

George Gruenthal

Second revised and expanded edition

January 2019

Contents

Introduction	1
1. The Americas before Columbus	3
Buffy Sainte Marie: My Country ‘Tis of Thy People You’re Dying	6
2. African Slaves.....	9
European Indentures	11
3. Formation of the 13 Colonies into the United States	13
4. Andrew Jackson, “Representative of the Common People,” Indian Fighter and Slave-owner.....	16
5. Compromises and Struggles between the Plantation South and the Capitalist North.....	18
Slave Rebellions	18
6. The Mexican American Wars, 1836-1848.....	22
7. Civil War	25
8. Reconstruction and the Development of the Afro-American Nation.....	29
Presidential Reconstruction	29
Reconstruction Governments.....	30
9. The Unification of the U.S. Capitalist State	33
10. 1886 and the Fight for the 8-Hour Day.....	36
Lucy Parsons.....	37
11. Workers’ Struggles, 1880 to 1920	39
Joe Hill Song.....	40
12. Development of Imperialism and the Spanish-American War of 1898	42
Major General Smedley D. Butler	45
13. World War I.....	46
14. The Russian Revolution in and its Influence on the United States	49
15. Formation of the Communist Party USA	52
16. Reformist and Revolutionary Organizations within the Black National Movement.....	55
Claude McKay:If We Must Die.....	57

17. The “Roaring Twenties”	59
18. The Great Depression	61
Early Workers’ Struggles during the Depression	62
19. Workers’ Struggles During the New Deal	65
Fascist Attacks and Bourgeois Reforms	67
20. The International Situation Leading up to World War II.....	70
Woody Guthrie: Jarama Valley	73
21. World War II and the Role of the Major Powers.....	75
Bertold Brecht: What Did the Soldier’s Wife Receive?.....	79
22. The International Consequences of World War II.....	81
23. Post-World War II, McCarthyism and the Trade Union Movement	84
24. The Korean War	88
25. The Civil Rights Movement	92
Malcolm X	94
Billie Holiday: Strange Fruit.....	97
26. The Rise of the Revolutionary Afro-American Liberation Movement	98
The Black Panther Party	100
Other Revolutionary Afro-American Groups	103
Gil Scott Heron: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised	104
27. Other Revolutionary National Movements.....	107
The Puerto Rican National Movement.....	107
The Chicano/Mexicano Movement.....	108
Asian-American, Native American and Other Movements ...	109
28. The Vietnam War and the Anti-War Movement	112
Nixon and Watergate; Ford, the Totally Unelected President..	116
Phil Ochs: Love Me, I’m a Liberal	117
29. The Women’s Movement	119
The Movement of the 1970s	121
30. The LGBT Movement	123
AIDS	124
31. The Rise and Decline of the New Marxist-Leninist Movements	127

Maoism	130
Other Problems of the New M-L Movements	132
32. A Period of Ebbs and Flows	136
The International Situation	138
33. From the 2000 Elections to the Attacks of September 11, 2001	141
34. “Terrorism” and Endless Wars	144
Invasion of Iraq	145
35. Scapegoating of Muslims and the USA PATRIOT ACT	148
Dr. Aafia Siddiqui	150
36. May Day 2006 and the Immigrant Rights Movement	152
37. The Crisis of 2008 and the Decline of U.S. Imperialism	155
38. Continuing Imperialist Wars, Inter-Imperialist Crises and Internationalism	158
Imperialism in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East	158
The Class Nature of Russia and China Today	163
39. Oppressed Nationalities	167
Mass Incarceration	167
Recent Police Killings and Black Lives Matter	168
Struggles of Other Oppressed Peoples	170
40. Environmental Destruction and Capitalism	172
Fracking	172
Global Warming and Climate Change	172
Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and Monsanto	173
Chemtrails and Geo-Engineering	175
41. Trump and Increased Reaction	177
The Role of the Democratic Party	178
The Need for a United Front	180
The Internationale	182
General Bibliography:	184

List of Illustrations

Pyramid of the Sun, Teotihuacan, central Mexico	1
Colonists vs. Native People	5
Buffy Sainte-Marie	6
Slaves in the cotton fields	9
European indentured servants	12
Black Seminoles, Florida	17
Book cover: On to New Orleans	19
Fires in New York City, 1741	20
Northern Mexico, annexed by the United States, 1836-53	22
St. Patrick's Battalion: Commemorative plaque in Mexico City	23
Plaque honoring volunteers with the Union Army	25
Black troops in the Union Army	27
Blacks and whites in state Reconstruction governments	30
Black and white militia defend progressive Reconstruction government in Arkansas	32
Chinese railroad workers	33
Troops shooting down railroad workers, Baltimore, 1877	34
Poster for meeting at Haymarket Square, 1886	36
Lucy Parsons	37
Foreign-born population in the U.S., 1850-2010	39
Joe Hill	40
Remember the Maine, poster, 1898	43
Major General Smedley D. Butler	45
U.S. World War I poster	46
German World War I poster	47
U.S. Troops in Vladivostok, Russia, 1918	49
Seattle shipyard strike	50
Convention of the Communist Party of America, 1919	53
Court-martial of members of the 24th Infantry Regiment, 1917	55
African Blood Brotherhood, poster	56
Claude McKay	57
Confusion outside Stock Market, New York City, 1929	61

People seeking food and clothing relief, 1937	62
Bonus Army encampment, 1932.....	63
Longshore workers strike leading to San Francisco General Strike, 1934.....	65
Flint Auto Worker paper.....	66
Chamberlain sells out Czechoslovakia to Hitler, 1938	71
U.S. Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War	72
Woody Guthrie	73
U.S. and Soviet troops meet on Elbe, April 25, 1945	77
Bertold Brecht.....	79
Britain attacks unarmed demonstrators, Athens, Greece, December 3, 1944.....	82
Days Idle in Strikes and Lockouts for United States	84
Picasso's drawings of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg	86
Picasso, Massacre in Korea	89
U.S. destruction in Pyongyang, Korea, 1950.....	90
Birmingham police use dogs against civil rights demonstrators.....	92
Fidel Castro with Malcolm X, Harlem, 1960.....	95
Malcolm X at demo against police brutality, Harlem, 1957	96
Billie Holiday	97
Poster, Wanted for Murder, Gilligan the Cop.....	98
Demonstrators confront troops, Detroit, 1967	99
Panthers protest anti-gun bill, Sacramento, California, 1967	100
Fred Hampton	102
Gil Scott-Heron.....	104
Young Lords burn garbage in streets of El Barrio, New York City, 1969.....	107
National Chicano Moratorium, East Los Angeles, 1970	108
Wounded Knee, 1973	110
Liberation of Saigon, 1975	113
Columbia University strike, 1968	114
Demo, "We Won't Fight another Rich Man's War!!!"	115
Phil Ochs.....	117
Harriet Tubman statue, Harlem	119

Textile workers strike, 1934	120
Protestors at Stonewall Inn confront police, 1969	123
HIV/AIDS Infections, sub-Saharan Africa	124
Palante, organ of PRRWO, October, 1973 & 1976	128
Flyer of SDS Weatherman faction, 1969	129
Nixon greets Mao, Peking, 1972.....	131
Hourly Earnings of Production Employees, 1964-2004	134
March in support of “War Zone” strikers, 1995	136
Soldier after rebellion over beating of Rodney King, Los Angeles, 1992	137
Girl’s choices in Soviet Union	139
World Trade Center 7, September 11, 2001	142
U.S. forces bomb hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, 2015	144
Demo in New York City on February 15, 2003, a month before the U.S. invaded Iraq	147
Vandalism of Islamic Center in Dearborn, Michigan, 2007	148
Dr. Aafia Siddiqui.....	150
Border wall between the U.S. and Mexico	152
May Day, Union Square, New York City, 2006.....	153
Cuts to Social Spending, cartoon	155
World’s 10 largest banks, 2018	156
Fascists burn trade union building in Odessa, Ukraine, 2014	159
Aircraft carrier in Philippine Sea,2016	161
U.S. troops around the world	162
Graph: Foreign Direct Investment outflows, 2012 & 2013	164
Graph: Incarcerated Americans, 1920-2014	167
Slave patrol and sheriff’s badges	170
Graph: Global carbon dioxide emissions, 1751-2012	172
Monsanto cartoon	173
Sky over Secaucus, New Jersey	176
Photos of Earth, 2000 & 2015	176
Cartoon on Russian interference in 2016 U.S. election	179

Introduction

Although the subtitle of this book is similar to Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States*, that book was not the inspiration for this work. The idea came from the book: *Mi pais, la tierra y sus gentes* (*My Country, Its Land and Peoples*) by Pablo Miranda. He was able to break down the history and politics of his native Ecuador in a simple form (simple enough that I was able to read through it easily with my rudimentary knowledge of Spanish). I thought that it would be helpful to readers in the U.S., particularly young people, to have a similar history of the U.S. Of course, the inevitable weakness in a short work that tries to deal with such a complex subject is that it is not possible to cover even all major events.

I am not a historian by profession, but I have done a certain amount of political and historical writing. I also participated in many of the events of the last 50 years that are discussed in this book, so much of this part is more experience than history. I am an Anglo-American (white) man from a middle class background. I became an activist in the fight against the Vietnam War at Columbia University. In the anti-war movement, we had major discussions as to whether or not this war was a mistake. It was the invasion by the U.S. of the Dominican Republic in April of 1965 that made it clear to me that these wars were a consequence of the system of imperialism (monopoly capitalism), and I was won over to scientific socialism. Since then, I have worked with various Marxist-Leninist groups in an attempt to build a genuine communist party in this country.

The reader will see that I have made no attempt to separate the "bare facts" from my views. Every writer, to one extent or another, and with greater or lesser honesty, includes his own views. This does not preclude being objective, as long as the writer bases these views on facts.

Many of my positions may be controversial, even to readers with similar views. I also tried to write both for those who have some understanding of scientific socialism and those who do not. I hope that people will read the whole book, even if they have disagreements. If they have serious comments or criticisms, and of course if they find any factual errors, I would greatly appreciate it if

they would share them with me. I will try to take them into account in future editions of this book, as I have done with this edition.

George Gruenthal
georgeg0626@hotmail.com

1. The Americas before Columbus

Despite the stories in U.S. history books, Columbus did not “discover” America. There were people in the Americas for at least 30,000 years before the arrival of the European settlers. In what is today the United States and Canada, there were the great mound building societies, particularly in the Ohio Valley; hunter-gatherers including some of the peoples of the Great Plains; the Dine (“Navajo”) and Hopi peoples, who developed settled agriculture in the Southwest; the Algonquin and Iroquois peoples in the Northeast, who also mainly engaged in farming, among many others. As Engels points out, throughout the world, including in the Americas, people at first lived in communal society, where the instruments of production were shared in common.

There were also major civilizations, with highly developed class differences, such as the Wari, Nazcas and Incas in the Andean region of South America; the Mayas in what is now southern Mexico, particularly the Yucatan peninsula, and Central America; and the Teotihuacanecos, Toltecs and Aztecs in what is now central Mexico.*



Pyramid of the Sun, Teotihuacan, central Mexico,
begun about 100 C.E. (Common Era)

* Their development indicates that, even if there had been no conquest of the Americas by the western colonialists, class societies would still have developed in the Western Hemisphere.

By various estimates, there were up to 100 million people in hundreds of tribes and nationalities in all parts of this vast area, including up to 12 million (Ward Churchill says 35 million) in North America. U.S. historians today are forced to recognize much of this.

When Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, he described the peacefulness of the native Arawak people. However, this did not stop him from rounding up 500 of them and sending them to Spain in 1495. Of these, 200 died along the way. Under the Spanish conquistadores (conquerors), with the active assistance of priests, native peoples were enslaved on estates or forced to search for gold, whose location they were often tortured to reveal. Many died in the mines as slaves. Later, Spain enslaved Africans and brought them to their colonies.

Though some people claim that the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean were completely wiped out, this is not correct. When the Spanish conquerors came, they did not bring women. Clearly, they had sexual relations with the indigenous women, mainly through rape, so many people in the Caribbean today have indigenous ancestry.

Over the next decades, Spain conquered most of what is now called Latin America. But the defeat of the Spanish Armada (fleet) by the British in 1588 allowed Britain to take part in the conquest of the Western Hemisphere.

When English settlers arrived in the Northeast of what is today the United States, particularly Massachusetts (from the Algonquin meaning “people of the great hill”^{*}), the native peoples tried to make them welcome, showing them how to grow corn and other crops to survive. But the leaders of the settlers, once they felt confident that they could live in their new environment, responded by massacring the original inhabitants.

Earlier U.S. history books told of good white men coming to bring “civilization” to the native peoples. But these fairy tales have now been too well exposed, mostly due to the struggles of the native peoples themselves. Instead, they have been replaced

^{*} If the settlers had adopted the view that immigrants should speak the language of the peoples that they live among, we on much of the East Coast would be speaking Algonquin.

by new and more subtle lies. In these, the settlers (such as John Smith) are seen as getting along with the native people (such as Pocahontas), but these peaceful relations were foiled by “hot-heads” from both sides. One might call this the Disney version of history, as portrayed in the 1995 movie “Pocahontas.”

The history of relations between the native peoples and the leaders of the colonists, and later the U.S. government, has always been one of genocide and forced removal. Even before the American Revolution, many of the original inhabitants were pushed west of the Ohio River. Then, particularly in the 1830s, they were pushed west of the Mississippi and finally into the system of “reservations” today. Even here people are forced off these reservations whenever oil, gold or other valuable resources are found there. Ward Churchill says that some 2/3 of U.S. energy resources are on these reservations. Besides the outright takeover of these areas, the mining has caused tremendous environmental damage, such as from the radioactive waste of the former uranium mines in the Black Hills of South Dakota, an area that is sacred to the Lakota people. These reservations are on the worst



Drawing: Colonists vs. Native People
Battle of Bloody Brook, 1675, near Deerfield, Massachusetts

land, where almost nothing grows.

According to official figures, of all “ethnic groups,” the life expectancy for Native Americans is the lowest (72 years, 5 years lower than for Anglo-Americans). However, this difference seems greatly underestimated, since it is officially recognized that the death rate for Native Americans is 50% higher than that of whites.* The official unemployment rate for native peoples is the highest (11% in 2014, twice the overall rate), as is their poverty rate of 25%, and they have the highest rates of alcoholism and suicide. But from the wars of the Seminole people together with their African allies against the attacks by Andrew Jackson, to the defeat of U.S. General Custer in 1876, to the battle of Wounded Knee in 1973, the native peoples have always fought to defend their land and sovereignty.

Buffy Sainte-Marie:
“My Country ‘Tis of Thy People You’re Dying” (1964)

Buffy Ste Marie is a musician, composer, singer and educator born in the Piapot Plains Cree First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada. She wrote many moving songs describing the situation of the native peoples of North America.



From the 1974 album *Native North American Child: An Odyssey*
Music at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKKX-H3NMNI>

Now that your big eyes have finally opened
Now that you’re wondering how must they feel
Meaning them that you’ve chased across America’s movie screens
Now that you’re wondering “how can it be real?”
That the ones you’ve called colorful, noble and proud
In your school propaganda
They starve in their splendor?
You’ve asked for my comment I simply will render.
My country ‘tis of thy people you’re dying.

* See: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0422-natamerican-deathrate.html>

Now that the longhouses breed superstition
You force us to send our toddlers away
To your schools where they're taught to despise their traditions.
Forbid them their languages, then further say
That American history really began
When Columbus set sail out of Europe, then stress
That the nation of leeches that conquered this land
Are the biggest and bravest and boldest and best.
And yet where in your history books is the tale
Of the genocide basic to this country's birth,
Of the preachers who lied, how the Bill of Rights failed,
How a nation of patriots returned to their earth?
And where will it tell of the Liberty Bell
As it rang with a thud
O'er Kinzua mud
And of brave Uncle Sam in Alaska this year?
My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Hear how the bargain was made for the West:
With her shivering children in zero degrees,
Blankets for your land, so the treaties attest,
Oh well, blankets for land is a bargain indeed,
And the blankets were those Uncle Sam had collected
From smallpox-diseased dying soldiers that day.
And the tribes were wiped out and the history books censored,
A hundred years of your statesmen have felt it's better this way.
And yet a few of the conquered have somehow survived,
Their blood runs the redder though genes have paled.
From the Grand Canyon's caverns to craven sad hills
The wounded, the losers, the robbed sing their tale.
From Los Angeles County to upstate New York
The white nation fattens while others grow lean;
Oh the tricked and evicted they know what I mean.

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

The past it just crumbled, the future just threatens;
Our life blood shut up in your chemical tanks.
And now here you come, bill of sale in your hands
And surprise in your eyes that we're lacking in thanks

For the blessings of civilization you've brought us,
The lessons you've taught us, the ruin you've wrought us
Oh see what our trust in America's brought us.

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Now that the pride of the sires receives charity,
Now that we're harmless and safe behind laws,
Now that my life's to be known as your heritage,
Now that even the graves have been robbed,
Now that our own chosen way is a novelty
Hands on our hearts we salute you your victory,
Choke on your blue white and scarlet hypocrisy
Pitying the blindness that you've never seen
That the eagles of war whose wings lent you glory
They were never no more than carrion crows,
Pushed the wrens from their nest, stole their eggs, changed their
story;

The mockingbird sings it, it's all that he knows.

"Ah what can I do?" say a powerless few

With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye

Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you.

My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Bibl: Ward Churchill, ed. *Marxism and Native Americans*, 1983.

Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property
and the State*, first published in English, 1891

Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, 1877. Engels based much of
his above work on Morgan's researches.*

* Morgan has a chapter on "The Aztec Confederacy," in which he states that the Aztecs were also a pre-class society. Although this may have been true while they were a nomadic society, when they settled in central Mexico they took over the class relations of the earlier societies in the region.

2. African Slaves

Though the genocide of the native peoples led to the clearing of the land, it did not solve the question of who would work the land. The small farms of the North were usually worked by the farm-owners themselves. But the large plantations of the South (cotton, rice, indigo, sugar and tobacco) needed large amounts of labor. Attempts to enslave the indigenous people were generally not successful, as they could and did run away to the West to join their brothers and sisters beyond the reach of the settlers.

African slavery in the Western Hemisphere began in 1502 in present-day Hispaniola (the Caribbean island made up today of the Dominican Republic and Haiti) and expanded rapidly by 1510. The first African slaves in what was to become the U.S. were brought by the Spanish to South Carolina in 1526, but the slaves revolted and joined the native people. In 1565, slaves were brought to St. Augustine, Florida. In the British colonies of North America slavery began when some 20 Africans were brought to Jonestown, Virginia, in 1619. In 1625, the Dutch West Indies Company brought 11 enslaved Africans to the New Amsterdam colony in what is now New York City.



Engraving: Slaves in the cotton fields

Some 12.5 million enslaved persons were kidnapped from Africa, according to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. A plaque in the National Museum of African-American History in Washington DC estimates that less than half survived to do forced labor in the Western Hemisphere.

In the first census after the 1776 revolution that led to the formation of the United States, in 1790, there were almost 700,000 enslaved persons of African descent, out of a total population of almost 4 million people. In the states that later joined the Confederacy, there were over 500,000 slaves, more than a third of the total population of about 1.5 million in these states. There was slavery in the Northern colonies as well, but the numbers were much smaller and many worked on small farms or as house slaves. In New York State, slavery was finally abolished only in 1827. But much Northern capital was involved in slavery in other ways. Most of the U.S. slave ships were produced by the New England shipbuilding industry. Though the Constitution outlawed the international slave trade after 1808, New York continued to be the center of that illegal trade until the Civil War. And through the end of that war, Northern banks, particularly from New York City, financed the cotton trade and thus the Southern slave owners. These banks were the financial backbone of the Democratic Party, which supported slavery, and this trade helped make New York the financial capital of the U.S.

While Southern plantations were worked by chattel slaves (the slaves who were themselves owned by their masters), the products of this slave labor were sold on the capitalist world market. This was different from slavery in ancient Greece and Rome, where in general slaves were either household servants or labored to enrich their personal owners. Cotton from the South provided the raw material for the English textile industry, while tobacco was sold to satisfy the habits of smokers worldwide. Similarly, sugar from the French colony of Haiti, later from the U.S. territory of Louisiana and the Spanish colony of Cuba was used to sweeten the lives of those who could afford it throughout the U.S. and Europe. In the period before the Civil War, Southern cotton picked by slave labor made up 2/3 of all U.S. exports.

Karl Marx pointed out the relation between modern slavery to the beginnings of capitalism:

“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.” (Marx: *Capital*, Vol. I, Chapter 31: Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist.)

He also briefly described the conditions of slave labor:

“Hence the negro labor in the Southern States of the American Union preserved something of a patriarchal character, so long as production was chiefly directed to immediate local consumption. But in proportion, as the export of cotton became of vital interest to these states, the overworking of the negro and sometimes the using up of his life in 7 years of labor became a factor in a calculated and calculating system.” (*Capital*, Vol. I, Chapter 10: The Working Day, Section 2.)

European Indentures

In addition, many Europeans looking for jobs were brought over from Europe as indentured servants. In order to pay the high cost of passage to the colonies, they had to sell themselves to whoever would pay for their passage. They would work their debt off over a fixed period, usually from four to seven years. These indentures made up anywhere from 50 to 70% of those coming from Europe to North America in the colonial period. England also had many people in prison, often small farmers who had to borrow money from the banks and were unable to repay their debts. Many of these people were sentenced to “transport,” sent to the colonies as indentures. Large numbers of whites in Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia were former prisoners. Some 50,000 came to North America in this way.

In the early colonial period, the working and living conditions of the European indentures and the African slaves were not very different, though many indentures worked on small farms

and industries, while most slaves worked on plantations. Moreover, Africans were almost always enslaved for life, while Europeans mostly came voluntarily under a fixed-term contract.

There were frequently joint rebellions and other protests by blacks and whites, including about ten such revolts in Virginia between the Servants Plot of 1663 and the tobacco riots of 1682. The largest of these was Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. Angered by fact that the wealthy monopolized the land around the capital, Jamestown, poor whites and blacks united and burned down the capital, forcing the governor, William Berkeley, to flee. However, the rebellion was also directed against the native people, as some of the rebels wanted the unrestricted right to take over their land. The rebellion was crushed and one thousand troops were sent from England. Twenty-three leaders of the rebellion were hanged. As Berkeley wrote in a letter some years later, "How miserable that man is that Governes a People where six parts of seaven are Poore, Endebted, Discontented and Armed" (quoted by Allen, below). To prevent similar rebellions of blacks and whites, laws were passed, particularly in the South, which treated the Africans as "inferior," creating a separation between blacks and whites.

Bibl: Ted Allen, *Class Struggle and the Origin of Racial Slavery and Invention of the White Race*, 1975

Ira Berlin & Leslie M. Harris, eds., *Slavery in New York*, 2005



Drawing: European indentured servants

3. Formation of the 13 Colonies into the United States

As production developed in the 13 British colonies, industrial capitalism based on wage slavery developed in the North and plantation agriculture based on chattel slavery developed in the South. The colonists, but particularly the Northern capitalists and the Southern planters, chafed under the restrictions imposed by the British monarchy. They had to pay taxes to the king, and could carry on trade only with the “mother country.” In the Boston Massacre in 1770, British troops killed five colonists (including Crispus Attucks, the first black person killed in the Revolutionary War), and wounded six others. The tensions grew, leading to the Boston Tea Party in 1773, in which a group of colonists threw British tea in the harbor rather than pay taxes on it. (However, some colonists opposed this act, believing that it contradicted their slogan of “liberty and property.”) After the British fired on protestors at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, in April of 1775, many colonists who had been uncertain as to whether they wanted full independence or simply greater autonomy joined the armed struggle that led to U.S. separation from Britain.

The colonists’ fight against the British army was one of the first guerrilla wars. After seven years of fighting, the British were forced to withdraw. The white men with property chose delegates to the Continental Congress, which led the political aspect of the war. For a short period, the 13 former colonies tried to maintain a loose grouping under the Articles of Confederation, but they soon agreed to form a **United** States of America. The new country decided to abolish the monarchy and hereditary titles, which existed in most of Europe, and to establish a republic, with a president and two houses of the legislature, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Voting was generally restricted to white men who owned property; women were not allowed to vote until 1920 under the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The House of Representatives was elected directly by the eligible voters, with one Representative for every certain number of voters. The Senate had two members for each state, regardless of population. The Senators

were chosen by the legislature of each state, not by popular vote, until the 17th Amendment in 1913. Similarly, the President was, and still is, chosen by the members of the Electoral College, the number of electors from each state being equal to the total number of Representatives and Senators from that state. These electors were chosen “in such Manner as the Legislature thereof shall direct” (U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 1). However, by 1828, in all but two states the electors were chosen by general election. In almost all states, the electors were pledged to support the winner of the majority of votes in that state.

The electors still occasionally play an important role, as in the Hayes-Tilden election in 1876 (see Chapter 9) and the Bush-Gore election in 2000 (see Chapter 33). There have been several elections in which the president received the largest number of electoral votes but did not have the highest popular vote. This happened most recently in 2016, when Donald Trump was chosen President although he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by almost 3 million votes. This is a good reason to abolish the Electoral College.

In 1787 a Constitutional Convention was called to draw up a new Constitution. The main question that had to be decided by the delegates was that of slavery. Although most states in the North allowed slavery, slave labor played a minor role in Northern production, as it was not very profitable in the small farms, workshops and factories there. In the plantation South, slaves were the main source of labor. While the Northern capitalists generally did not want to abolish slavery, they did want to slow its spread. A series of compromises was adopted. The international slave trade was to be ended by 1808. The bigger question was how to count the slave population. The Southern plantation owners, who granted no rights to their slaves, wanted them counted in the census since this would increase the number of their representatives in Congress. The Northern capitalists did not want slaves counted at all. A compromise was reached to count each slave as $\frac{3}{5}$ of a person (Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution). This gave the South representation in Congress beyond the number of its free citizens, and this compro-

mise lasted until after the Civil War with the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865.

The Constitution was ratified in 1788. The Bill of Rights, the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution, were ratified in 1791. These provided for certain rights to the citizens, including freedom of the press, of speech and assembly, and the right to trial by jury. Although in practice these may be denied or restricted, as by requiring a police permit for a march or rally, they were far more progressive than the provisions of most of the constitutions in Europe.

4. Andrew Jackson, “Representative of the Common People,” Indian Fighter and Slave-owner

In 1824, when Andrew Jackson made his first, unsuccessful, run for the presidency, only 25% of adult white males were eligible to vote. By 1828, the eligible voters rather than the state legislators chose their state presidential electors in 22 out of 24 states. However, U.S. senators were still chosen by the state legislatures until the 17th Constitutional Amendment in 1913.

Jackson won his first presidential election in 1828 under the slogan “Vote for us if you believe that the people should govern.” Under Jackson, most states gradually eliminated property qualifications for voting, including the requirement that they be taxpayers. By 1840, 78% of adult white males were eligible to vote.

Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Russian socialist revolution of 1917, pointed out:

“The reason why the omnipotence of ‘wealth’ is better *secured* in a democratic republic, is that it does not depend on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell... it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that *no* change, either of persons, of institutions, or of parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic, can shake it.” (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.)

Jackson’s populist image should not hide the fact that he was a major merchant and slave owner. Hundreds of slaves worked on his plantation, The Hermitage, near Nashville, Tennessee.

Jackson was also infamous as a fighter against the native peoples. In Florida, which was then a Spanish colony, slaves who converted to Catholicism were freed. After U.S. independence, many slaves from Georgia ran off to Florida, where they settled among the Creeks and Seminoles. In the First Seminole War of 1816-19, Andrew Jackson led a campaign against the native peoples and their African allies, which forced Spain to cede Florida to the U.S. in 1820.

In 1830, President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, forcing the native peoples to move west of the Mississippi River. This led to the infamous Trail of Tears, in which between 2,000 and 6,000 Cherokees out of 16,000 died while being removed to the Oklahoma Territory. By 1840, some 100,000 native people from the Southeast had been removed, opening up 25 million acres of land to white settlers.



Engraving: Black Seminoles, Florida

5. Compromises and Struggles between the Plantation South and the Capitalist North

Capitalism and chattel slavery could not coexist forever. The political history of most of the period between the formation of the United States and the Civil War was one of conflict and compromise between these two systems. For most of this time, the Southern slave-owners were dominant. George Washington, the head of the Continental Army and later first President of the U.S., was also one of the largest slave-owners in the country. Other major U.S. leaders, including Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, were slave-owners. Of the 15 presidents prior to Lincoln, eight were from the South. The tobacco, indigo, rice, sugar and cotton produced by Southern slave labor were the most important U.S. export products.

As the U.S. extended westward, the main contradiction was over whether new territories would be incorporated into the country as slave or free states. As the settlers moved toward the Ohio River, they pushed out the native people as they went. These settlers were mainly small farmers, who had no need for (and could not afford) slaves. In the South, the plantation owners moved west, also pushing out the native people, incorporating Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, and annexing Florida from Spain, all of which became slave states. The major conflicts came as the U.S. expanded west of the Mississippi. Texas was annexed in 1845 as a slave state (see Chapter 6). In Kansas and Nebraska, these contradictions erupted into guerrilla warfare. The small farmers, led by John Brown, fought the pro-slavery forces of the big plantation owners, resulting in Kansas being admitted to the Union as a free state. (Nebraska only became a state in 1867, after the Civil War.)

Slave Rebellions

The history of this period is full of slave rebellions, particularly throughout the South. As the rebellions increased, so did the restrictions on the slaves. In 1803 in Haiti, the slaves rebelled, abolished slavery and kicked out the French colonialists. France's defeat led it to sell the entire Louisiana territory (which reached to the Canadian border) to the U.S. in that same year.

Southern states put through laws forbidding slaves from learning to read or write, at least in part so that they would not learn about the Haitian revolution. The slaves were also not allowed to drum, as drumming served as a means of communication from one plantation to another.

Slaves were not permitted to travel from one plantation to another except on business of their owner. Slave marriages were not recognized, and slave families were constantly broken up as members were sold off to different plantation owners.

One of the largest slave rebellions took place in Louisiana in 1811. It was led by Charles Deslondes, who had been born in Haiti and had gone through the Haitian revolution but was brought to Louisiana by his owner. He organized a group of slaves who marched from Baton Rouge down the Mississippi River, attacking plantation owners and freeing the slaves. Their slogan was "On to Orleans." The slaves were defeated by an army coming up from New Orleans. Deslondes and other leaders were decapitated and their heads put on stakes in front of the plantations to terrorize other slaves away from rebellion.



Book cover:
On to New Orleans

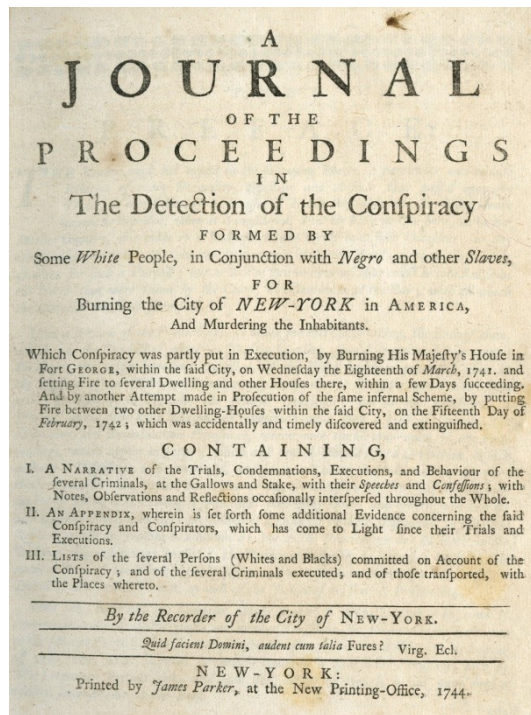
There were also slave rebellions in the North during the period when slavery was still permitted there. A major revolt broke out in New York under British colonial rule in 1712, in which nine slave-owners and their assistants were killed. The governor sent troops to capture the rebels; 25 were executed (including a pregnant woman whose execution was delayed until she had given birth) and six committed suicide to avoid being captured.

Other major slave rebellions and planned revolts were those organized by Gabriel, slave name Prosser (the name of his owner, which Gabriel never used) in the Richmond area, Virginia in 1800, Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina in 1822 and Nat, slave name Turner in Southampton, Virginia in 1831. Others led the fight to abolish slavery by other means, such as David Walker, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison and So-

journer Truth. These abolitionists, both black and white, raised both moral and practical objections to slavery in the U.S.

In 1859, John Brown led a group of blacks and whites to raid the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to capture the guns and distribute them to the slaves and to spark a general slave revolt. He was captured by U.S. General Robert E. Lee, soon to lead the Confederate Army. Brown and others were hung.

The Underground Railway was made up of people who would help slaves escape to the North. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 declared that any escaped slave caught anywhere in the U.S. had to be returned to their owner in the South. Thus the hand of slavery reached throughout the country. Many free blacks were seized and taken down South under the claim that they were escaped slaves. After this the Underground Railway had to extend to Canada.



In 1741, a series of fires broke out in New York City, blamed on a conspiracy of blacks and poor whites to burn the city down. Although the fires may not have been the result of such a conspiracy, the authorities executed or exiled over 100 people

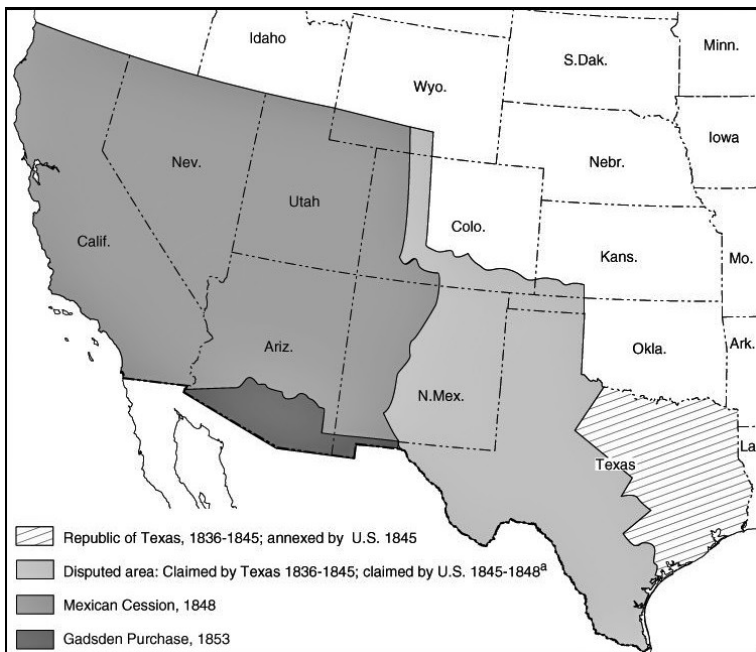
Bibl: Albert Thrasher, *On to New Orleans*, 1996
Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, eds., *Slavery in New York*,
Chapter 2, 2005
Film, *12 Years a Slave*, 2013
Herbert Aptheker, *Negro Slave Revolts in the United States*,
1526-1860, 1959

6. The Mexican American Wars, 1836-1848

As with so many other periods in U.S. history, most books on the Mexican American wars turn the truth on its head. We are supposed to commemorate the “brave defenders” of the Alamo in the war against Mexico for the “independence of Texas.” But we are rarely told that this war was both for U.S. territorial expansion as well as for the extension of slavery.

In 1823 the U.S. “Monroe Doctrine,” already declared that no outside power would be allowed to interfere in the Western Hemisphere, so that “the U.S. could exercise its own influence undisturbed.”

When the first U.S. settlers moved into Texas, which was then a part of Mexico, they did so to extend slavery. The plantation system rapidly exhausted the soil, so slave-owners moved with their slaves into east Texas. Sam Houston, the first president of “independent” Texas, was himself a slave-owner. As the Anglo (white English-speaking) settlers moved further west, they



Northern Mexico, annexed by the United States, 1836-53

encountered increased resistance from the Mexican government and people. The Anglos established the Alamo as a fort to defend their settlements (as they did elsewhere to guard the land that they had stolen from the native peoples).

The Mexican army under General Santa Anna attacked the fort in 1836, defeating the Anglo settlers there, who were wiped out. One of the “heroes” of the Alamo was James Bowie. The U.S. history books ignore or downplay the fact that Bowie was a major land speculator and slave-owner. He bragged about how, while searching for a mine in a native area of Texas (still under Mexican sovereignty), he killed over 40 native people while losing only one of his own men.

The Anglo settlers later defeated the Mexican army, and after a period of “independence” Texas joined the United States in 1845 as a slave state.

In a further war of territorial expansion, the U.S. again attacked Mexico. The war of 1846-48 and the later forced purchase of the Gadsden Territory led to the seizure of the whole of northern Mexico. This area comprised what are today the states of Califor-



St. Patrick's Battalion: Commemorative plaque in Mexico City: "In memory of the Irish soldiers of the heroic St. Patrick's Battalion, martyrs who gave their lives to the Mexican cause during the United States' unjust invasion of 1847."

nia, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, part of Colorado, and even parts of Oklahoma and Wyoming. With that, the “Manifest Destiny” of the U.S. rulers for the formation of the United States “from sea to shining sea” was completed.

One aspect of the Mexican-American War that is known only by a few people in the U.S., but is widely known in Mexico, is the story of the St. Patrick’s Battalion (Los Patricios). These were a group of mostly Irish soldiers who were drafted or recruited into the U.S. army after immigrating to the United States following the potato famine in Ireland. They were badly treated by their officers and some 200 hundred defected and joined the Mexican Army. Some were killed in battle, but the majority of those who were captured by the U.S. Army were executed as traitors. However they are still treated as heroes in Mexico.

Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, forced on Mexico by the U.S. in 1848, the Mexican people in the new U.S. territories were supposed to have the right to keep their lands and use their language. But these rights were quickly eroded. Many Mexican peasants were thrown off their lands, either by direct force or through forced purchase. English became the official language of this territory. Even today in the Southwest, Spanish-speaking teachers must teach Spanish-speaking students in English, and in the courts Spanish-speaking judges preside over trials with Spanish-speaking witnesses and Spanish-speaking defendants, but all in English, the “unofficial” official language of the U.S.*

Bibl: Film, *One Man’s Hero*, 1999

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican%E2%80%93American_War#Designs_on_California

* Most people in the U.S. have seen imported products such as fruits with labels in English and French. This is not because of a large French-speaking population in the U.S., but because these products are also imported to Canada. That country recognizes that it is a bi-lingual country (particularly since Quebec province was originally colonized by France), and it has a law that any product produced or imported into Canada must have labels in English and French. It would be simple enough for the U.S. to adopt a similar law regarding English and Spanish.

7. Civil War

By 1860, the forces representing capital using free labor in the North had grown stronger than those representing plantation owners using chattel slavery in the South. A coalition led by the Northern capitalists, including the wage laborers and small farmers united around the Republican Party and its presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln. Afraid that Lincoln would restrict the expansion of slavery, most of the slave-owning states seceded (broke away) from the United States. Eleven Southern states seceded and formed the Confederate State of America, led by Jefferson Davis, a large plantation owner from Mississippi who owned over 100 slaves.

Many white small farmers in the South opposed secession. The farmers in the mountainous western part of Virginia, where the terrain was not suited to plantation agriculture, refused to secede and formed the new state of West Virginia in 1861, which stayed with the Union. The white small farmers of the Piedmont (foothills of the Appalachian Mountains) in Alabama also voted against seces-



Plaque honoring volunteers with the Union Army, on the building of the American Lithographers Union, New York City

sion, but they were not able to form their own state. In April of 1861, Confederate troops fired on federal Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and the four-year-long Civil War began.

At first, Lincoln limited himself to preserving the Union and opposing the extension of slavery. In August of 1862, in a letter to the editor of the *New York Tribune*, he said:

“If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about Slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union.”

In the early part of the war, the Union was largely unsuccessful militarily, as Lincoln had appointed vacillating and conservative generals to lead the Army. He also refused to state clear aims for the war beyond restoring the Union. However, by late 1862, Lincoln realized that he had to go farther. He appointed Ulysses S. Grant, who was strongly against slavery, as Commanding General. Lincoln put through the Emancipation Proclamation as an Executive Order, which provided that all slaves in rebel-held territory as of January 1, 1863, were to be freed. Blacks were also allowed to join the Union Army. This led to a huge enlistment of about 186,000 black soldiers, including free blacks from the North as well as large numbers of escaped slaves who rushed to join the Union army. These troops played a heroic and often determining role in much of the war. This was so even though they were often given the most dangerous assignments, initially had lower pay and were commanded by white officers who often had racist attitudes.

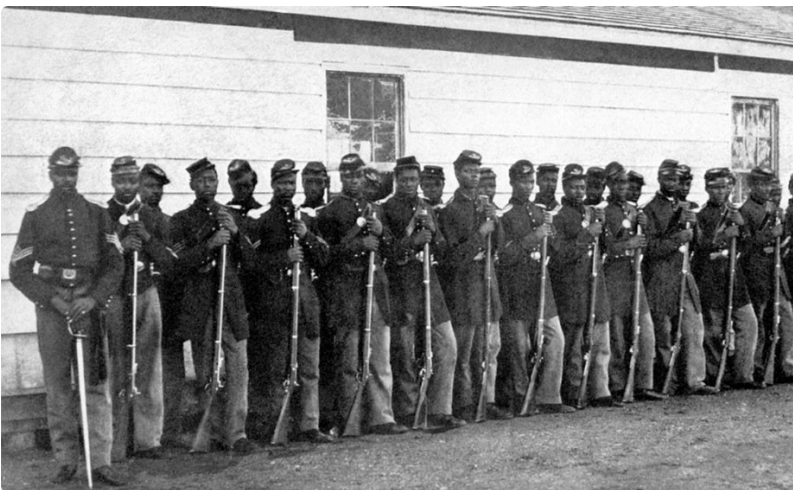
The Union had no standing army, and initially relied on volunteers. Many white trade unionists enlisted, recognizing in practice Karl Marx’s slogan that “labor in the white skin can never be free while in the black skin it is branded.” Later the Union (like the Confederacy) instituted a draft. The rich and their sons made extensive use of a provision of the law that allowed any person who had been drafted to buy their way out by finding a substitute or by paying \$300. However, the vast majority of

Union troops were volunteers. Of 2.1 million soldiers, 2% were draftees, and 6% were substitutes paid by those who otherwise would have been drafted. Only about 46,000 in the North were ever conscripted, although the threat of being drafted spurred people to enlist.

It is no coincidence that New York City was a center of anti-Union and anti-black sentiment, as the New York banking establishment had always financed the Southern slave-owners. New York City Mayor Fernando Wood, a leader of the Democratic Party, called for the secession of New York City from the Union. In 1863, a racist “anti-draft” riot shook the city, with whites lynching blacks from lampposts and burning down the Colored Children’s Orphanage. These riots, which lasted almost a week and led to the deaths of at least 119 Black people, were justly put down by force.

In 1864, Lincoln was overwhelmingly reelected president. He was assassinated in a conspiracy led by John Wilkes Booth, a Southern racist, in April of 1865, two weeks after the Union victory.

It is worth noting that Joseph Weydemeyer, a Marxist who had fought together with Engels in the German revolution of 1848, emigrated to the United States in 1851. During the Civil



Black troops in the Union Army

War he joined the Union army, fighting against the Confederates in Missouri and rising to the rank of Colonel.

Bibl: Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, articles and letters from 1860-1865

<http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/6-unionist-strongholds-in-the-south-during-the-civil-war>

Film, *Free State of Jones*, 2016

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription_in_the_United_States

Karl Obermann, *Joseph Weydemeyer: Pioneer of American Socialism*, 1947

8. Reconstruction and the Development of the Afro-American Nation

The conclusion of the Civil War brought about the end of chattel slavery in the U.S. Ironically, the last slaves to be freed were those in the “border states,” Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, which allowed slavery but did not join the Confederacy. Their slaves were only freed with the passing of the 13th Amendment in 1865 that outlawed slavery. Moreover, those slave-owners who “allowed” their slaves to join the Union Army were compensated for the loss of “their property.”

The slaves were now free in their person, but they were largely not able to participate fully in U.S. representative democracy. This was because, in general, the lands of the plantation owners were not touched. There were a few exceptions, such as in parts of the Sea Islands off the coast of the mainland of South Carolina and Georgia, where Union generals carried out the dream of the black farmers for “40 acres and a mule.”* Many freed people moved to the North and West, but the majority remained in the old plantation area. Having no farm land of their own, they were often forced into sharecropping, a semi-feudal form of agriculture in which the laborer worked the fields belonging to the plantation owner for a share of the crop. This was accompanied by debt peonage, in which the laborer sold his crop (often to the same land owner or a merchant), but never receiving enough to pay off his debt. He was thus in perpetual bondage.

Presidential Reconstruction

Andrew Johnson, from the slave state of Tennessee who had owned slaves himself, had been chosen as Lincoln’s vice-president in the election of 1864. Lincoln had already ensured the passage of the 13th Amendment ending slavery throughout the United States. When Lincoln was assassinated on April 19, 1865, a week after the effective end of the Civil War, Johnson became president.

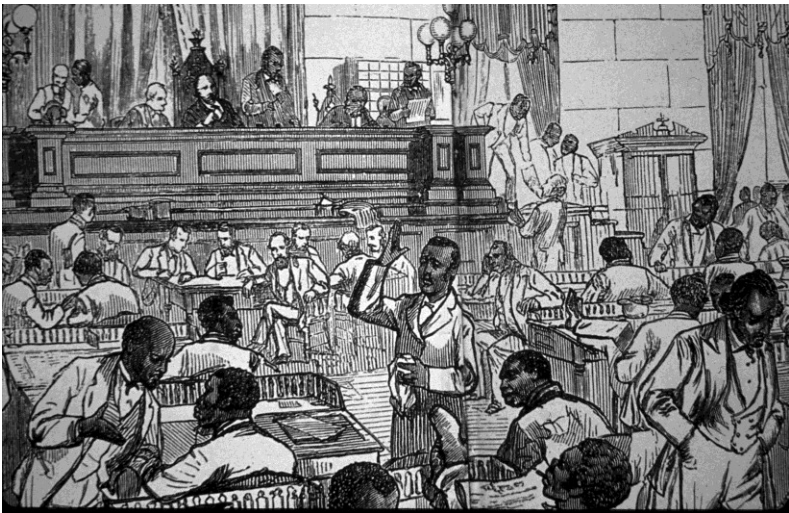
* In some areas, black people were only dispossessed of their lands by big hotel chains when the Sea Islands became a major tourist destination in recent decades.

Johnson began a program known as Presidential Reconstruction. He allowed the former Confederate leaders back into power in the Southern states. These states enacted the so-called Black Codes, which deprived the freed people of their rights and forced them back on the plantations.

However, in 1866, Congress under the leadership of the Radical Republicans, particularly Senator Charles Sumner and Representative Thaddeus Stevens reversed Presidential Reconstruction. They adopted the Civil Rights Act of 1866, guaranteeing the rights of the freed people; later the 14th Amendment was passed granting the former slaves citizenship and “equal protection under the laws, and finally the 15th Amendment was passed guaranteeing them the right to vote.

Reconstruction Governments

The newly freed people were granted certain civil and human rights. They were able to move from place to place. Male freedmen could also vote and run for office. In all 11 states of the former Confederacy, new Reconstruction governments had to be formed before they could rejoin the United States. Blacks and



Black freedmen and poor whites served in the state Reconstruction governments in the South, as well as in Congress

their white allies, mostly sharecroppers and small farmers who had no interest in slavery, were elected to the U.S. Congress and the State Legislatures. For the first time, Blacks from the South were elected to the federal House and Senate, including two Senators from Mississippi, and to the Southern state legislatures. Except for the brief period known as populism in the 1890s, after Reconstruction there were no Southern Blacks in Congress until about 100 years later, after the Civil Rights movement.

The Reconstruction governments were the first to bring democracy to the South. They passed laws in the interest of all working people. For the first time, public schools and libraries were established there, and both blacks and poor whites were able to learn to read and write. Women were granted many rights, and the burden of taxation was placed on the rich.

However, these governments were soon attacked by the reactionary forces organized by the plantation owners. The Ku Klux Klan was formed in this period. It was based on the former slave patrols that made sure that slaves on the roads had a pass from their owners. (These patrols later became the basis for the police forces in South.). Between 1869 and 1877, one by one the Reconstruction governments were overthrown by the violence of the reactionary forces. In 1876, a tie vote in the Electoral College for the presidency led to a deal, under which the Republican, Hayes, took the presidency in return for an agreement to remove Union troops from the South. This sealed the fate of bourgeois democracy for Black people in the U.S. Jim Crow laws were established, which forbade Blacks from voting and established segregation in all walks of life. Vagrancy laws were established that allowed for the arrest of blacks and poor whites who did not have jobs, and those arrested were leased to work for private employers. This alliance of the Northern capitalists and the Southern plantation owners, under the leadership of the former, also represented the end of any progressive role for the capitalist class in the U.S.

The end of slavery brought about the breakdown of the isolation of the individual plantations, even though these had traded their products on the world market. Now Black people in the

plantation South developed into an Afro-American* nation, with a common territory, common language (English), a common economy based on sharecropping and a common culture (with their own literature and history). Thus an oppressed Afro-American nation was formed the U.S.

Bibl: Howard Fast, *Freedom Road*, 1944, and 1979 movie by the same name

Slide show, *Free the Afro-American Nation*, 1982; text available at:

mltranslations.org/US/FreeAfroAmNation.htm

W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 1935



Black and white militia defend progressive
Reconstruction government in Arkansas

* I use the term "Afro-American" for people whose ancestors endured slavery in the Americas, as distinct from "African-American," which I use for immigrants from Africa to the U.S.

9. The Unification of the U.S. Capitalist State

In 1869, the First Transcontinental Railroad was completed. This allowed for the economic unification of the country under the capitalist class. The defeat, first of the slave-owners in the South in the Civil War and then of the democratic Reconstruction governments there, allowed for the political unification of the country under the growing monopolies.

Chinese workers were imported to build the railroads, to work in the mines and in agriculture in California. Large numbers began to arrive in the 1850s. By 1880, there were over 300,000 Chinese workers in the U.S.; in California they made up over 10% of the population. When they were no longer needed, the Chinese Exclusion Act, prohibiting any Chinese laborers from immigrating into the U.S., was signed into law by President Chester A. Arthur in 1882, and this continued in force until 1943 (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Exclusion_Act). This was part of the continuing development of white chauvinism (the belief that white people are superior to other peoples).

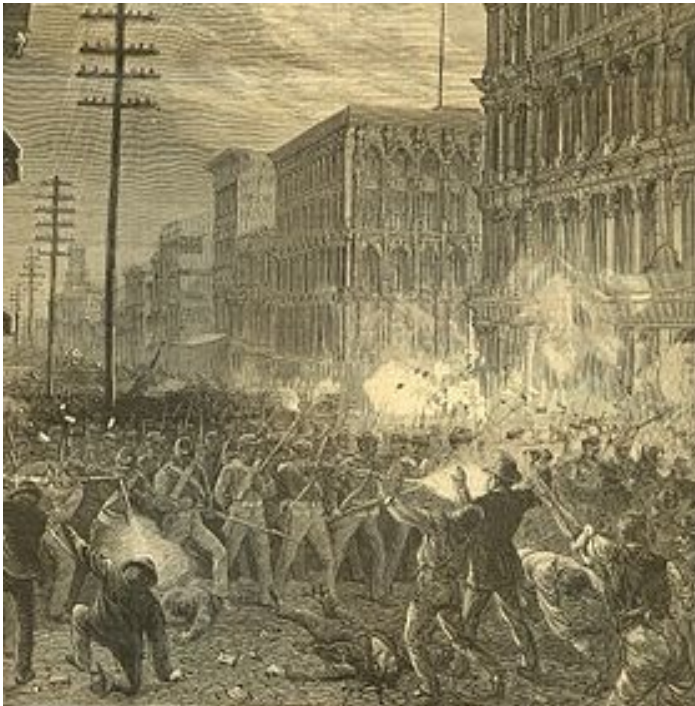
The development of capitalism also led to the increasing growth of the working class or proletariat. Mass industries were established, particularly in oil, steel, water transport and railroads. The latter crisscrossed the country, allowing for the movement not only of passengers (including workers) but also freight. They made it possible, for example, for coal to be efficiently transported from mining areas to all parts of the country.



Chinese railroad workers

The railroad workers became a key section of the working class. On July 14, 1877, a strike began in West Virginia in response to a wage cut imposed by the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad. It quickly spread to many other areas of the country. The railroad owners called on local and state governments, which sent out the state militia to put down the workers. But the militia themselves were made up of workers who served part-time, much like the National Guard today. There was still no standing army. This militia was partly unreliable, as members asked why they should shoot down their own brothers and cousins on strike. In some cities, the militia refused to fight, or even went over to the side of the strikers.

Nevertheless, by the end of August, 1879, the strike was defeated, particularly when President Hayes sent in Federal troops, who killed dozens of workers. After this, the government began to build up a standing army. It is worth noting that the railroad



Troops shooting down railroad workers, Baltimore, 1877

strike took place just six years after the Paris Commune of 1871, the first attempt at seizure of power by the working class. In Paris, the National Guard was also a key component of the Commune, and after the suppression of the Commune the French capitalist class also moved to develop a standing army. This already shows the beginning of the parallel struggles of the workers internationally, at least in the industrial countries.

10. 1886 and the Fight for the 8-Hour Day

During this period there were few unions and little if any protection for workers' rights. There were no restrictions on the length of the working day. The capitalists could force workers to work 10, 12, 14 or 16 hours, pocketing the extra profit.

In Chicago in 1886, a group of workers, including many immigrants (mostly from Germany), organized to demand that the legal working day be reduced to 8 hours. This demand was taken up by the recently formed Chicago Central Labor Union. A strike for the 8-hour day was called for May 1, and some 80,000 came out in Chicago; many others came out in similar actions in cities around the country.

On May 3, during a strike at the McCormick Harvester Works in Chicago, the police shot at workers attending a mass rally, killing six of them. The following day, an agent provocateur (someone secretly working for the government) threw a bomb at a rally in Haymarket Square, which killed seven policemen and four workers. In supposed retaliation, the government arrested leaders of the strike and charged them with first-degree murder, although none were charged with throwing the bomb. Seven of them were condemned to death and one to 15 years' prison. August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer and George Engel were hanged, becoming martyrs for the workers' cause. Louis Lingg allegedly committed suicide, and the others, Samuel Fielden, Michael Schwab and Oscar Neebe spent several years in jail until they were pardoned by liberal Illinois Governor John Peter Altgelt in 1893. Over the



Poster, in English and German, for meeting at Haymarket Square, 1886

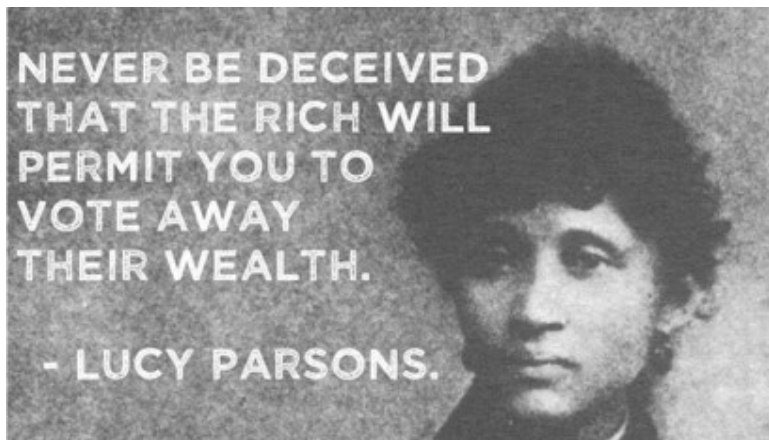
next years, many industries were forced to recognize the 8-hour day.

In 1889, the Socialist International, the organization of working class parties at that time, recognized May 1 as International Workers Day. It has since been celebrated around the world, but for decades the trade union bureaucracy in the U.S. refused to celebrate it here, replacing it with Labor Day, a day for patriotic speeches, parades and picnics that have nothing to do with the actual struggles of the working class.

Lucy Parsons

Lucy Eldine Gonzalez Parsons was born in 1853 in Texas, probably as a slave. She was one of the leaders of the May 1, 1886, strike. Lucy was of Native American, Mexican, and possibly Afro-American ancestry. She was married to Albert Parsons, who was arrested in 1886. She made speeches around the country, trying to get the death sentences of her husband and the other Haymarket victims overturned, but Albert was executed in 1887.

Lucy Parsons wrote for a variety of working class journals. She was a founding member of the IWW (see next chapter). She considered herself an anarchist-communist. She organized the Chicago Hunger Demonstrations in 1915. In the mid-1920s she worked with the International Labor Defense, which defended, legally and politically, working-class fighters who were under attack by the U.S. government.



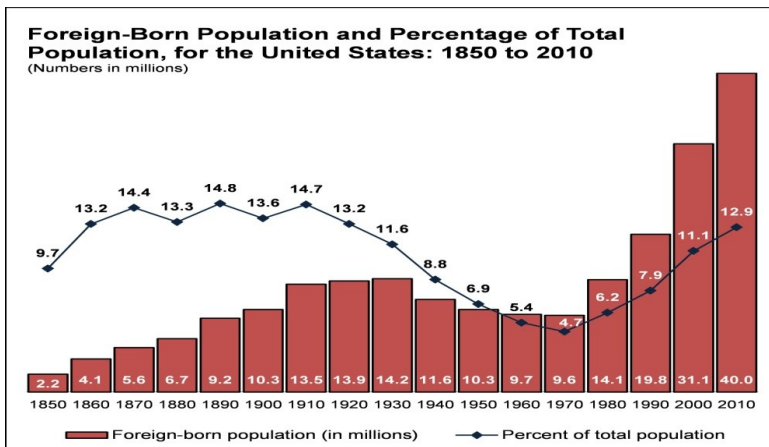
She was a fighter for women's rights, but unlike some feminists, she saw the present-day oppression of women as a function of capitalism, not as the oppression of all women by all men. Her views led her into controversy with the famous anarchist Emma Goldman, whom she criticized for "addressing large middle-class audiences." Parsons continued to be active in the labor movement until her death in 1942 at the age of 89. (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucy_Parsons.)

Bibl: Richard O. Boyer & Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, 1955
Anthony Bimba, *History of the American Working Class*, 1937

11. Workers' Struggles, 1880 to 1920

In the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, the capitalists were able to greatly expand industry across the country. Between 1880 and 1920, over 20 million workers looking for jobs immigrated to the United States and settled across the country. Many were from the poorer countries of southern and eastern Europe: Italians, Slavs (Poles, Czechs, Russians, etc.) and Jews looking for work in the new industries. As agriculture and mining grew in the Southwest, Mexican workers also moved into that area, the number growing to between 50,000-100,00 per year in the 1920s. Many of the immigrants brought the working class traditions from their home countries, mainly socialism but also anarchism. They helped inject a renewed militant spirit into the working class movement.

The development of industrial capitalism throughout the country and the growth and concentration of the working class led to the rise of new workers' organizations. One of the most important of these was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). They were ordinary workers who got jobs and organized in the factories (unlike today's bureaucrats who are usually highly paid and often have never worked in the industry). They often travelled by hoboing (riding on freight trains without paying).



Though the total number of immigrants has been highest in recent decades, the percents were highest from the 1860s to 1920s

The IWW also fought for free speech, demanding the rights of workers to speak out against their conditions. They organized immigrant and native-born, black and white workers together.

The IWW was hampered by its syndicalist outlook. This meant that they limited the fight to that of the union (syndicate). Their slogan was: "One Big Union." This left the political (including electoral) fight mainly in the hands of the capitalists and their parties.

Another important group was the Socialist Party (S.P.). This organization was made up of both petty-bourgeois (middle class) intellectuals and workers. It was an advance over the older Socialist Labor Party, which confined itself to organizing mostly immigrant, especially German-speaking, workers.* The S.P. did a lot to spread a socialist outlook around the U.S. It was divided between reformists, mostly from among the intellectuals, and revolutionaries, mostly from among the workers.

One of the major struggles in this period was a strike of coal miners in Ludlow, CO, in 1914 against a company controlled by John D. Rockefeller. Some 1200 striking miners and their families had set up a tent colony. Rockefeller called out the Colorado National Guard and company guards, who fired on the colony, killing some two dozen people, including women and children. Over the next 10 days, miners throughout the state resisted, and some 70 to 200 people were killed on both sides in the struggle. The strike only ended when President Wilson sent in Federal troops to crush it.

Joe Hill Song

Joe Hill, a miner from Provo, Utah, was born Joel Hägglund in Sweden. He was a member of the IWW. He was also a balladeer, who composed and sang songs of workers' struggles wherever he organized. Hill was framed on a murder charge and executed in



* Engels warned against the Germans in America who showed a sectarian attitude to the American workers' movement. See Engels, Letter to *F. Kelley-Wischnewetzky in New York*, December 28, 1886 in: Marx Engels *Collected Works*, Vol. 47, p. 541.

1912 at the age of 36. Fittingly, his comrades wrote this song to commemorate him.

To hear the song, sung by Paul Robeson, go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8Kxq9uFDes>

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
Alive as you and me
Says I, "But Joe, you're ten years dead,"
"I never died," says he.
"I never died," says he.

"In Salt Lake City, Joe," says I,
Him standing by my bed,
"They framed you on a murder charge,"
Says Joe, "But I ain't dead,"
Says Joe, "But I ain't dead."

"The copper bosses killed you, Joe,
They shot you, Joe," says I.
"Takes more than guns to kill a man,"
Says Joe, "I didn't die,"
Says Joe, "I didn't die."

And standing there as big as life
And smiling with his eyes
Says Joe, "What they can never kill
Went on to organize,
Went on to organize."

From San Diego up to Maine,
In every mine and mill –
Where workers strike and organize
It's there you'll find Joe Hill.
It's there you'll find Joe Hill.

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
Alive as you or me
Says I, "But Joe, you're ten years dead",
"I never died," says he.
"I never died," says he.
"I never died," says he.

12. Development of Imperialism and the Spanish-American War of 1898

By the beginning of the 19th century, the U.S. and other industrially-developed countries such as Britain, France, Germany and Japan had gone beyond free-competition capitalism. All the major industries were now monopolized, that is, a small group of capitalists controlled the entire industry. For example, Standard Oil, founded in 1870 and chaired by John D. Rockefeller, controlled 88% of the U.S. refined oil industry by 1890. U.S. Steel was founded in 1901 by J.P. Morgan and others as a merger with Andrew Carnegie's Steel Corp., and within a year it controlled 2/3 of U.S. steel production. In 1905 U.S. Steel joined the International Rail Cartel that divided steel sales to railroad companies among various European powers. In 1929, the U.S. produced over 90% of the world's 32 million automobiles, and in 1966 the Big Three automakers, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, still produced 90% of all autos made in the U.S. The industrial monopolies merged with the big banks, which were also monopolized, to form what is called finance capital. They exported capital all over the world, taking advantage of the natural resources, cheap labor and markets, especially in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

The history of much of the Middle East since the early 20th century is full of examples of division of oil resources among various developed capitalist countries. Thus, the monopoly corporations divided up the world economically among them, and the governments divided up the weaker countries politically, making them into colonies or neo-colonies. This stage of capitalism is called imperialism.

One continent that was the particular subject of imperialist intervention was Africa. At the Berlin Conference in 1884-85, the imperialist countries (particularly Britain and France) agreed to divide the continent among themselves. In the Anglo-Boer war from 1899-1902, the British fought the Dutch settlers (known as Boers) over control of southern Africa. Other small countries, such as Belgium, occupied large countries, such as Congo, which has more than 7 times Belgium's population. King Leopold II occupied the Congo as his personal colony in 1885, but it be-

came an official colony of Belgium in 1908. It was primarily a source of natural rubber. Leopold had the hands cut off of workers who did not produce enough rubber. It is estimated that 10 million Congolese were killed or mutilated.*]

The U.S. developed monopolies earlier than most other countries (except for Britain), and it exported capital earlier, particularly to Latin America. But for historical reasons (including its own past as a colony of Britain), it was behind in the conquering of colonies. By the end of the 19th century the world was already divided up among the “great powers.” Thus, the U.S. had to resort to force against other powers to establish its “own” colonies.

In 1867, the U.S. purchased Alaska from the Russian Empire for \$7.2 million. Of course, neither one asked the native Inuit (“Eskimo”) or Aleut people whether they wanted to be owned by either power. Since the second half of the 20th century, Alaska has made billions of dollars for the major U.S. oil monopolies.

In 1893, U.S. settlers overthrew Queen Lili’uokalani, the ruler of the Hawaiian Islands. Sanford Dole became President of the “Republic of Hawaii.” He was the cousin of James Dole, the founder of the Hawaiian Pineapple Company. For decades, Hawaii was a huge Dole pineapple plantation. Particularly since the 1950s, has become extremely profitable for the tourism industry. Hawaii is also one of the sites of the world’s largest multinational maritime exercises, called RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific), and of live-fire military training at the Pōhakuloa Training Area.

Both Alaska and Hawaii were officially incorporated into the U.S. as states in 1959. But the native peoples in both states are still fighting for their right to self-determination.



U.S. war poster, 1898

* <http://www.digitaljournal.com/blog/11297>

In 1898, the U.S. warship Maine exploded in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, which was then a Spanish colony. The U.S. declared war on Spain, blaming it for the explosion. (Decades later, it was determined that the explosion was probably the result of a fire that ignited the ship's ammunition.) As a result of its victory in that war, the U.S. took possession of Puerto Rico and Cuba in the Caribbean, and the Philippines and Guam in the Pacific. These countries had already been fighting for their independence from Spain. Under the Platt Amendment, Cuba was made into a Protectorate (it was nominally independent but the U.S. had the "right" to intervene whenever it saw fit). The Philippines became a colony until it won nominal independence in 1946. Cuba remained under U.S. domination until the revolution of 1959. Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands (which was purchased from Denmark in 1917 for \$25 million in gold) remain open colonies today.

In the early 20th century, in order to ship goods more cheaply between the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, the U.S. wanted to build a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. What is today Panama was then a province of Colombia. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt sent warships to support a phony "rebellion" calling for an independent Panama. The new country allowed the U.S. to build the canal through it, and to establish a "Canal Zone" of five miles on each side of the canal. Much of the work was carried out by laborers from the West Indies, thousands of whom died from malaria and other diseases during the construction of the canal, both under the U.S. and under an earlier French attempt to build the canal.

The Canal Zone remained under U.S. control until 1979, when mass demonstrations forced the U.S. to return the area to Panama. The canal itself was given back to Panama in 1999.

Treating the Caribbean as its own lake, the U.S. government invaded Haiti in 1915, taking over its banks and other institutions and rewriting the Haitian Constitution to allow for foreign ownership of land there. The U.S. defeated Charlemagne Peralte in the so-called "Caco Wars" and continued to occupy the country until 1934. Similarly, the U.S. occupied the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924, when it turned over rule to a U.S.-backed ally.

Major General Smedley D. Butler

Butler was a member of the Marine Corps, and one of only two marines who won two Medals of Honor. He was also chosen by major capitalists and bankers in the America Liberty League to lead a fascist coup against President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, but instead he exposed the plotters (see http://coat.ncf.ca/our_magazine/links/53/53-index.html).



“I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.”

Bibl: Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1916.

Butler, *War is a Racket*, 1935

Documentary Film: Director, Anna Keala Kelly, *Noho Hewa*, 2010, about the U.S. occupation of Hawaii.

PBS Video: *The Overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani*, 1997

Documentary Film: Director, Peter Bate, *Congo: White King, Red Rubber, Black Death*, 2003.

13. World War I

The First World War, from 1914-1918, was a war between two blocs of robbers, one led by Britain and the other by Germany, to see which would dominate the world. The main imperialist (monopoly capitalist) powers had already divided the whole world among them. So the only way one could gain more territory was by robbing another. Britain was at that time the oldest and largest colonial power, but one in decline, while Germany was the newer and more vigorous power, which tried to take what it could from Britain.

Initially, the United States did not involve itself militarily in the war. It did, however, lend money and sell arms to both sides, particularly to Britain and France. The U.S. became the leading participant in international arms sales, exporting \$2.2 billion in war supplies to Europe. (By 1920, the U.S. accounted for 52% of global arms exports.) President Woodrow Wilson ran for re-election in 1916 under the slogan: "He kept us out of war." However, if the U.S. wanted to be repaid for its loans, it would have to join Britain and its allies in the fighting. In April of 1917, the U.S. officially entered the war.



U.S. World War I poster

World War I was the bloodiest war up to that time. It involved some 65 million troops on both sides, including some 5 million from the U.S. There were pitched battles, some using millions of troops, trench warfare, heavy artillery, tanks, the first use of airplanes in warfare, and the use of poisonous gas by both sides (even though this had already been made illegal by international declarations in The Hague in 1899 and 1907, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_weapons_in_World_War_I)

There were 37 million casualties in this robbers' war, in-

cluding 17 million dead and 20 million wounded. The dead included some 10 million troops (including 117,000 from the U.S.) and 7 million civilians. The war was followed by the outbreak of an influenza pandemic, which killed between 50 and 60 million people worldwide, including some 650,000 in the U.S.

In May of 1917, in the middle of the war, Pres. Wilson introduced the draft (the Selective Service Act), under which over 3 million soldiers were called up, while another 2 million volunteered. The U.S. also “gave” citizenship to the people of the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico under the Jones Act of 1917, so that they could be drafted into the U.S. armed forces. Some 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in the war.

With the Allied victory in 1918, the U.S. entered the world stage as a “great power.” During the war, it consolidated its influence over Latin America, its self-declared “back yard.” It twice invaded Mexico during that country’s revolution, and also invaded Haiti, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and occupied the Virgin Island. Now, although it still had few official colonies, it was able to invest in the colonies of its European allies. By the end of the war, the U.S. became the world’s largest creditor nation. U.S. direct investment abroad went from \$2.5 billion in 1912 to \$5 billion in 1920 and \$8 billion in 1929. Stalin, the leader of the Soviet



German World War I poster:
“Your Fatherland is in Danger
Sign Up!”

Union after Lenin's death in 1924, said:*

The center of financial power in the capitalist world, the center of the financial exploitation of the whole world, has shifted from Europe to America. Formerly, France, Germany and Britain usually formed the center of the financial exploitation of the world. That cannot be said now without special reservations. Now, the center of the financial exploitation of the world is mainly the United States of America.

Bibl: Shih Chan, *A Brief History of the United States*, Peking, 1972

* "The Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU(B). Political Report of the Central Committee," in J. V. Stalin, *Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1954), vol. 7, p. 272.

14. The Russian Revolution and its Influence on the United States

In the middle of World War I, in February of 1917, the semi-feudal regime of the Russian tsar (emperor) was overthrown by the masses of workers and peasants. A capitalist Provisional Government was formed, while at the same time the workers organized their own Councils, or Soviets (the Russian word for Councils). The capitalist government continued to take part in the imperialist war, and the Soviets, led by the opportunist parties, went along with the government.

As the workers, peasants and the soldiers themselves grew increasingly tired of the war and the growing misery that it caused, the revolutionary socialists, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, won the majority in the Soviets, particularly in the major cities. On November 7, the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government under the slogan: Peace, Bread, Land, and All Power to the Soviets. Thus the first lasting workers' state was established in Russia, which over time put an end to exploitation, poverty and unemployment.

The U.S. government, afraid that U.S. workers would follow the Russian example, joined some 14 countries in sending troops to try to suppress the Russian revolution. Some 5,000 U.S. troops were sent to Arkhangelsk in the north and 8,000 troops to Vladivostok.



U.S. Troops in Vladivostok, Russia, 1918

vostok in the far east of Russia. However, the foreign intervention and the Russian counter-revolutionary forces were all defeated by the Red Army of the workers and peasants, with the help of mutinies by many soldiers in the foreign interventionist forces.

The Bolshevik Revolution had a tremendous effect on the workers' movement all over the world, including the U.S. In February of 1919, a strike of 32,000 shipyard workers broke out in Seattle, Washington. It was supported by other workers in the city, and soon became a city-wide general strike. A central strike committee decided which services were allowed to function

(such as those delivering milk to children and those providing emergency services in hospitals) and which were not (almost everything else). The strike committee ran the city for six days. It was modeled, both consciously and unconsciously, on the Russian workers' councils. Although the strike was defeated when some of the more conservative unions pulled out, it provided workers with a great lesson, not just of their power to withhold their labor, but of their power to run society.

For over a decade after World War I, the mass production industries were basically unorganized. There were at best a few craft unions, but these ignored the mass of industrial workers. The American Federation of Labor had about 4 million members in 1920, falling to 3 million in 1925. William Z. Foster had been a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) before World War I, and he had been involved in the fight to unionize the packinghouse workers during the war. He began to organize the hundreds of thousands of steel workers. In September of 1919, 350,000 of them went on strike. On October 31, when the coal workers' contract expired, 500,000 miners joined the steel workers on strike. President Wilson and Attorney General Palm-



er declared this strike unlawful, and John L. Lewis, the head of the mine workers union, called off the strike, saying: “We are Americans. We cannot fight our government.” The steel workers remained on strike for almost four months, but in the end they were defeated due to the treachery of the leaders of the craft unions.

In 1923, Foster became a member of the Communist Party, USA He was its Chair from 1924 and General Secretary from 1945 until his retirement in 1957.

Bibl: Anna Louise Strong, *I Change Worlds*, Chapter VII, 1935
Bimba, Chapter XXVIII, 1937

Foner, Philip S., *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. 8, 1987

Video on Seattle general strike:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efM5EsZPfbA>

15. Formation of the Communist Party USA

The working class and oppressed peoples in the U.S. and other countries had nothing to gain from taking sides in the First World War. Most of the leaders of the IWW opposed the war, but that organization was already in decline due to the limits of its syndicalist views. The opportunist leaders of the Socialist Party (SP) tried to rally their members to support the monopoly-capitalist government in this war. The SP also had many centrist leaders who, while opposing the war in words, refused to condemn the openly pro-war leaders who called on the workers to slaughter each other in the interests of their rulers. They also gave only lip service to support of the Russian Revolution. In the end both the right and center joined forces against the left.

Many of the SP leaders were abject racists as well as opportunists. Victor Berger, the first socialist Representative in Congress, stated: "There can be no doubt that the Negroes and mulattoes constitute a lower race."* In 1920 the Socialist Party issued *A Political Guide for the Workers*, which said, among other things: "Its purpose is to secure a majority in Congress and in every state legislature, to win the principal executive and judicial offices, to become the dominant and controlling party, and when in power to transfer to the ownership of the people of industries..." (pp. 34-35). This is the usual social-democratic and revisionist position of "peaceful transition to socialism."

The great working class leader Eugene Debs, who had taken a leading part in the railroad strike of 1894, spoke out openly against the war. He stated: "I am opposed to every war but one; I am for that war with heart and soul, and that is the world-wide war of social revolution."† For this, the government, while waging a war in the name of "democracy," threw Debs in jail. In 1920 he ran for President from jail and got one million votes, about 3.5% of the total.

Under the influence of the Russian Socialist Revolution and the formation of the Communist International (the world organization of revolutionary, communist parties), a split developed at

* *Social Democratic Herald*, May 1902. Quoted in Foster, Chapter 7.

† *Appeal to Reason*, September 11, 1915

the Emergency National Convention of the SP in August and September 1919. The revolutionary forces had a clear majority, though they were divided among themselves over tactical questions. One group, made up mainly of U.S.-born workers, wanted to fight it out at the convention. The other, made up mostly of immigrant workers, felt that this was senseless and formed the Communist Party of America (CPA). The group that wanted to stay and fight within the SP was kicked out after bureaucratic maneuvering by the SP leadership, which called the police to have the left thrown out of the convention. They then formed the Communist Labor Party (CLP). Both parties were made up largely of industrial workers. For example, Bill Dunne, the leader of the Butte, Montana, branch of the SP, made up overwhelmingly of miners, brought the whole branch into the CLP.

Thus, in 1919, two CPs were formed. The Communist International (CI) refused to admit them as separate groups, saying that there were no differences of principle between them, and insisted that they first unite. This they did in 1921 and the united party was admitted to the CI. Debs, putting organization before ideology, never joined the CP and remained within the SP until his death in 1926. The SP's membership fell from almost 100,000 before the CPs split to 12,000 in 1921.

The U.S. government did not sit idly by as the Communist Party was being formed. It claimed that these revolutionaries



Founding Convention of the Communist Party of America, 1919

were dangerous “terrorists,” and declared both parties to be illegal. It arrested some 10,000 people, including leaders and rank-and-file members of both CPs and other revolutionaries, such as the anarchist Emma Goldman. After several court battles, the government deported some 500 people. That and the fear of further government repression reduced the combined communist ranks from some 60,000 to about 12,000.

The repression of the incipient communist movement was led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. His chief assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, headed the “anti-subversive” group within the Attorney General’s office, the General Intelligence Division, which later became the notorious Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

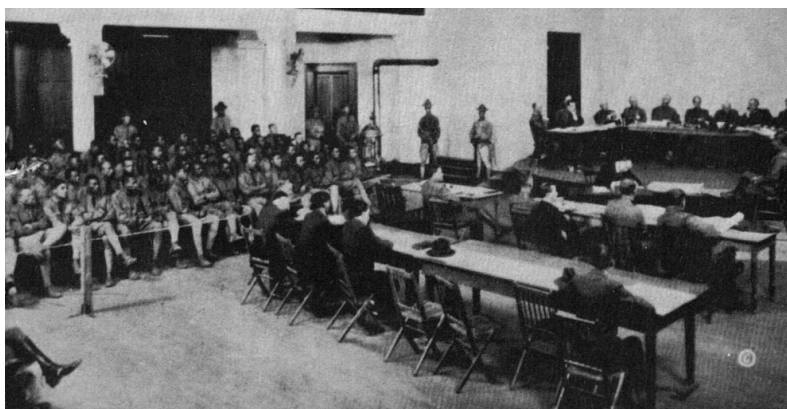
Bibl: Bimba, Chapter XXIX, 1937

Foster, Chapters Eleven & Twelve, 1952

16. Reformist and Revolutionary Organizations within the Black National Movement

The Afro-American movement made major strides forward in the early part of the 20th century and after World War I, parallel to the rise of U.S. imperialism. In 1903, the Niagara Movement was formed, which included such great intellectual leaders as W.E.B. Du Bois. The NAACP, formed in 1909, grew into a mass organization to defend the legal rights of the Afro-American people. The United Negro Improvement Association, led by Marcus Garvey, preached Black pride. Booker T. Washington, based in the Tuskegee Institute, who preached acceptance of second class citizenship and accommodation to white supremacy by Black people, was left behind.

However, these new movements still suffered from reformism and class prejudice. The Niagara Movement based itself on the “talented 10th,” the intellectual 10% of the Afro-American people who it claimed would lead the movement, while the masses would play a subordinate role. Furthermore, after initially opposing World War I, Du Bois supported the U.S. role in that war in an article entitled “Close Ranks” in the NAACP journal’s *The Crisis* of July 1918. The NAACP refused to mobilize the masses of Black people against segregation and oppression and limited itself to legal action. Garvey’s Back to Africa movement,



Court-martial of members of the 24th Infantry Regiment, 1917

despite its powerful mass influence, provided no real solution to the problems faced by the Afro-American masses within the U.S. Garvey also met with a leader of the KKK and agreed with him in opposing “miscegenation” (inter-racial marriage). It is interesting to note that J. Edgar Hoover placed the first Black FBI agent, James Wormberg Jones, in Garvey’s organization to sabotage his shipping company, Black Star Lines.

World War I played an important role in the development of the consciousness and organization of the Afro-American masses. Black people were drafted into the U.S. armed forces, and although many were kept in non-combat jobs (cooking, cleaning, etc.), some served in combat roles (although in segregated units under white officers).

In the Jim Crow South, this sometimes led to armed clashes. In 1917, the 24th Infantry Regiment, a black unit, was stationed in Houston, Texas. Its members constantly subjected to taunts and abuse, particularly by white Houston cops. After a couple of black soldiers were beaten and arrested, troops from the 24th took their arms and went into town. A battle ensued in which 17 whites, including 13 cops, were killed. In retaliation, all the troops were court-martialed, a total of 19 were executed and 63 were sentenced to life imprisonment. (See [http://www.leftvoice.org/1917-Black-Troops-Rebel-Against-](http://www.leftvoice.org/1917-Black-Troops-Rebel-Against-Jim-Crow-in-Houston)

Jim-Crow-
in-Houston

World War I also led to the beginning of the Great Migration of Afro-Americans from the rural South to the industrial centers, both North and South. For the first time, Blacks (as well as women) took jobs in factories in large numbers.

THE KLAN FORCES US TO PROTECT OURSELVES!

NEGROES! Organize Under the Protective Shield of

THE AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

(A Peace-Loving, but Red-Blooded Organization)

for "IMMEDIATE PROTECTION AND ULTIMATE LIBERATION OF NEGROES EVERYWHERE." Enjoy the benefits of Protective and Fraternal Organization. Enlist in the Liberation Movement for a FREE AFRICA and the

LIBERATION OF NEGROES EVERYWHERE!

No loose-talking in the A. B. B. No cowardly compromises. No servile surrender of Negro rights. No illusion about the task before us. No attempt to operate without a program.

The AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD (A. B. B.) is the only EFFECTIVE protective Negro organization in the world, with the grandest lineage of any FRATERNAL organization in all history, dating from the dawn of history on the banks of the upper Nile and operating uninterruptedly through all the centuries in the ennobling ceremony of blood brotherhood which is practiced to this day in Central Africa.

The A. B. B. has posts throughout the United States, the West Indies, Central America, South America and the Motherland, Africa. If you want to help yourself, if you want to help your Race,

IF YOU ARE IN REAL EARNEST

you will cut out and sign the accompanying application blank and mail it at once with enrollment fee of three (\$3.00) dollars, money order or registered mail. As

CYRIL V. BRIGGS, Executive Head

AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

2299 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., U. S. A.

DON'T PUT OFF YOUR LIBERATION! SEND IN YOUR APPLICATION NOW!

After the war, returning white soldiers, incited by the bosses, fought to get back “their” jobs that had been “taken” by blacks. This led to riots and lynchings of blacks in major cities, including East St. Louis, Chicago and Tulsa, Oklahoma. However, blacks often fought back, frequently led by returning black veterans. Hundreds of people, the majority black, were killed in these clashes in the summer of 1919 alone. The riots also doomed the valiant attempt to organize an inter-racial union among Chicago packinghouse workers.

A relatively small but influential group, the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), split from Garvey’s movement. Many were veterans of World War I, which was called a “war for democracy.” They saw the hypocrisy of this both when they were in segregated units and when they came back to a U.S. with no democracy for Black people. Many were also influenced by the Bolshevik revolution that, besides ridding the country of the capitalist and landlord exploiters, also brought democracy and equality to the non-white people of Central Asia and the Far East. The program of the ABB included a call for self-determination of the Afro-American nation and for unity with progressive white workers. Members of the ABB were among the first black members of the Communist Party USA, including Harry Haywood (born Haywood Hall) and his older brother Otto Hall.

Claude McKay: If We Must Die

Claude McKay was born in Jamaica in 1889 and came to the U.S. in 1912. He was a writer of prose and poetry and figured prominently in the artistic and cultural movement among Afro-Americans known as the Harlem Renaissance. In his earlier years, he was sympathetic to communism; he visited the Soviet Union and wrote sympathetically about it. He never joined the Communist Party, but he was a founding member of the African Blood Brotherhood. In his later years he turned from communism, claiming that it suppressed individuality.



His poem, "If We Must Die," was written in response to the post-World War I racial clashes.

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursèd lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

Bibl: *Free the Afro-American Nation*, 1982

Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, Chapters 2 & 4, 1978

Film: *The Killing Floor*, directed by Bill Duke, 1984, on organizing Chicago packinghouse workers

17. The “Roaring Twenties”

The first class battles that followed the October Revolution had died down by the early 1920s. Internationally, the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic was defeated in 1919. The January 1919 uprising in Germany was crushed, and two great revolutionary leaders, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were murdered by soldiers of the social=democratic government. Other risings in Central and Eastern Europe were similarly put down. The Soviet Union was left to build socialism in one country, but with the aid of workers around the world and the Communist Parties united in the Communist International.

Within the U.S., some of the great working class strikes had also been defeated. The great Steel Strike of 1919 was unsuccessful, and it would be another 15 years or more until the big industries would be unionized.

At the same time, the U.S. and world economy achieved a certain temporary recovery. New industries were built and old industries were expanded. This new lease on life for capitalism in the U.S. was nicknamed the “roaring twenties.” Some people believed that this period would last forever, that capitalism had outgrown its “boom and bust” cycles. This attitude even found its reflection within the communist movement, where forces led by Bukharin in the Soviet Union also believed in the long-term stabilization of capitalism. Within the CPUSA, this view, led by Jay Lovestone, was called “American exceptionalism.”

The revolutionary position that this stabilization of capitalism was only temporary was upheld by Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union after Lenin’s death. He rallied the revolutionary forces in the CPs throughout the world at the 6th Congress of the Communist International in 1928. After some vacillation, this position was taken up by the CPUSA under William Z. Foster’s leadership. The correctness of this position became clear to all a year later with the stock market crash of October, 1929, and the onslaught of the “Great Depression.”

It is worth noting what became of Lovestone, a leader of the opportunist forces in the CPUSA. Although he still paraded as a revolutionary for several years, later he together with some open social-democrats became part of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

There he helped establish the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which became the link between the trade union bureaucracy and the CIA in building reactionary trade unions and undermining revolutionary ones abroad, particularly in Latin America.

Bibl: Stalin: Speeches on the American Communist Party, 1929

18. The Great Depression

On October 29, 1929, the crash of the stock market in New York City marked the end of the “roaring twenties” and signaled the beginning of the Great Depression, the most severe of the cyclic economic crises up to that point. The stock market fell 12% (30 points) in one day and about 25% in two weeks, leading some depressed stock brokers to commit suicide. Factories closed and unemployment increased, reaching an official high of 25% in 1933. Many workers, unable to pay their rent, were evicted from their homes, and many small farmers saw their farms foreclosed, taken over by the big banks for failure to pay their mortgages. Many unemployed people became homeless, moving into tent encampments around the big cities. These were nicknamed “Hoovervilles,” after President Herbert Hoover, who refused to provide any relief to workers in the crisis. The illusion that capitalism could always provide jobs and that wages would continually rise was broken. This was the end of “American Exceptionalism.”

The crisis was an international one, spreading to all capitalist countries. Only the socialist Soviet Union, where production was



Confusion outside Stock Market, New York City, October 29, 1929

based on need and not maximum profit, was able to totally eliminate unemployment and increase production to new and higher levels in the period of its five-year plans (see table below).

Volume of Industrial Output Compared with 1929 (1929 = 100)

	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
U.S.A.	66.4	75.6	88.1	92.2	72.0
Great Britain	98.8	105.8	115.9	123.7	112.0
Germany	79.8	94.0	106.3	117.2	125.0
U.S.S.R.	283.3	293.4	382.3	424.0	477.0

Early Workers' Struggles during the Depression

Even in the early years of the Depression, workers began a serious fightback. At that time, there was no such thing as unemployment insurance, and people were dependent on the meager help from religious organizations or from people in their family who were lucky enough to still have a job. On March 6, 1930, tremendous demonstrations of unemployed workers, organized by the Communist Party and the Unemployed Councils, took place throughout the country. Millions came out into the streets, calling for "Jobs or Income Now."

Many of these demonstrations were attacked by the police. In 1932 in Atlanta, Georgia, Angelo Herndon, a young black member of the Communist Party, was charged with insurrection for organizing blacks and whites together. He was sentenced to

18-20 years in prison. Due to mass pressure, he was released in 1934 after serving two years of his sentence.

Another early battle was the Bonus March. The veterans of World War I had been promised a



People seeking food and clothing relief, 1937

bonus, to be paid in 1945. With the onset of the Depression, a call was issued for the bonus to be paid at once. In 1932, veterans began to gather in large encampments outside Washington DC. One of the largest of these was in Anacostia Flats, Maryland. A decision was made by President Hoover to crush this encampment. On July 28, a large number of troops was sent to attack the veterans of “their own” army, who had fought for “American democracy” some 14 years earlier. The veterans were driven out and the encampment was burned to the ground. At least two veterans were killed in this action, William Hushka and Eric Carlson. Among those who took part in this attack on the veterans were three officers who later became famous generals in World War II: Douglas MacArthur, James Patton and Dwight Eisenhower. In 1936 Congress, overriding President Roosevelt’s veto, voted to grant the veterans their bonus.

One important organization was the Sharecroppers Union, begun in Tallapoosa, Alabama, in 1931. It organized primarily Afro-American croppers (who were paid for their work for wealthy white landowners with a small share of the crop, not in cash). The Union had battles with local sheriffs and other racists,



Bonus Army encampment, 1932

with several people getting killed, including Ralph Gray, one of its founders. The Union reached a membership of about 10,000 at its height in 1936.

Bibl: Stalin, *Report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B)*, March 1939

Stalin, *Marxism vs. Liberalism*, 1934

Kelley, Robin D. G. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama*

Communists during the Great Depression, 1990.

Shaw, Nate. *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*.

Edited by Theodore Rosengarten, 1974.

19. Workers' Struggles during the New Deal

Although the New Deal allowed workers the right to organize, they had to fight to put this right into practice. One of the first and greatest of these fights was for the unionization of the longshore workers on the West Coast, which led to the San Francisco General Strike in July, 1934.

Before the unionization drive, longshore workers were super-exploited as temporary shape-up workers. The work was hard manual labor, as at that time cargo was loaded and unloaded by hand, without the containers and cranes that are used today. Workers would come down to the docks early in the morning and would wait for the shipping companies' representatives to pick the workers they wanted. The rest went home to try again another day. With great effort, militant organizers encouraged the workers to join what was then the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and later became the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) on the Pacific Coast. They went on strike to force the shipping companies to hire workers through the union. The strike was met by violence from the companies and the government, in which two workers, Howard Sperry and Nick Bordoise, were killed. Tens of thousands of workers from throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond took part in their funeral procession.

Workers throughout San Francisco went on strike in solidarity with the longshore workers. After four days, the main demands



were basically won. The companies had to recognize the union, the workers received a substantial wage increase, and most importantly they won the recognition of the union hiring hall. (To this day, the ILWU remains one of the most progressive unions in the country, not only representing workers in their day-to-day interests but also through strikes against the former apartheid South African regime, for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, against the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and for May Day.)

This period was one of the unionization of the great mass production industries in the U.S., such as auto, steel, rubber and trucking. Until that time, the A.F. of L. had mainly organized the small number of higher-paid, skilled craft workers, ignoring the great majority of industrial workers. Although some of these workers had been organized in the early part of the 20th century by the IWW, the Wobblies with their anarcho-syndicalist traditions were not able to maintain these unions. Other attempts at industrial organization, such as steel and meat packing, had failed. Now, a new effort was made by the Council on Industrial Organizing, later the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.). This effort was largely led by the Communist Party in a united front with more militant forces in the A.F. of L., such as John L. Lewis of the mineworkers union.

One of the major organizing efforts was in the auto industry, which led to the great Flint sit-down strike from December 1936 to February 1937. In order to prevent scabs from breaking an organizing strike at the General



Motors plant in Flint, Michigan, and to prevent management from removing machinery, the workers occupied the plant and held it for almost three months. They were aided by the support of other workers, not only in Michigan but throughout the country. The Women's Auxiliary also played a heroic role, helping to supply the strikers with food and other necessities. Michigan Governor Frank Murphy called out the National Guard, but the strikers held firm and Murphy could not use the Guard to drive the workers out, partly due to fear of damaging to the equipment inside the plant. Finally, the company conceded and recognized the right of the workers to unionize. The other auto companies quickly followed suit.

Organizing in other key industries was made easier by the success in auto, but again not without violence including the killing of striking workers by scabs, company goons and the government. The largest steel company, U.S. Steel, recognized the union, but Republic Steel, misnamed "Little Steel," refused to recognize it. When the workers went out on strike on the South-east side of Chicago in 1937, the police shot at the strikers. Altogether 18 workers were killed, hundreds wounded and thousands arrested. Although the strike was initially defeated, the company was eventually forced to recognize the union.

Fascist Attacks and Bourgeois Reforms

Internationally the bourgeoisie had two different tactical ways of reacting to the capitalist crisis. In many countries, especially in Europe, the capitalists turned to fascism to try to crush the rising workers' movement. Already in the early 1920s, Mussolini, a former Social-Democrat, had taken over the Italian government, crushing the independent trade unions and setting up a corporate state. In Germany, Hitler was supported by such big monopolists as Krupp and Thyssen (steel), Siemens (electrical), and I.G. Farben (chemical, producer of Zyklon B that was later used to exterminate Jews and others in the gas chambers during World War II). Hitler had the Reichstag (Parliament) building in Berlin burned down in February 1933. He tried to blame the fire on the Communist Party, and used this to put an end to the bourgeois-democratic Weimar Republic, ban the Communist Party,

crush the trade unions, and eventually ban the social-democrats and all other parties. He scapegoated the Jews and blamed a “Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy” for all Germany’s problems, beginning with its defeat in World War I.

The U.S. capitalists, who were already the strongest in the world, were able to follow a path of reforms. In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt, candidate of the Democratic Party, was elected president with a 57% majority. Under pressure from the growing working class movement at home (see next chapter) and the successful example of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, he put forward a package of reforms under the name of the New Deal, which he had to fight to get Congress to pass. These reforms included: legislation allowing workers to form unions; setting up the Public Works Administration (PWA), which helped to build up the infrastructure of the country, including highways and bridges, but also murals and audio-recordings that helped unemployed artists and other intellectuals. He established the first social security system for the elderly, as well as unemployment relief.

Although these reforms did provide some relief for workers, the New Deal was not able to get the country out of the Depression. In 1938, official unemployment was still close to 20%, despite the recruitment of many workers through the PWA. Joseph Stalin, in a 1934 interview with the writer H.G. Wells, pointed out that: “no capitalist would ever agree to the complete abolition of unemployment, to the abolition of the reserve army of unemployed, the purpose of which is to bring pressure on the labor market, to ensure a supply of cheap labor.” Only during World War II was the capitalist world able to get out of the Great Depression by building up the war industry and recruiting large numbers of the unemployed into the armed forces.

Bibl: Walter Linder, *The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike Against GM 1936-37*, 1973

Samuel Darcy, unpublished memoirs, *The Lessons of the Recent Strikes and of the General Strike*, no date,

available at Tamiment Library, New York City

Genora Johnson (interviewed), *Striking Flint*, 1981, available at:

<https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/amersocialist/genora.htm>. Though Johnson gives too much credit to the Socialist Party, of which she was a member, her interview gives a lively account of the role of women in the strike.

20. The International Situation Leading up to World War II

Officially, World War II began when Nazi Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939. But in fact, the first phases of the war took place considerably earlier. In 1931, Japan invaded and occupied Manchuria, the most industrialized region in China, and in 1936 it moved to take over large parts of the rest of that country. After coming to power in Germany in 1933, Hitler quickly rebuilt the German armed forces. In 1936 he remilitarized the Rhineland, which was not allowed under the Treaty of Versailles imposed on Germany after its defeat in World War I. In 1935, fascist Italy invaded and occupied Ethiopia in northeast Africa. The western capitalist governments turned a blind eye to these activities of the fascist powers, making only verbal criticisms. Only the socialist Soviet Union called for genuine resistance. Its Foreign Minister, Maxim Litvinov, appealed to the capitalist democracies to form collective security agreements against aggression. The Soviet Union even joined the League of Nations to aid in this appeal. But except for mutual defense treaties with France and Czechoslovakia (which were never really put into effect), nothing came of this.

In 1935, the Communist International (Comintern) held its Seventh Congress under the leadership of the great Bulgarian revolutionary, Georgi Dimitrov.* The Comintern changed its tactical orientation to call for united and popular fronts against fascism and war. A united front government was formed in France in 1936, which prevented fascism from taking over the country at that time and carried out some reforms in the interest of the working class.

In the same year, the united front Republican government in Spain began a three-year fight against the fascist Franco, who

* Dimitrov had been accused by the fascists of setting the Reichstag (German Parliament building) on fire. The fascists used this as an excuse to eliminate the remaining democratic rights in Germany. Dimitrov struck a blow against the Nazis when he exposed the fact that the fire was a deed of the fascists themselves, and the court was forced to acquit him.

was aided by Mussolini and Hitler. However, the western powers refused to sell weapons to the legal Republican government. Moreover, the French social-democratic Premier Blum tried, often unsuccessfully, to prevent members of the International Brigades from crossing into Spain to fight for the Republic. The Brigades were organized by the communists, some left socialists and other democratic forces. They included many anti-fascists from Germany and Italy, as well as from other countries. Some 3,000 fighters came from the U.S., of whom about 1,000 were killed in battle. The only states that gave aid to the Spanish Republic were the socialist Soviet Union and Mexico under the progressive Cardenas government. Even the Roosevelt government in the U.S. observed a policy of "neutrality," refusing to sell arms to Spain, while the fascist powers gave all possible aid to Franco. During World War II, Franco returned the favor to the western powers, remaining neutral on the western front while sending the Blue Division to fight on the side of Hitler against the Soviet Union.

There were many other early military actions before the official outbreak of World War II. In March of 1938, Nazi Germany annexed Austria, and in April of 1939 fascist Italy occupied Albania. One of the most serious supports given to the fascists by the western powers was the Munich Treaty selling out Czecho-



British P.M. Chamberlain (left) sells out Czechoslovakia to Hitler to turn Germany east against the Soviet Union, 1938

slovakia in September of 1938, when Hitler demanded the annexation of the western portion of that country.

Prime Minister Chamberlain of Britain and Premier Daladier of France met

with Hitler and Mussolini and agreed to Hitler's demand, allegedly to "preserve peace." However, Hitler used this concession to occupy all of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939. In actuality, the western powers wanted to urge Hitler to go east and attack the Soviet Union, trying to destroy the Land of Socialism once and for all.

While trying until the last minute to develop collective security agreements with the Western capitalist democracies, at the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1939, Stalin warned the West that they could not expect the Soviet Union to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. When it became clear that the negotiations for collective security being carried out in Moscow with Britain and France in the summer of that year were not progressing, Stalin accepted Hitler's proposal for a non-aggression pact, which was signed in Moscow by German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov (who had replaced Litvinov in May). The plans of the Western powers to get Hitler to attack the Soviet Union at that time failed, and the Soviet Union's fear of having to fight the fascist powers by itself was put to rest.



U.S. Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

Woody Guthrie: Jarama Valley

The Jarama Valley was the site of a famous battle in the Spanish Civil War. This song was sung by the famous U.S. folk-singer Woody Guthrie, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eREF2NgRXoc>



There's a valley in Spain called Jarama
It's a place that we all know so well
It was there that we fought against the fascists
We saw a peaceful valley turn to hell

From this valley they say we are going
But don't hasten to bid us adieu
Even though we lost the battle at Jarama
We'll set this valley free before we're through

We were men of the Lincoln Battalion
We're proud of the fight that we made
We know that you people of the valley
Will remember our Lincoln Brigade

From this valley they say we are going
But don't hasten to bid us adieu
Even though we lost the battle at Jarama
We'll set this valley free before we're through

You will never find peace with these fascists
You will never find friends such as we
So remember that valley of Jarama
And the people that'll set that valley free

From this valley they say that we are going
But don't hasten to bid us adieu
Even though we lost the battle at Jarama
We'll set this valley free before we're through

All this world is like this valley called Jarama
So green and so bright and so fair
No fascists can dwell in our valley
Nor breathe in our new freedom's air

From this valley they say we are going
But don't hasten to bid us adieu
Even though we lost the battle at Jarama
We'll set this valley free before we're through

Bibl: *Georgei Dimitrov, Leipzig, 1933*, Sophia Press, 1968

21. World War II and the Role of the Major Powers

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Within two weeks, the reactionary feudal Polish government collapsed, and the Soviet Union sent troops in to what had been western Poland to prevent Germany from occupying the whole country. This region had been occupied by Poland during the Russian Civil War and Intervention. It was predominantly made up of Ukrainians and Byelorussians, and was reincorporated into the Soviet Republics of Ukraine and Byelorussia.

While Britain and France declared war on Germany after its invasion of Poland, no major fighting took place at that time. This first phase was called the “phony war,” or “sitzkrieg” (sitting war), as compared to the later German military tactic of “blitzkrieg” (lightning war). During this period the Soviet Union fortified its defenses against the German attack that it knew was coming. In a short war with Finland, it pushed back its frontier (which had been only 18 miles from Leningrad). It reincorporated the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, as well as the Republic of Moldavia, all of which had been taken from Soviet Russia during the Civil War. These moves were a major setback to the fascist powers, especially Germany, which saw them as potential German territory.

In October of 1940, Italy began its occupation of Greece, aided by the Germans the following April. Romania joined the Axis in November of 1940, as did Bulgaria in March of 1941. Germany occupied Yugoslavia in April of 1941. In the West, in May and June of 1940, Germany quickly occupied Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg and the north of France, leaving the south to the puppet government centered in Vichy. Germany began the aerial bombardment of Britain. Meanwhile, Japan expanded its occupation of China, where it was confronted by a shaky united front alliance between the Communist Party led by Mao Tse-tung and the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The army led by the Communist Party did the great majority of fighting against the Japanese troops, while fending off continual attacks by the Kuomintang. The Soviet Union, which had repulsed Japanese attacks on Mongolia in 1938 and 1939, remained neutral towards Japan, while sending military aid to China.

Finally, on June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany launched a three-pronged attack on the Soviet Union, using over 4 million troops, the largest invasion in history. Many commentators in the capitalist countries predicted that the Soviet Union would collapse within six weeks. But despite serious losses of territory in the beginning of the war, the Soviet Union held out. Leningrad was surrounded and besieged for almost three years, with about one million people dying, many from starvation; however, it never surrendered, and Moscow held firm against the German attack.

In July of 1941, the Soviet Union formed an alliance with Britain, and in December with the United States after the U.S. entered the war. This was the collective security for which the Soviet Union had worked for years before the war, forcing Germany to fight on two fronts. Even though it was not until June of 1944 that the Western powers opened the second front against Germany with the invasion of Normandy in France (which they had promised to carry out two years earlier), now it was Germany, not the Soviet Union, which was isolated.

There were some capitalist politicians who still wanted to play off the Soviet Union and Germany. On June 23, 1941, immediately after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, then Senator (later President) Harry Truman said: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible." But this did not happen. The U.S. and Britain sent supplies to the Soviet Union, although this aid, the Lend Lease, amounted to only about 5% of the Soviet Union's own armaments.

As everyone in the United States knows, Japan attacked the U.S. Pacific fleet in its colony of Hawaii on December 7, 1941, marking the U.S. entry into the war. Japan had been the U.S.'s major competitor in Asia and the Pacific, and it was there that the U.S. concentrated much of its fighting. It fought together with the heroic Hukbalahap guerillas in the Philippines, which had been a U.S. colony. It also fought to defeat the Japanese in its colony of Guam, as well as in smaller chains of the Marianas, Marshall and Caroline Islands, over which it established protectorates after the war. The only land war that it fought in Japan

itself was on the island of Okinawa, which remains the site of major U.S. bases in Asia today.

The U.S. and Britain sent their forces into Sicily in July and August of 1943, and into the southern Italian mainland in September of 1943. There, in conjunction with the powerful Italian partisan resistance, they defeated Italian fascism. Mussolini was executed by the partisans in April of 1945. Britain had a mission in Greece, mainly supporting the small rightist guerrillas, while the Greek Democratic Army, ELAS, did most of the fighting against the Italian and German occupiers. Britain also sent troops and supplies to aid Tito's Yugoslav guerrillas, which were also supported by the Soviet Union in the liberation of Belgrade.

The Soviet Union bore the great brunt of the fighting. At its height, in February 1943, Germany had 195 divisions fighting the Soviet Union, while it had only 49 divisions, that is, only one-quarter as many, on the Western front. Even in July of 1944, after the Normandy invasion, Germany had 124 divisions on the Eastern front, almost twice the 69 divisions it had in the West. The difference in the fighting can also be seen in the casualties. While the Soviet Union lost at least 20 million killed (both soldiers and civilians), the U.S. only lost about 420,000 and Britain about 450,000 killed. Of the Axis (Germany and its allies) military deaths, 5.48 million were on the Eastern Front (against the Soviets and their Eastern European allies), while only 830,000 were on the Western Front (against Britain, the U.S. and their

Western European allies); that is, the Soviets killed over six times as many German troops as the West did.

By February 1943, the Soviet Union had reversed the course of the war at the battle of Stalingrad. It then pushed Germany inexorably back to the west and, together with the partisan resistance, liberated Ruma-



U.S. and Soviet troops meet on Elbe, April 25, 1945

nia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, finally entering Germany and liberating Berlin on May 2, 1945. Albania was the only country that liberated itself without the aid of foreign troops, defeating fascist Italy and then Nazi Germany by November of 1944.

Britain and the U.S. finally opened the Second Front on June 6, 1944, storming the beaches of Normandy. This helped relieve the Soviet Union from carrying out the main fight against Germany on its own. Although Germany wanted to sign a separate peace with the U.S. and Britain while continuing to fight against the Soviet Union, it was politically impossible for the Western powers to agree to this. However, Germany still kept most of its forces fighting in the East; otherwise the Soviet Union might have liberated all of Germany by itself. Nazi Germany unconditionally surrendered to the U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union on May 7, 1945. The war in Europe was over.

Under its agreements with the Western powers, within three months of the defeat of Germany in the West, the Soviet Union moved its troops to fight Japan in the East. On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union sent its army to defeat about 50 Japanese divisions in Manchuria. The U.S. under President Truman dropped two atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 respectively. These bombings resulted in the horrific deaths of about 200,000 people, including those who died from burns and radiation illness in the months after the attacks.* These cities had no military importance, and their bombing only served to warn the Soviet Union of the U.S. atomic might and to prevent it from taking any part in the post-war governing of Japan. The war in Asia ended with the unconditional surrender of Japan to the U.S. on September 2, 1945.

* The use of atomic bombs against Japan was not the only attack by the Western allies, particularly the U.S., against civilians. Britain and the U.S. firebombed the German city of Hamburg in July of 1943, killing over 42,000 civilians, and a similar firebombing of Dresden in February of 1945 killed another 25,000 people. In March of 1945, the U.S. firebombed the Japanese capital of Tokyo, killing at least 88,000 people.

Bertold Brecht: What Did the Soldier's Wife Receive?

Bertold Brecht was a prominent German anti-fascist playwright and poet. During the Nazi period Brecht left Germany to live in various countries in Europe, and in 1941 he moved to the United States. In 1947 he was called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and the following day he returned to Europe. He moved to the (east) German Democratic Republic, where he directed the famous Berliner Ensemble theater company. This poem was written during World War II, around 1943, referring to the German soldiers.

Sung in German by Lotte Lenya at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxGla2m6NGg>



And what did the soldier's wife receive
From the ancient capital, Prague?
From Prague she received her high-
 heeled shoes,
Greetings, good news, and her high-
 heeled shoes
She received from the capital, Prague.

And what did the soldier's wife receive
From Oslo beyond the sound?
She received from Oslo a little fur piece,
And the hope it might please, a little fur piece
She received from beyond the sound.

And what did the soldier's wife receive
From wealthy Amsterdam?
From Amsterdam she received a hat,
She looked well in that, the pretty Dutch hat
She received from Amsterdam.

And what did the soldier's wife receive
From Brussels, the Belgian town?
She received from Brussels the rarest of lace,
What a joy to possess the rarest of lace
She received from the Belgian town.

And what did the soldier's wife receive
From Paris the city of light?
She received from Paris a silken gown,
'Twas the talk of the town, the silken gown
She received from the city of light.

And what did the soldier's wife receive
From the south, from Bucharest?
From Bucharest she received a smock,
A strange gay frock, the Rumanian smock
She received from Bucharest.

And what did the soldier's wife receive
From the Russian land of snow?
She received from Russia her widow's weeds,
For her grief she had need of those widow's weeds
She received from the land of snow.

Bibl: Wikipedia:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:World-War-II-military-deaths-in-Europe-by-theater-year.png>

22. The International Consequences of World War II

One of the most important results of World War II was the growth of the socialist and people's democratic camp, with the spread of people's democracies in Eastern Europe and Asia, and especially with the victory of the revolution in China in 1949. These countries had to do a great work of rebuilding to make up for the war's destruction. The superiority of socialism was shown in particular by the fact that by 1948 the Soviet Union had already surpassed its highest pre-war production levels.

With the defeat of fascism, U.S. troops held massive demonstrations demanding to be demobilized and sent home. In the Philippines, they formed soldiers committees and refused to be used against the revolutionary Huk movement, which had been their ally in the fight against Japan.

At the same time, World War II left the U.S. as the major imperialist power. One group of its rivals, Germany, Italy and Japan, had been defeated in the war, and another group, Britain and France, had been severely weakened. They were in the process of losing their main colonies through the strength of the people's liberation movements. The U.S., which had not been invaded or attacked (except in its colony of Hawaii in 1941), had emerged relatively unharmed.

Even while the war in Europe was still raging, in December 1944, Churchill militarily attacked his nominal allies, the Greek People's Liberation Army, ELAS, in order to prevent them from liberating Greece. When 200,000 people demonstrated in Athens, the British and the Greek reactionary troops fired on them, killing 28 people. Churchill even stationed snipers on the Acropolis (something Hitler had not dared to do) to fire at demonstrators.

In March of 1946, Churchill made his infamous speech in Fulton, Missouri, declaring that an "iron curtain" had fallen over Europe. But this phrase was used earlier by Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, who wrote on February 25, 1945, in *Das Reich*, that if Germany lost the war, "an iron curtain would

fall” over Eastern Europe (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Curtain).*

The U.S. began its threats against the Soviet Union and its fights against the new people’s democracies. In Europe, the U.S. government built up an arsenal of A-bombs and H-bombs to threaten the Soviets. The wartime Office of Strategic Service (OSS) became the post-war C.I.A. The U.S. used Nazi General Gehlen’s military intelligence organization to send spies into Eastern Europe. (Gehlen later became head of West Germany’s intelligence agency.) The U.S. provided arms to British imperial-



Britain attacks unarmed demonstrators,
Athens, Greece December 3, 1944

* Churchill had a different view of the role of the Soviet Union during the war. On August 4, 1944, he said: “it is the Russian armies who have done the main work in tearing the guts out of the Germany army. In the air and on the oceans we could maintain our place, but there was no force in the world which could have been called into being, except after several more years, that would have been able to maul and break the German army unless it had been subjected to the terrible slaughter and manhandling that has befallen it through the strength of the Russian Soviet armies. I salute Marshal Stalin, the great champion, and I firmly believe that our twenty years’ treaty with Russia will prove one of the most lasting and durable factors in preserving the peace and the good order and the progress of Europe.” See *A Time of Triumph*, vol. 7, p. 6977.

ism to intervene against the Greek democratic forces in the Civil War there from 1946-1949. The U.S. rigged elections in France and Italy to prevent the formation of communist governments and to drive communists out of cabinet posts. It prodded its south Korean puppets, led by Syngman Rhee, to attack the Democratic People's Republic of (north) Korea. It supported France in its failed attempt to reestablish its colony in Vietnam, providing 80% of French costs in that war by the time of France's defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. It also backed Britain in its wars to defeat national liberation movements from Kenya (Mau Mau) in Africa to Burma and Malaya in Asia. It orchestrated a coup in Iran in August of 1953, overthrowing the progressive government of Mohammed Mossadegh and installing the hated Shah (emperor) Reza Pahlavi. In the process, control of Iranian oil passed from British to U.S. monopolies. In many parts of the world, the "cold" war became increasingly hot.

Bibl: Wilfred Burchett, *People's Democracy*, 1951

William Z. Foster, *Twilight of World Capitalism*, 1949

Greek American Council: National Liberation Front –

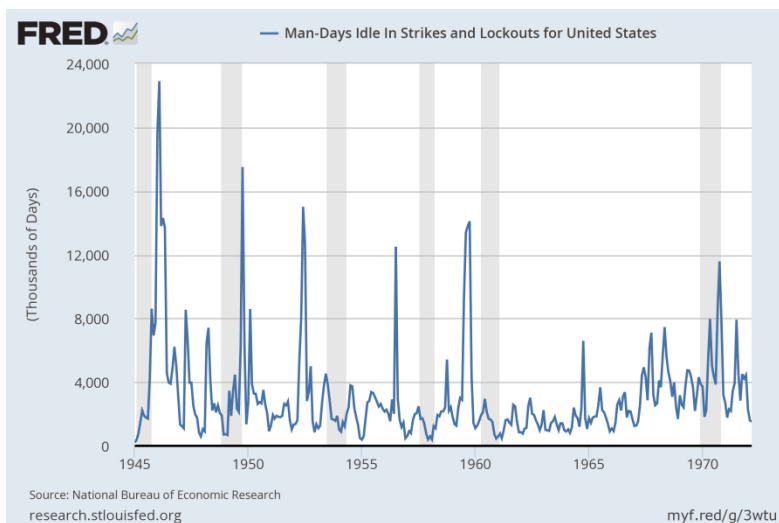
E.A.M., *White Book*, 1945

Daniele Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies*, 2004

23. Post-World War II, McCarthyism and the Trade Union Movement

The period immediately after World War II was one of important mass movements. Within the U.S., massive strikes broke out in an effort to make up for the wage freeze imposed during the war beginning in 1943 (see graph below). In 1945 and 1946 alone, there were major strikes among auto, steel, electrical, maritime, railroad and coal workers. In 1946 a successful city-wide general strike broke out in Rochester, NY, in support of striking government workers who had been fired for attempting to form a union.

U.S. imperialism tried to isolate and undermine the Soviet Union and the new people's democracies in Europe and Asia. In order to do this, it carried out a two-pronged offensive against its working class, needing peace at home to prepare for war abroad. On the one hand, it attacked the communists and other militants in the trade union movement, using the old reactionary forces in the A.F. of Labor and its new red-baiting allies in the leadership of the C.I.O., such as Walther Reuther of the UAW and Phillip



Federal Research Economic Data (FRED), from
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/M08257USM552NNBR>

Murray of the Steel Workers.* Militants were hounded out of most of the unions that they had led in building. A few progressive unions, such as the United Electrical Workers (U.E.) and the I.L.W.U., withdrew or were expelled from the C.I.O. and became independent unions retaining some form of progressive leadership. This was the beginning of McCarthyism and the “Cold War.” By the time the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. merged in 1955, it was on the basis of anti-communism and was not a progressive step.

The anti-communist campaign was not just a product of the Republican Party and Joseph McCarthy (Republican Senator from Wisconsin). Harry Truman ran for and won the Presidency on the basis of the Democratic Party platform of 1948, which declared:

“We condemn Communism and other forms of totalitarianism and their destructive activity overseas and at home... We reiterate our pledge to expose and prosecute treasonable activities of anti-Democratic and un-American organizations which would sap our strength, paralyze our will to defend ourselves, and destroy our unity, inciting race against race, class against class, and the people against free institutions.”†

In 1949, the U.S. government indicted 12 top leaders of the CPUSA, and later over 100 other local leaders in over a dozen cities, under the “Smith Act,” stating that they “advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government by force or violence.” In an ironic role reversal, the prosecutors quoted from the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, showing how these leaders had put forward the need for revolution to bring about socialism. The CPUSA leadership, on the other hand, claimed that the quotes were distorted, that these works were out of date or did not apply to the U.S.‡

* It should be noted that many of these leaders had been allies of the CP in building the C.I.O. unions just a decade before.

† Donald Johnson, ed., *National Party Platforms*, Univ. of Ill. Press (1978), pp. 435-6.

‡ Foster correctly pointed out that “Paine, Jefferson and Lincoln, all... freely advocated the people’s right of revolution.” But he also said: “They [the prosecutors] have especially deluged you with quotations

The main problem with such a defense is that it confuses the workers by denying basic principles of scientific socialism, which only serves the capitalists. The CPUSA leadership could have explained to the workers that the attacks on the party, the trade unions and others were part of the class struggle, that the U.S. state is based on violence against the working class. Moreover, the CP's defense was unsuccessful, as the government ignored the pacifist claims of its leadership and sentenced all but one of them to five years in prison. (Foster himself did not stand trial because of his ill health.)

Two supporters of socialism and the Soviet Union, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were framed as "atom spies" by the U.S. government and executed in June of 1953. Although they were offered clemency if they would denounce the Soviet Union, they remained true to their principles and refused, even though it cost them their lives.



Picasso's drawings of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg

from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, as well as from certain members and ex-members of the American Communist Party. These quotations, the Jury should note, are usually torn from their context and are so juggled about as to make them imply the very opposite of what the writers really meant and said; they also deal with situations widely different from that prevailing today in the United States." William Z. Foster: *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, pp. 7-8.

The other aspect of the government offensive against the working class, equally important but less recognized, was the policy of buying off a section of the workers, particularly through the trade union bureaucracy. As Lenin pointed out long ago in *Imperialism*,... from the super-profits made from the enslavement of the colonial peoples “(obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their ‘own’ country) it is *possible to bribe* the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labor aristocracy.” For example, money was given to the trade union bureaucrats to build low-cost co-ops for their members. Also, the G.I. Bill allowed troops returning from World War II to go to college at government expense, with the idea (often illusory) that in this way they could escape exploitation by getting out of the working class. Unlike during the 1930s, when the government made concessions in response to the workers’ struggles, these were bribes to keep the workers from engaging in struggle. In this way, the home front was mainly quiet as the U.S. launched wars of domination to maintain itself as the prime imperialist power. The decades’ long alliance between the trade union bureaucrats and U.S. monopoly capitalists was formed during this period.

Bibl: Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*,
preface to the French and German editions, 1916
Labor Fact Book #9, 1949
William Z. Foster, *In Defense of the Indicted Communist
Party Leaders*, 1949

24. The Korean War

Korea had been occupied by Japan since 1905, after Japan defeated Russia in an inter-imperialist war in that year, and was annexed by Japan in 1910.) The Korean people, led by Kim Il Sung and the Workers' Party of Korea, fought a long guerrilla war from 1938-45 to restore their country's independence. With the defeat of Japan at the end of World War II, the Korean people rose up. People's committees were formed throughout the country, and a Korean People's Republic was established, based in Seoul.*

Under the agreement for the surrender of Japan, Soviet troops were sent to disarm Japanese troops north of the 38th parallel and U.S. troops were sent to disarm them south of that parallel. This was never meant to mark a political division of the country but just a temporary demarcation line for the disarmament process. The U.S. brought in the reactionary Syngman Rhee, who had been in exile in the U.S. for decades, to run the southern part of the country. On December 12, 1945, the U.S. banned the people's committees in the south. In October and November of 1946, there were mass uprisings throughout the south, which were suppressed.

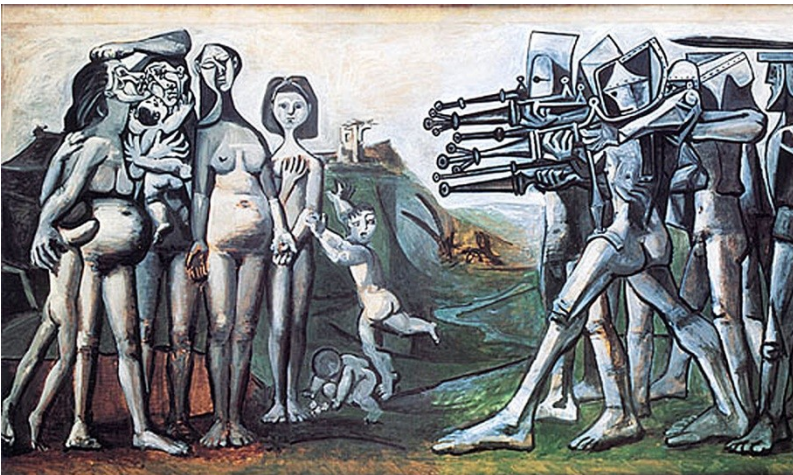
From April 19-23, 1948, a National Conference was held in Pyongyang that was attended by almost all the political forces in both north and south, except for those supporting Rhee. A separate regime with Rhee as Prime Minister was established in the south in August of 1948. It was based economically and politically on the landlords as well as capitalists, particularly owners of textile factories. It built up an army based on Korean troops that had collaborated with the Japanese colonial occupiers. In October of 1948, there were mutinies and uprisings in the south, which developed into guerrilla war until 1950. By the end of 1948, the Soviet troops had withdrawn from the north, leaving the government in the hands of the Democratic People's Repub-

* A CIA analysis in 1948 spoke of the people's committees as "a grassroots independence movement which found expression in the establishment of the People's Committees throughout Korea in August 1945." (Quoted in Halliday and Cumings, p. 23.)

lic of Korea (DPRK) led by Kim Il Sung. The U.S. officially withdrew combat troops from the south the following year, but left a small Korean Military Advisory Group.

In China the Communist Party headed by Mao Tse-tung and the People's Liberation Army had played a major part in defeating the Japanese aggressors during World War II. Afterwards, it defeated the attacks by the reactionary regime of Chiang Kai-shek and on October 1, 1949, it proclaimed China a people's republic, similar to those in Eastern Europe. Thus, one-quarter of humanity was liberated from imperialist rule, in the second greatest revolution in history, after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917.

In April of 1948, there was an uprising on the south Korean island of Cheju. Rhee's troops came in and killed some 60,000 people. This massacre was only acknowledged by the U.S. some 60 years later. Rhee repeatedly called for "liberating" the north, and U.S. President Truman was angered by its "loss" of China. Although all the "official" histories of the Korean War claim that the north attacked the south, the truth is the reverse. On June 17, just over a week before the war broke out, John Foster Dulles, then a special adviser to Truman on foreign affairs, stated while visiting south Korean troops along the 38th parallel: "No adversary, not even the strongest can oppose you. The time is not far



Picasso: Massacre in Korea

off when you will be able to display your strength.”

At the start of the war, Rhee massacred up to 200,000 more communist and other leftist prisoners. In the ensuing months, the DPRK, with half the population of the Republic of (south) Korea, forced Rhee’s troops into a small enclave around Pusan on the country’s east coast. The U.S. pushed a resolution through the U.N. Security Council*, calling for a “U.N.” force to counter “North Korean aggression.” Thus the Korean War was carried out under the U.N. flag. About 370,000 “U.N.” troops landed at Inchon on the country’s west coast, of which some 327,000 were from the U.S., the remainder coming from U.S. allies in Western Europe and countries dependent on the U.S. in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They pushed the troops of the DPRK back.

As the U.S./”U.N.” forces advanced towards the Chinese border, Gen. Douglas MacArthur threatened to invade that country and even use nuclear weapons against its cities. In response,



Pyongyang, 1950. The U.S. left a trail of destruction in Korea..

* The U.S. was able to avoid a Soviet veto only because the Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council at that time, in support of the right of the People’s Republic of China to take the seat still held by Chiang Kai-shek’s regime.

China called for people to enlist in the Chinese People's Volunteers to aid their Korean brothers and sisters. Some 250,000 joined up (the U.S. claims there were about one million) and quickly pushed the U.S./"U.N." forces and south Korean troops back to the 38th parallel. When MacArthur wanted to invade China, President Truman fired him, fearing that this could lead to a major U.S. defeat.

For about two years, the war continued while inconclusive negotiations took place at the border village of Panmunjom. U.S. bombers made sure that no building of more than one story was left standing in the north. The Korean people had to dig caves in the hillsides, from which they emerged at night to till their crops.

Finally, in July of 1953, an armistice was signed, leaving the original demarcation line at the 38th parallel. Although the Chinese People's Volunteers were quickly withdrawn, the U.S. never withdrew its forces. Some 30,000 U.S. troops are still there and, together with south Korean forces, they continually carry out threats against the DPRK. The war caused the deaths of 2-3 million Korean people as well as of some 35,000 U.S. troops. The Korean War marked the first serious setback to U.S. attempts to "roll back communism."

Bibl: Wilfred Burchett, *This Monstrous War*, 1953. When Burchett shipped 500 copies from Australia to the U.S. in late 1953, the U.S. customs officials confiscated the entire shipment and threw it into the sea. Burchett attended much of the peace negotiations in Panmunjom. He exposed so much of the U.S. propaganda that many Western journalists came to him for the truth.

Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, *Korea, The Unknown War*, 1988

25. The Civil Rights Movement

The post-war period saw the rise of a massive, militant movement for civil and human rights, particularly aimed at overturning the Jim Crow system of segregation of Afro-Americans in the South. In 1951, the Civil Rights Congress, an organization supported by the Communist Party, brought a petition to the United Nations, *We Charge Genocide*, indicting the ruling class for its treatment of Black people in the U.S.* Black troops who had fought against fascism abroad refused to go along with discrimination at home. Mass demonstrations began to take place against all aspects of segregation: in employment, public facilities, busses, even restrooms, and for the democratic right to register to vote. These demonstrations were met with reactionary violence, from



Birmingham police used dogs against civil rights demonstrators

* Paul Robeson and William L. Patterson presented the petition to UN offices in New York and Paris respectively. Patterson had his passport confiscated when he returned to the U.S. Robeson was unable to obtain a passport at all, and W.E.B. Du Bois, who was supposed to go with Patterson to Paris, was prevented from travelling by the U.S. State Department. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_Charge_Genocide

tear gas, to police dogs to fire hoses, both by the public forces of the state and the private racist forces such as the KKK. A saying showing the unity of these reactionary forces was “Blue by day [police], white by night [Klan].”

While the capitalist media and historians generally credit the pacifist forces such as Martin Luther King and the NAACP for this struggle, much of the work was carried out by new militant groups such as SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, later Student National Coordinating Committee). SNCC helped organize the first Black Panther Party, in 1965 in Lowndes County, Alabama, to fight for voting rights. At that time, the county was 80% black but there was not a single registered black voter.

Other organizations openly proclaimed the need for armed self-defense to deal with the reactionary violence of the oppressor. The Deacons for Defense and Justice, made up mostly of veterans of World War II and the Korean War, was formed in Jonesboro, Louisiana, in 1964 to defend civil rights marchers. In the late 1950s, Robert F. Williams, also a World War II vet and leader of the Monroe, North Carolina, chapter of the NAACP, armed his followers to fight segregation there. He was indicted on false kidnapping charges and forced to flee to Cuba, where he set up Radio Free Dixie broadcasting to people in the South.*

The fight against segregation took place as the semi-feudal system of share-cropping was coming to an end. Share-cropping was the system by which the workers labored on the land of the land-owner in return for a share of the crop, leaving them tied to the land. This was the predominant system of agriculture in the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South from the defeat of Reconstruction in the 1870s to the 1950s.

* The Communist Party was opposed to Williams' support of armed self-defense. Williams wrote of them: "... the U.S.C.P. has openly come out against my position on the Negro struggle. In fact, the party has sent special representatives here to sabotage my work on behalf of U.S. Negro liberation. They are pestering the Cubans to remove me from the radio..." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_F._Williams). This was far different from the earlier position of the C.P., when it was considered the "party of the Negro."

The Civil Rights movement was basically successful in abolishing formal segregation, as marked by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Black Belt was transformed from a semi-feudal region to one of dependent capitalism.* Further, as we shall see, the victory of basic democratic reforms led to a militant Black national movement, especially in the north.

In the 1960s, SNCC emerged as a leader of the black power movement, headed among others by Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael later changed his name to Kwame Toure (from Presidents Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea – Conakry). This is one indication of the importance of the relationship between the black national movement in the U.S. and the anti-colonial movements, particularly in Africa and the West Indies. The black national movement also had an important influence on other national movements in the U.S., such as among Puerto Ricans (especially in New York City), Chicanos/Mexicanos, Asian-Americans and Native Americans. These movements were also influenced by the anti-colonial and revolutionary struggles in Latin America and Asia, especially in Cuba and Vietnam. One example of this is the meeting of Malcolm X with Fidel Castro in 1960 in Harlem when Fidel came to New York to attend the UN General Assembly.

Malcolm X

One of the greatest Afro-American revolutionary leaders in this period was Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little, in Omaha, Nebraska. Malcolm's father had been a revolutionary nationalist who was killed by reactionary whites in Lansing, Michigan, in 1929, when Malcolm was only 4 years old. In his early years, Malcolm was a lumpen (petty criminal), who robbed people, burglarized

* This does not mean that the Afro-American nation no longer exists. In the 1950s and '60s, most colonial countries gained formal independence, though they remained neo-colonies dependent on the former colonial power. Later, many of these countries were transformed from semi-feudal agrarian countries to dependent capitalist countries. The situation of the Afro-American nation is not essentially different from that of those countries.

homes and sold drugs in Roxbury, Boston and Harlem, New York. In 1946, he was arrested for his criminal activities (though the police seemed to consider his relations with white women to be more of a crime) and sentenced him to 10 years in prison. There he re-evaluated his life, copied the dictionary and read many of the books in the prison library. This helped him to become a very effective speaker. He met members of the Nation of Islam (NoI – “Black Muslims”), who helped him get off drugs and converted him to Islam. They instilled in him their particular brand of black nationalism, which saw all whites as “devils.”

Malcolm was paroled from prison in 1952, and two years later he became the chief minister in the NoI’s Harlem mosque, becoming the group’s most effective spokesperson. Under Malcolm’s leadership, the Harlem chapter took up active political struggles, such as the fight against police brutality.* He provided an alternate, revolutionary pole to Martin Luther King and the pacifist wing of the civil rights movement. He said: “You don’t have a revolution in which you love your enemy, and you don’t have a revolution in which you are begging the system of exploitation to integrate you into it. Revolutions overturn systems. Revolutions destroy systems.” (Speech at the Congress for Racial Equality in Detroit, Michigan, April 12, 1964.)

Malcolm was leading the Harlem chapter of the NoI in a different direction from that of Elijah Muhammad, the group’s national leader. When President Kennedy was assassinated, Malcolm commented that “the chickens had come home to roost”



Fidel Castro with Malcolm X, Harlem, 1960

* In April of 1957, Johnson X Hinton, a member of the NoI, was severely beaten by New York police officers. Malcolm arrived and a crowd of several thousand gathered. Malcolm convinced the police to get Hinton medical attention, and only then told the people to go home.

(the violence that the U.S. government perpetrated at home and around the world had come back to strike it). For this statement, he was suspended from the NoI; in March of 1964 he left the Nation and set up his own Harlem mosque.

In April of 1964, Malcolm made his first pilgrimage to Mecca, which every Muslim is expected to make at least once during his lifetime, taking up the name El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. There he saw Muslims of every race and nationality, which made him rethink his anti-white views. He also travelled to various countries in Africa. When he returned to Harlem, he formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity (whose name was based on the Organization of African Unity, the organization of independent African states). He continued to be one of the most effective and revolutionary speakers of the Afro-American liberation movement.

On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated while speaking at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem.* It was later re-



Malcolm X at demonstration against police brutality, Harlem, 1957

* Three men involved in the shooting were chased by the crowd. One got away, but two were caught by the police. However, both the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* of February 22 changed their stories. The first edition of each paper said that two suspects were held, but the late editions say that one suspect was held.

vealed that Gene Roberts, a member of Malcolm's security detail who tried to give Malcolm moth-to-mouth resuscitation, was a police agent. Three members of the NOI were arrested, and they spent years in prison for this murder. But while members of the NOI may have pulled the trigger, it is clear that behind this murder was U.S. imperialism, particularly through COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program). This is an example of how the government can use differences between organizations for its own ends. Without Malcolm's leadership, the Organization of Afro-American Unity soon fell apart.

Bibl: *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1965

Civil Rights Congress, *We Charge Genocide*, 1951

Robert Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, 1962

Robert Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism*, 2003

Dr. Jack Felder, *Who Was Really Behind the Assassination of Malcolm X*, 1990

Billie Holiday: Strange Fruit

Billie Holiday first sung and recorded this song on lynchings in the South in 1939, written by Abel Meeropol. It can be heard sung by Holiday at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Web007rzSOI>

Southern trees bear strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

Pastoral scene of the gallant south
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop



26. The Rise of the Revolutionary Afro-American Liberation Movement

It is no coincidence that the passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act (1964 and 1965 respectively), and the formal end of U.S. “Jim Crow” apartheid, led to the rise of the revolutionary Afro-American liberation movement, both in the South but particularly in the oppressed nationality areas (so-called “ghettos” or “inner cities”) in the major cities of the North and West.

Many of the revolutionary national struggles, especially in the North, began as protests against police terror. On July 16, 1964, a white police officer, Thomas Gilligan, shot and killed James Powell, a 15-year-old black high school student in New York City. This led to one of the first major urban rebellions, in Harlem, as people rose up in protest.*

Many other urban rebellions took place in that period. These were notable for the use of mass revolutionary violence by the oppressed and mass reactionary violence by the state. In 1965 in the Watts section of Los Angeles, 34 people were killed. In 1967 in Newark, some 26 people died,



* This was also a protest in which conscious revolutionaries took part. The then revolutionary Progressive Labor Party (PLP), under its vice-chair and head of the Harlem Defense Council, Bill Epton, put up posters around Harlem with the slogan: “Wanted for Murder: Gilligan the Cop.” Epton violated a temporary city ordinance prohibiting demonstrations in Harlem, which all the black reformist organizations went along with. When Epton tried to lead a march from 125th Street and Lenox Avenue, he was arrested and charged with “criminal anarchy.” Epton was expelled from PLP in 1969, when that organization followed its own line opposed to scientific socialism; he served a year in prison only after his expulsion, in the early 1970s.

while in Detroit, 43 people were killed. The U.S. army had to be brought into Detroit, where the 82nd Airborne Division, which had fought in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam, was used to suppress the demonstrators.

These rebellions also showed the reactionary aspect of forces such as Martin Luther King who, while calling for better housing, economic conditions and opportunities for Blacks, said in response to the state violence in Watts: “It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them” (*The New York Times*, August 16, 1965).

Less than two years later, King came out openly in opposition to the U.S. war on Vietnam. In a speech at the Riverside Church in New York, on April 4, 1967, he stated: “I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government.” Exactly one year later, on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, where he was supporting a strike of predominantly Afro-American sanitation workers. Mao Tsetung, the leader of the Chinese revolution, said: “Although King was a proponent of non-violence, this did not stop U.S. imperialism from doing away with him violently.” King’s assassination led to the most extensive outbreaks, as tens of



Demonstrators confront troops, Detroit, 1967

thousands of people rebelled across the country in the following weeks. Again police and troops responded violently, leaving dozens killed and thousands injured and arrested.

The Black Panther Party

It was during this period that the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) gained tremendous influence, particularly among Black youth. The organization began in Oakland, California, in 1966, led by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, to protect the black community from police brutality. Members armed with rifles followed police cars around Oakland (carrying an unconcealed fire-arm was then legal in California).^{*} The BPP quickly spread around the country, with some 45 chapters at its height in 1970. Their weekly newspaper had a circulation of about 100,000 copies. The Panthers also set up direct services to the community, such as a free breakfast program, which provided meals to some 10,000 school children each day.



Panthers protest anti-gun bill, Sacramento, California, 1967

^{*} In response to this, California passed an anti-gun bill, the Mulford Act, which was supported by the NRA and signed into law by California's Republican Governor, Ronald Reagan.

The BPP took up the national demands of the Afro-American people. Its 10 point program included decent housing, education, an end to the draft of Black people, etc. Its final point was: "We demand a plebiscite, in which only Black people can participate, to determine the relationship of African people to the U.S. government." Although this formulation did not speak of a specific territory, this demand was an expression of the right to self-determination of the Afro-American nation.

The Panthers were never consolidated around a single political or ideological line. While they studied the *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung* ("The Red Book"), they were not united around scientific socialism. Some leading members, including Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton, put forward that the "lumpen" (by which they usually meant "street people," not just criminals) were the vanguard, while others, including Fred Hampton, had a more working class orientation.

The Panthers' program, and particularly their armed defense against police terror, led to a violent response from the police. In New York City in April, 1969, the police rounded up 21 leaders of the Party, who were held on bail of \$1 million each. They were all eventually released (their bail largely paid for by sympathetic churches as well as wealthy liberal and progressive individuals), and finally cleared of all charges. However, the arrests seriously disrupted the work of the Panthers in New York.

In other parts of the country, Panthers were vilely assassinated by the police and other agents of the state, with dozens being killed overall. One of the most notorious examples was the murder of Illinois chapter chair Fred Hampton and his deputy Mark Clark, in the early morning hours of December 4, 1969. An FBI informant, William O'Neal, who had been Hampton's bodyguard and Director of Chapter Security, led a group of police officers and FBI agents to Hampton's house. He had shown the cops a floor plan of the apartment and they fired through the door, killing Hampton and Clark as they slept. The next day the Chicago Panthers led people from the community through the house, exposing the gruesome actions of the police and FBI.

Other Panthers were imprisoned for long periods for crimes they did not commit. Geronimo ji-jaga Pratt served 27 years in

prison, framed for the 1968 murder of a white woman in Santa Monica, California. He was only released in 1997 after wiretaps showed that he had been under surveillance in San Francisco, almost 400 miles away, at the time the murders were committed.

Besides outright killings and arrests, the government used the notorious COINTELPRO against the Panthers, as well as against other progressive leaders and even against pacifists such as Martin Luther King. They did this through instigating splits in organizations, sending anonymous letters that played one leader against another. These tactics of suppression and deception were among the factors that finally led to the Panthers' demise in the late 1970s.

The repression against former members of the Panthers and their off-shoots continues even today. Mumia Abu-Jamal, a leading member of the Philadelphia chapter of the BPP from the age of 14, has been in prison since 1981, now serving a life sentence after spending decades on death row, framed for the killing of a Philadelphia cop.

We must also mention the government repression of MOVE, a revolutionary pro-nature organization, in Philadelphia. In 1978, under racist white mayor Frank Rizzo, the police attacked the MOVE headquarters. One cop was killed, and as a result 9 MOVE members were sentenced to life in prison. All who are still alive are still in jail (two, Phil and Merle Africa, died in jail under suspicious circumstances), although they were simply defending themselves. Later, in 1985, under black mayor Wilson Goode, the police dropped a bomb on the MOVE compound, killing 11 people, including five children, and destroying some 65 other homes in the neighborhood.



Fred Hampton

Other Revolutionary Afro-American Groups

The African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), formed in 1972, was one of the most important mass organizations in that period, consisting primarily of Afro-Americans. The ALSC supported the fight of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde against their Portuguese colonial rulers. It also supported the fight of the peoples of Zimbabwe (then called Southern Rhodesia – named after the British colonialist and imperialist Cecil Rhodes), first against British colonialism and after 1965, against the racist, white-settler regime of Ian Smith. It supported the struggles of the peoples of South Africa against the system of apartheid (racial segregation), as well as of the people of Namibia (South West Africa) against South African colonial rule. These regimes were strongly supported economically, politically and militarily by U.S. imperialism (particularly through NATO, of which Portugal was a member).

At its height, on May 26, 1973, the ALSC mobilized some 100,000 people in 30 cities around the country for African Liberation Day. The ALSC reflected the strong relations between Afro-Americans and the peoples of the African continent. The ALSC later broke up, partly due to the influence of Maoism and its reactionary policies towards the African liberation movements (see Chapter 31).

There were other revolutionary Black groups at that time that specifically organized among the working class, seeing it as the leading class. Most important of these was the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM). DRUM grew out of militant Black caucuses organizing in the auto plants in Detroit. At that time, and still generally today, blacks had the hardest, most dangerous and poorly paid jobs in auto and other industries. In their organizing, DRUM came up not only against management, but also against the sell-out union leadership of the United Auto Workers (UAW). It led several militant wildcat strikes. The various DRUM-type caucuses later united to form the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW).

DRUM also influenced the formation of similar organizations in other cities and industries. One of these was the Health Revolutionary Unity Movement (HRUM). HRUM began as a

rank-and-file group of workers at Gouverneur Hospital in 1969 and spread to other hospitals throughout New York City. It was affiliated with the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (see Chapter 27). Not only did it lead several strikes; it also organized the community around health issues, such as lead poisoning and tuberculosis testing. These hospital workers later joined AFSCME District Council 37, the largest municipal workers' union in New York City.

Gil Scott-Heron: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

With music at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGaoXAwI9kw>

You will not be able to stay home, brother
You will not be able to plug in, turn on and
cop out

You will not be able to lose yourself on skag
And skip out for beer during commercials
Because the revolution will not be televised



The revolution will not be televised
The revolution will not be brought to you by Xerox
In 4 parts without commercial interruptions
The revolution will not show you pictures of Nixon
Blowing a bugle and leading a charge by John Mitchell
General Abrams and Spiro Agnew to eat hog maws
Confiscated from a Harlem sanctuary
The revolution will not be televised

The revolution will not be brought to you by the Schaefer Award
Theater and will not star Natalie Woods and Steve McQueen
or Bullwinkle and Julia

The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal
The revolution will not get rid of the nubs
The revolution will not make you look five pounds thinner
Because the revolution will not be televised, Brother

There will be no pictures of you and Willie May
Pushing that shopping cart down the block on the dead run
Or trying to slide that color TV into a stolen ambulance

NBC will not be able predict the winner at 8:32
Or report from 29 districts
The revolution will not be televised

There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down
Brothers on the instant replay
There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down
Brothers on the instant replay
There will be no pictures of Whitney Young
Being run out of Harlem on a rail with a brand new process
There will be no slow motion or still life of Roy Wilkins
Strolling through Watts in a red, black and green
Liberation jumpsuit that he had been saving
For just the proper occasion

Green Acres, The Beverly Hillbillies and Hooterville Junction
Will no longer be so damned relevant
And women will not care if Dick finally gets down with Jane
On search for tomorrow because black people
Will be in the street looking for a brighter day
The revolution will not be televised

There will be no highlights on the eleven o'clock news
And no pictures of hairy armed women liberationists
And Jackie Onassis blowing her nose
The theme song will not be written by Jim Webb
Francis Scott Key, nor sung by Glen Campbell, Tom Jones
Johnny Cash, Englebert Humperdink or the Rare Earth
The revolution will not be televised

The revolution will not be right back after a message
About a white tornado, white lightning, or white people
You will not have to worry about a dove in your bedroom
The tiger in your tank or the giant in your toilet bowl
The revolution will not go better with Coke
The revolution will not fight the germs that may cause bad
breath

The revolution will put you in the driver's seat

The revolution will not be televised, will not be televised
Will not be televised, will not be televised

The revolution will be no re-run brothers

The revolution will be live

Bibl: Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers*, and *Agents of Repression, The FBI's Secret Wars on the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, 1990 & 2002

We Accuse: Bill Epton Speaks to the Court, 1966, available at: www.mltranslations.org/US/archive/epton.htm

<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/hrum.htm>

27. Other Revolutionary National Movements

The Puerto Rican National Movement

The revolutionary Black national movement, and the Panthers in particular, influenced the formation of revolutionary movements among other oppressed nationalities in the country. One of these was the Young Lords Organization (YLO), originally a street gang of mostly Puerto Rican youths in Chicago, which later set up a chapter in El Barrio (Spanish Harlem) in New York City. Public services were poor in all working class neighborhoods, but especially in those of the oppressed nationalities. One of the Lords' first actions was to pile garbage into the middle of the street in El Barrio and set it on fire. Firefighters came to put out the flames, but this led to a dramatic improvement in sanitation services, especially in El Barrio.

In 1970, the Lords in New York changed their name to the Young Lords Party, and in 1972 to the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO). They developed a 10-point program consciously modeled after the Panther program. They were frequently attacked by the police, such as when they formed a contingent that tried to take the lead in the Puerto Rican Day Parade in 1971. One of their members, Julio Roldan, died mysteriously in police custody after he was arrested on minor charges in 1970.



Young Lords burn garbage in streets of El Barrio, 1969

PRRWO made a strong effort to carry out work in the working class. They organized in many factories in the borough of Queens in New York City. They were also influential in the organization of the Puerto Rican Student Union. PRRWO eventually formed several chapters along the East Coast.

The Chicano/Mexicano Movement

The Southwest of the U.S., from California to Texas and further north, had been seized from Mexico in the period from 1836 to 1853 (see Chapter 6). The Spanish-speaking people of this territory became the Chicano people, re-enforced by new “immigrants” from Mexico who crossed “la falsa frontera” (the false border). Thus they formed the oppressed Chicano/Mexicano nation of Aztlan. This area is also a center of immigration from other countries in Latin America, especially from Central America. This nation must have the right to self-determination up to secession from the United States.

One of the revolutionary national movements among Chicanos/Mexicanos that began in the late 1960s was the Brown Berets, who organized particularly in the Southwest and in Chicago. They helped organize the Chicano Moratorium. On August 29, 1970, the Moratorium led a huge march of 20 to 30 thousand people through East Los Angeles, California, against the Vietnam War. This peaceful march was attacked by the police, who



killed four people, including Ruben Salazar, a progressive journalist. In 1974, the August 29th Movement was formed, one of whose primary goals was the right to self-determination of the Aztlan nation.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Reies Tijerina formed a group to fight to preserve the land grants in the Southwest that their ancestors had been given by Spain. He is best known for leading an armed raid on the county courthouse in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico. There have also been major workers' struggles in the Southwest. To mention just a few, there was the long fight of the United Farm Workers from 1965 to 1970 to organize the grape, lettuce and other agricultural workers, centered in Delano, California, the Farah pants strike of 40,000 predominantly Chicana women garment workers in El Paso, Texas, in 1972, and the Watsonville, California, Cannery strike of 1,000 workers that lasted 18 months, beginning in 1985.

Asian-American, Native American and Other Movements

Asians and Asian-Americans have a long and proud history of participation in and leadership of progressive and revolutionary movements in the U.S. Sen Katayama, a founder of the Japanese Communist Party, spent two decades in the U.S. and worked with the U.S., Canadian and Mexican CPs. Larry Itliong was a leader together with Cesar Chavez of the California grape workers' strike. Today many young Filipino activists work with Bayan which has taken part in organizing May 1st demonstrations and other activities.

In this period, movements among Asian-Americans, particularly Chinese-Americans, included I Wor Kuen (Righteous and Harmonious Fist), which defended the International Hotel in San Francisco that housed many Chinese-American and Asian immigrant workers from being torn down by real estate interests. In New York there was the Asian Study Group, which later became the Workers Viewpoint Organization. This organization was particularly influenced by the Cultural Revolution in China, showing revolutionary Chinese films in the streets and empty lots in Chinatown.

Finally, there was the American Indian Movement (AIM) among indigenous people in the U.S. and Canada. One of its main actions was the 1973 takeover of Wounded Knee in the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, the site of a massacre of native peoples by the U.S. army in 1890 in which over 200 people were killed. AIM held Wounded Knee for 71 days, during which they had to fight off not only the police and the FBI, but also the sell-out tribal leadership of Dick Wilson and his GOONs (Guardians of the Oglala Nation). Under Wilson's leadership, over 60 AIM members and supporters had been murdered on Pine Ridge. This conflict with Wilson was not unique, as all the revolutionary national groups had to fight against the national reformists as part of their struggle.

Leonard Peltier is a leader of AIM and one of the longest-held political prisoners in the United States. In 1977, he was framed and convicted for the killing of two FBI agents and sentenced to two consecutive terms of life imprisonment. The incident was the result of a shootout at Pine Ridge, in which an AIM member, Joe Stuntz, was also killed.

One cannot discuss this period without mentioning the Attica Rebellion and massacre in 1971. The rebellion was motivated not only by the outrageous conditions in prison but also by the



Wounded Knee, 1973

killing of an Afro-American revolutionary, George Jackson, in San Quentin prison, California, some two weeks earlier, and in sympathy with the rising revolutionary movement in the U.S. and worldwide. On September 9, 1971, some 1,200 inmates took over a section of Attica prison in upstate New York. They seized 42 guards as hostages and carried out negotiations with prison authorities, with members of the press chosen by the inmates serving as observers. After several days, Nelson Rockefeller, the liberal Republican Governor of New York (and brother of David Rockefeller, chair of Chase Manhattan Bank) called in the State Police and National Guard in order to preserve the authority of the capitalist state. The troops fired on the inmates, killing 29 of them as well as 10 hostages. The lie that the hostages had had their throats slit by the inmates quickly collapsed when it became known that they had all died of bullet wounds (the inmates had no guns). The guards further retaliated by beating inmates, whom they made to run naked through their lines.

Bibl: Dan Georgakas & Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, 1975

Karl G. Yoneda, *The Heritage of Sen Katayama*, 1975
<https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/filipino-migrants-gave-grape-strike-its-radical-politics/>

Film, *Incident at Oglala*, 1992

28. The Vietnam War and the Anti-War Movement

Vietnam, together with Laos and Cambodia, had been a French colony since the mid-19th century. The Vietnamese had fought for their independence, first from France, then from Japan, which occupied the country during World War II, and then from France again, which reoccupied the country after the war. By the time of France's defeat by the revolutionary Vietminh forces at the town of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the U.S. was supplying 80% of France's war costs. According to the Geneva Peace Accords that officially ended the war, the Vietminh were to regroup in the northern part of the country, above the 17th parallel, and the French in the southern part preparatory to their withdrawal. The division was never meant to be a political partition, and elections were to be held within two years. While the Vietminh withdrew to the north, the U.S. established a puppet regime in the south made up mainly of Vietnamese who had collaborated with the Japanese and the French. The U.S. refused to hold the elections as scheduled, knowing that they would have been won by Ho Chi Minh, the head of the Workers Party of Vietnam. President Dwight Eisenhower admitted in his memoirs, *Mandate for Change, 1953-56* (p. 372) "had elections been held as of the time of the fighting, possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh."

While Uncle Ho, as he was affectionately known in Vietnam, became the head of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north, the U.S. imported Ngo Dinh Diem from exile in the U.S. to rule the south. After peaceful demonstrations were repressed by Diem with the backing of the U.S., the Vietnamese formed the National Liberation Front (called the "Vietcong" or Vietnamese Communists by the U.S.) and turned to guerrilla warfare to get rid of Diem's regime. The U.S. government first sent "advisors" to the south under Kennedy, and under Johnson it eventually sent 500,000 troops. In 1965, the U.S. began a campaign of bombing north Vietnam, which continued (with interruptions) until Nixon was forced to sign a peace treaty in 1973 providing for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. By April 1975 the puppet regime had collapsed, south Vietnam was liberated and shortly afterwards the country was unified. At the same time,

Laos and Cambodia were also liberated, bringing an end to colonial and neo-colonial rule over the three countries of Indo-China.

The Vietnam War led to a huge anti-war and anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, the fight against the war grew as the war dragged on and U.S. casualties increased. Hundreds of thousands of people took part in mass anti-war marches, even if they were not involved in other anti-war groups. The anti-war movement, largely centered on the white petty-bourgeois (middle class) universities, developed quickly from a largely pacifist anti-war movement to a militant anti-imperialist one. Its size and political clarity developed as other acts of imperialist aggression took place, such as the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 and the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia in 1970 and Laos in 1971. These made it clear that the war was no accident.

One of the main student groups was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), originally the youth group of the social-democratic League for Industrial Democracy. SDS was involved in the occupation of campus buildings, particularly in such elite universities as Columbia and Harvard.



Liberation of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), 1975

This is not to ignore the role of Black and other oppressed nationality students, mostly from working class backgrounds. The week-long occupation of buildings at Columbia University in 1968 began when the Student Afro-American Society decided to turn a sit-in into an occupation. When the white students vacillated about doing this, they were asked to leave and occupy their own buildings, which they did. Other militant actions by oppressed nationality students included the 1968 strike at San Francisco State University in California, led by the Third World Liberation Front and the Black Student Union. One cannot forget the struggle at Jackson State University in Mississippi in May of 1970, in which two students were killed by the National Guard. This was mostly downplayed by the capitalist media, which focused overwhelmingly on the killing of four white students at Kent State in Ohio that same month. Nor can we forget the killing of three black men in 1968 by Highway Patrol officers in Orangeburg, South Carolina, when students from South Carolina State University and others were protesting segregation at a nearby bowling alley.



Columbia University strike, 1968

However, the main character of the anti-war movement was provided by the white petty-bourgeois students, many of whom, consciously or not, were concerned by the threat of being drafted into the army and sent to Vietnam.

The U.S. troops were mainly draftees, overwhelmingly from the working class, as most middle class youths were able to escape the draft, through student deferments or by other means. A large percent of the troops were Afro-Americans, Latinos or members of other oppressed nationalities, many of whom realized that they had no interest in fighting the Vietnamese. Muhammad Ali, the world heavyweight boxing champion, refused to be drafted, stating: "I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over." For this refusal, he was stripped of his boxing title.

One cannot deal with the anti-war movement without discussing the important role played by active-duty soldiers and veterans themselves. As the war dragged on, and as soldiers saw atrocities that they were being forced into, such as the napalm bombing of whole villages, more and more troops began to protest. One main form was to patrol in the opposite direction from where the Vietnamese liberation fighters had been reported. More important was the refusal of troops to go on patrol, or even "fragging" their own officers, shooting them in the back or throwing fragmentation grenades at them. Many soldiers turned in their medals and youths burned their draft cards. Organizations of protesting soldiers included the American Servicemen's



Union and Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Of course, other individualist actions included "getting high" on marijuana, heroin or other drugs.

This was also a reason for the large numbers of unemployed and homeless among veterans.

The Vietnam War led much of the U.S. population to lose faith in the government. Moreover, the U.S. defeat led to the “Vietnam syndrome,” making the government afraid to intervene with troops outside the country for a few years. It mainly relied on sending military aid (and a few “advisors”) to reactionary forces, especially in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. The first direct invasion after Vietnam was in 1983 against the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada, which had only 110,000 people. An internal coup against the progressive government of Maurice Bishop gave the U.S. the excuse and the possibility of an easy victory in the invasion. This was followed by the invasion of Panama in 1989 to remove President Noriega, who was kidnapped and jailed in the U.S. for drug dealing.

Nixon and the Watergate Scandal; Ford, the Totally Unelected President

In 1972, a large section of the U.S. population, as well as a sector of the capitalist class, realized that the U.S. had lost the war in Vietnam. This led the Democratic Party to put up George McGovern, Senator from South Dakota, as its candidate for President to run on an anti-war platform against the incumbent Richard Nixon. Apparently the capitalist class as a whole, and a majority of the voters, were not ready for an antiwar candidate. Nixon won with an overwhelming majority of the electoral vote (McGovern won only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia) and 61% of the popular vote.

However, during the campaign, a team of “burglars” was caught breaking into the Watergate Hotel in DC in an attempt to “bug” (install listening devices in) McGovern’s campaign headquarters. In the months after the election, it became clear Nixon’s administration was behind the break-in as well as other “dirty tricks” directed at his political opponents. To avoid being impeached (have charges brought against him) and removed from office, Nixon became the first U.S. president to resign.

However, Nixon first had to perform a constitutional maneuver. His vice-president, Spiro Agnew, was suspected of corrup-

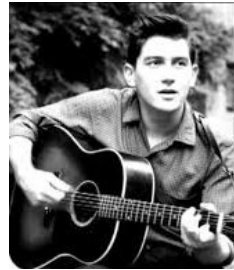
tion and not considered fit to be president of the U.S. Therefore, Agnew was “convinced” to resign first and Nixon chose Gerald Ford to be Vice-President. Ford was the Speaker of the House and a total non-entity who was acceptable to all sectors of the ruling class. Nixon then resigned and Ford became the first totally unelected president. (Other vice-presidents have become president upon the death in office of the president, but they were at least elected as part of the presidential ticket.

All this led to increased disillusionment by many people with the U.S. “democratic” system.

Phil Ochs: Love Me, I’m a Liberal (1966)

With music at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u52Oz-54VYw>

I cried when they shot Medgar Evers
Tears ran down my spine
I cried when they shot Mr. Kennedy
As though I’d lost a father of mine
But Malcolm X got what was coming
He got what he asked for this time
So love me, love me, love me, I’m a liberal



I go to civil rights rallies
And I put down the old D.A.R.
I love Harry and Sidney and Sammy
I hope every colored boy becomes a star
But don’t talk about revolution
That’s going a little bit too far
So love me, love me, love me, I’m a liberal

I cheered when Humphrey was chosen
My faith in the system restored
I’m glad the commies were thrown out
of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. board
I love Puerto Ricans and Negroes
as long as they don’t move next door
So love me, love me, love me, I’m a liberal

The people of old Mississippi
Should all hang their heads in shame
I can't understand how their minds work
What's the matter don't they watch Les Crain?
But if you ask me to bus my children
I hope the cops take down your name
So love me, love me, love me, I'm a liberal

I read New Republic and Nation
I've learned to take every view
You know, I've memorized Lerner and Golden
I feel like I'm almost a Jew
But when it comes to times like Korea
There's no one more red, white and blue
So love me, love me, love me, I'm a liberal

I vote for the Democratic Party
They want the U.N. to be strong
I go to all the Pete Seeger concerts
He sure gets me singing those songs
I'll send all the money you ask for
But don't ask me to come on along
So love me, love me, love me, I'm a liberal

Once I was young and impulsive
I wore every conceivable pin
Even went to the socialist meetings
Learned all the old union hymns
But I've grown older and wiser
And that's why I'm turning you in
So love me, love me, love me, I'm a liberal

Bibl: John Catalinotto: *Turn the Guns Around*, 2017

29. The Women's Movement

From early on there have been movements for women's rights in the U.S. In the 1800s and early 1900s, one of the main demands was for the right to vote, or women's suffrage.

The first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. One of the organizers, Elizabeth Stanton, said: "We are assembled to protest against a form of government, existing without the consent of the governed—to declare our right to be free as man is free, to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support, to have such disgraceful laws as give man the power to chastise and imprison his wife, to take the wages which she earns, the property which she inherits, and, in case of separation, the children of her love." Her speech and that of Afro-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass led to the convention demanding the women's right to vote.*

This right was only won in 1920 with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. It is no accident that this was only three years after the socialist revolution in Russia (see Chapter 14), as the revolution proclaimed equal legal rights for women in all spheres, including the right to vote. That revolution also began



Harriet Tubman statue, Harlem

to provide the conditions to make women equal in reality, through the socialization of household labor, including the provision of crèches and day care centers for children (something increasingly difficult to find for working women and men in the U.S. today), provision of nutritious meals in cafeterias in factories and other workplaces, etc.

Women have always participated in all progres-

* <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-rights/seneca-falls-convention>

sive movements in the U.S. Women, together with men, took part in the movement to abolish slavery. We will mention only the best known. Sojourner Truth helped John Brown recruit men for his raid on Harpers Ferry (see Chapter 5) and later to recruit black troops for the Union Army. Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery to the North and returned to the South 13 times to help lead some 70 more families out of slavery.

In the mid-20th century, women also participated in the Civil Rights movement. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white woman in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, sparking the successful bus boycott there. Viola Liuzzo, a white woman and wife of a Detroit Teamster officer, took part in the march from Selma to Montgomery, in 1965. While driving another participant back to Selma after the march, she was assassinated by bullets fired by Klansmen from a passing car.*

Women have always been an important force in the workers' movement. We have already noted the participation of Lucy Parsons in the fight for the 8-hour day and for justice for the victims of the Haymarket Affair (see Chapter 10). Women workers have always engaged in strikes and other activities, particularly in industries in which they were in the majority. Among the earliest strikes in the

U.S. was that of women weavers in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1824 and of textile workers in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1834. There was the 6-



Textile workers strike, 1934

* The racists were accompanied by an FBI informant, Gary Rowe, who was supposedly "investigating" the Klan. He did nothing to prevent this murder, and it was never revealed whether he was one of the shooters.

months-long strike of silk workers in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1913, and a strike of some 400,000 textile workers that lasted for 21 days all along the East Coast in 1934. More recently there have been organizing campaigns and strikes among public sectors and hospital workers, where women make up a large percentage of the work force.

On March 25, 1911, a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in Greenwich Village, New York City, killed 146 garment workers, 123 of whom were women.* The workers could not get out of the factory because the owners had blocked the exits. Earlier that year, the Socialist Parties worldwide had organized International Working Women's Day (IWWD), celebrated by revolutionary and progressive organizations worldwide on March 8 ever since.

Friedrich Engels, the co-founder with Karl Marx of scientific socialism, explained in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, that the first division of labor was that between men and women. The oppression of women has existed since the beginnings of class society, and the full equality of women will only come with the final end of the division of society into classes, that is, communist society.

The Movement of the 1970s

Besides taking part in the various class and national struggles of the 1960s and early '70s, discussed in the previous chapters (in which women continually had to fight, with only limited success, for equality within these movements), the 1970s saw a new rise in the women's movement as such. One of the main demands was for the right to abortion and the right to divorce.

Before 1973, abortion was entirely prohibited in 30 states, and restricted in the other 20. This overwhelmingly affected working and poor women, since middle class women could more

* Today, while conditions have improved in many factories in the U.S., such incidents still take place in the oppressed countries. In 2012 a fire in a garment factory in Bangladesh, South Asia, led to the deaths of at least 112 workers, almost all women. The U.S. monopolists cannot escape the blame for this, as this factory produced garments for such companies as Disney, Wal-Mart and Sears.

easily find a sympathetic doctor who would perform an abortion – for a price. Under pressure from the women’s movement, in 1973 the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* overturned the blanket ban on abortions. However, it allowed states to enact certain restrictions, and in many areas it is difficult to find doctors willing to perform abortions. Even today, there is a fight against the attempts by the extreme right to defund Planned Parenthood, which includes support for a woman’s right to an abortion.

Before 1979, a divorce could only be granted if one partner claimed that the other partner was at fault for adultery, abandonment, commission of a felony, etc. This restriction put an additional strain on women, since a married man could live with another woman with less social stigma than a married woman could live with another man. Moreover, the laws that did allow divorce generally left the man with the lion’s share of the communal property, again making it much harder for working and poor women to get divorced. By 1983, almost all states allowed “no-fault” divorce. (One should again note that in early 1918 the Bolshevik Revolution granted no-fault divorce together with mandatory child support.)

One of the problems of the women’s movement in that period was that the leadership was largely in the hands of middle class, white feminists. They often looked down on their working class and oppressed nationality sisters and remained apart from their struggles. They generally did not see the need for a change in the social system.

Bibl: Friedrich Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, first published in English, 1891

30. The LGBT Movement

Throughout the history of the U.S., and of many other countries in the world, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people have been seriously discriminated against, both in law and in fact. Up to 1961, all states had laws criminalizing sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex, as part of laws against “sodomy.” In 2003, 13 states still had such laws. Furthermore, gays were not infrequently subject to the most outrageous torture, even leading to death. As just one example, we mention the case of Matthew Shepard, a gay man who was beaten, tortured and left to die in Wyoming in 1998. Transgender people are often subject to the most extreme treatment and degradation. Even today, LGBT teens are frequently subjected to bullying in school, and many such teens and young adults end up on the streets and often on drugs after being kicked out of their homes by unsympathetic parents.

The modern LGBT movement in the U.S. is usually dated to the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969. The Stonewall Inn was a predominantly gay bar in Greenwich Village in New York City that was frequently raided by the police. On June 28, 1969, the pa-



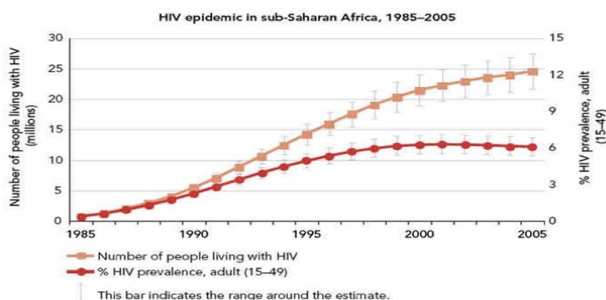
Protestors at Stonewall Inn confront police, 1969

trons of the bar, having had enough of such raids and police abuse, fought back for several days continuously*.

AIDS

One area of particular concern to the LGBT movement was to find a cure for AIDS (Auto-Immune Deficiency Syndrome), which eventually led to a horrible death. Although anyone can get AIDS, the disease had a particularly devastating effect on the gay community. For many years, the government and the pharmaceutical industry refused to put sufficient funds into finding a cure or even developing medication that would prevent people from dying of AIDS. The World Health Organization estimates that since the AIDS epidemic was first diagnosed in 1981, over 660 thousand people have died from the disease in the U.S. alone, and 39 million worldwide.

Since AIDS had spread to so many people in the U.S., the pharmaceutical corporations came up with anti-retroviral drugs that prevent people from dying from this disease. The annual cost of these medicines is about \$18,000 per person per year, much of this cost being born by government programs. This provides a huge boost to the profits of the pharmaceutical corporations.



HIV/AIDS Infections, sub-Saharan Africa

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn9244-unaided-hiv-infection-rate-has-stabilised-at-last/>

* I couldn't say "several days straight." ☺

It must be noted that there is still no cure for AIDS, and over 15,000 people in the U.S. still died from the disease in 2015. In many other parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is still rampant. The cost of AIDS drugs is prohibitive in these countries, and some 1 million people are estimated to die from AIDS worldwide each year.

In recent years, the LGBT movement has won important legal successes. Laws criminalizing sexual relations between people of the same gender have been overturned, and in 2015 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality, allowing marriage between two people regardless of gender.

However, certain reactionary moves followed the legal victories for LGBT rights. One is to the rights of domestic partners, particularly in liberal cities such as New York. Public sector workers and many others used to be able to simply register their live-in domestic partners, of the same or opposite gender, to have them covered under their family health plan. Before, this was considered necessary since gays could not legally marry. But now some of these rights of unmarried domestic partners are being whittled away. Considering that over 40% of children in the U.S. today are born to couples who are not married to each other, this is a very significant step backward. And since this percentage rises to over 77% among Blacks and 57% among Latinos, this has an even greater effect on members of oppressed nationalities.

Finally, we must mention a reactionary step that followed the ending of the prohibition or restriction on gays in the military. Not only does this open wider the field for those who want to join the imperialist army, it has had a specific consequence for the establishment of Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) chapters on college campuses. Previously, some colleges refused to allow ROTC chapters on their campuses because the military discriminated against gays. Now that gays are allowed to join the military, ROTC is being permitted back in these campuses. So now both gay and straight people can “be all that they can be” when they are sent to kill, or be killed by, oppressed people in wars of national liberation or their opposite number in inter-imperialist wars.

Of course, these consequences are not the fault of the LGBT movement, But they do point to the need for all progressive people, gay or straight, to fight against these backward steps.*

Bibl: Anna Louise Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet*,
Chapter XI, 1959

TV movie, *The Matthew Shepard Story*, 2002

[http://blogs.nature.com/news/2010/11/institute_of_medicine
urges](http://blogs.nature.com/news/2010/11/institute_of_medicine_urges_)

[ra.html](http://blogs.nature.com/news/2010/11/institute_of_medicine_urges_), on AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/your-money/fate-of-
domestic-partner-benefits-in-question-after-marriage-
ruling.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/your-money/fate-of-domestic-partner-benefits-in-question-after-marriage-ruling.html?_r=0)

* One must also note that not all earlier societies discriminated against same-sex relations. In many Native American societies, such people are considered “two-spirit.” On the other hand, in ancient Greece, males having sexual relations with other males was considered “normal,” since women were considered inferior and only needed for bearing children. And in feudal Tibet before its liberation in 1959, higher lamas frequently sexually exploited lower lamas.

31. The Rise and Decline of the New Marxist-Leninist Movements

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the revolutionary movements in the late 1960s and early '70s were mainly among the oppressed nationalities and among the predominantly white middle-class students. There were many political and ideological trends within these movements. However, as these movements grew, many began gravitating towards scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism.

The multinational working class, and particularly the white workers, did not by and large take part in these movements. This is not to say that the workers were completely quiescent. There were several bitterly fought strikes in this period, such as among the auto workers at General Motors, the workers at General Electric, and the great wildcat postal strike, all in 1970. But these basically did not go beyond trade union demands (although the Buildings and Grounds workers at Columbia University went on a one-day strike in solidarity with the anti-war students in 1968). Overall, the U.S. monopolies were still able to use a small share of the super-profits made from the labor of the working people of the colonies and dependent countries, to bribe much of the trade union bureaucracy and some of the more highly-paid workers. This was enough to keep the masses of the workers, especially the white workers, tied to the imperialist system.

At its height, many students in SDS considered themselves anti-imperialist, and some considered themselves Marxist-Leninist. For example, even before the mass building occupation at Columbia University in 1968, a mass meeting of some 1,000 students voted overwhelmingly to support the program of the National Liberation Front in south Vietnam. It was not uncommon for SDS members at meetings to justify their positions on various issues by referring to the classics of Marxism-Leninism, although often in a dogmatic way.

But the lack of participation by the multinational working class in the revolutionary movements of the late 1960s and early '70s put severe constraints on the ability of these movements to progress. By 1969, SDS had gone about as far as a purely student movement could go. No matter how many buildings on college

campuses students took over, they could not force the ruling class to withdraw from Vietnam.

At its national convention in Chicago in the summer of 1969, SDS split into two main factions. One, the Worker Student Alliance (WSA), opportunistically tailed the non-revolutionary working class movement, while the other, the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), opportunistically tailed the revolutionary national movements. The RYM itself split into two factions shortly after. RYM1 became the Weathermen, which carried out adventurist, semi-anarchist actions. Many people in RYM2 formed the October League, which later became the Communist Party (ML). Many of the early cadres of what became the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) also came out of the RYM



Palante, organ of PRRWO, October, 1973, when it fought for the revolutionary interests of the Puerto Rican workers and people



Palante, 1976, when it was centered on internal factional struggles

faction of SDS. Although the RCP still exists, it has mainly degenerated into an idealist* cult around its leader, Bob Avakian.

The Black Workers Congress (BWC), which grew out of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO), the August 29th Movement, Workers Viewpoint Organization (which later became the Communist Workers Party – CWP) and others all began to adopt Marxism-Leninism

There were two main attempts to unite the various revolutionary groups based on Marxism-Leninism, but both of these failed, in part due to chauvinism in the predominantly white groups.

The BWC soon split into four grouplets, none of which lasted more than a few years. PRRWO began expelling many of its members, accusing them of real or imagined revisionism and

reformism. The CWP was devastated by its disastrous “Death to the Klan” march in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1979, in which five members or supporters, Sandra Smith, James Waller, William Sampson, Cesar Cauce and Michael Nathan, were shot to death by the Klan. The KKK worked together with the government through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which provided the Klan with the route and other details of the march.

The Weathermen and others also took part in ac-



Flyer of SDS Weatherman faction, 1969

* By idealist we mean that the RCP sees socialism as arising from ideas in someone's mind, “wouldn't it be nice if” society were organized on a certain basis, rather than from the concrete conditions of the class struggle.

tions that led to disasters. Three Weathermen were killed by the premature explosion of a bomb in Greenwich Village, New York City, on March 6, 1970. In 1973, Black Liberation Army (BLA, a group made up mostly of former Panthers) members were involved in a shootout on the New Jersey turnpike. In that action, one cop and one BLA member, Zayd Malik Shakur, were killed and another BLA member, Assata Shakur, was arrested. She later escaped and went into exile in Cuba, where she still lives. In 1981 the BLA, together with some former Weathermen, was involved in an armored car robbery near Nyack, New York, which led to the deaths of two Nyack police officers and a Brink's guard. Several members of the former Weathermen and the BLA are still in prison after almost four decades.

One major error of these forces has been little discussed, in the view of this writer. When the leaders of the revolutionary national groups moved to adopt scientific socialism, they tried to convert these groups as a whole to Marxism-Leninism, leaving aside many of the rank and file members who were not ready for such a change. Instead the Marxist-Leninists could have formed a united communist organization within the different groups, while maintaining and giving guidance to the revolutionary national movements as mass organizations.*

Maoism

One must mention here that many of the new Marxist-Leninist groups were negatively influenced by "Maoism."[†] First,

* In quite different circumstances, in Lenin's "Talk with a Delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic," there is a discussion as to whether the People's Revolutionary Party there should be transformed into a Communist Party. He stated: "I should not recommend it, because one party cannot be 'transformed' into another.... A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous." (1921, in Lenin's *Collected Works*, vol. 42.)

[†] The question of Mao's role and that of China's Cultural Revolution are much too complicated to be taken up here. In this writer's opinion the polemics of the early 1960s by both the Communist Party of China and the Party of Labor of Albania against Khrushchev revisionism were basically correct. What is meant by Maoism here is the view that Mao

China put forward the counter-revolutionary “theory of three worlds,” which claimed that the leaders of any “third world” country, including such blatantly pro-imperialist reactionaries as Pinochet in Chile and the Shah of Iran, could be potential if vacillating allies against imperialism. It also held that second-rate imperialist powers, such as France, Germany and Japan, were somehow qualitatively different from the “two superpowers,” the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Later, it took the form of a *de facto* alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union (see the talks of Mao with Kissinger, Nixon and Ford). Further, the open reestablishment of capitalist relations in China after Mao’s death and the collapse of the Cultural Revolution led to increasing demoralization among many Maoists.

China’s line influenced the U.S. movement in several ways. In the liberation struggle in the former Portuguese colony of Angola, China and its U.S. supporters officially called for unity of the three movements that had supposedly opposed Portuguese colonialism. It thus equated the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), by far the strongest movement that had carried out the lion’s share of the struggle and was supported by the Soviet Union, with Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA (National



Nixon greets Mao, Peking, 1972

Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and Robert Holden’s FLNA (National Liberation Front of Angola), both of which were supported by the U.S. CIA. As the fight between these groups heated up, China and its U.S. supporters further equated the 1975 invasion of Angola

represents a “third stage” of scientific socialism beyond that of Marx and Lenin, and the particular stands of China explained in this section.

by the racist apartheid South African regime to attack the MPLA with the fight of revolutionary Cuba to defend Angola under the MPLA.* China's position was an important factor in the break-up of the ALSC (see Chapter 26) and in turning many sincere Afro-American revolutionaries away from Marxism.

Other groups were also affected by China's line. The October League (later the CP-ML) took the position that the Soviet Union was the main threat to Western Europe, thus ignoring the imperialist nature of these countries and siding with "its own" U.S. bourgeoisie. It thus took up a position of collaboration with the U.S. ruling class, at least internationally, and became an obstacle to the revolutionary movement. It disintegrated by 1982.

As a final example, in 1974 there was a massive rally at Madison Square Garden in New York City endorsed by diverse groups in support of the independence of Puerto Rico, an open U.S. colony. One of the speakers was Jerry Tung, head of what later became the Workers' Viewpoint Organization. He stated that, while fighting against U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico, one should also fight against the Soviet danger there, since the Soviet Union was supporting the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), one of the strongest *independentista* (pro-independence) organizations. This speech left many Maoists in the audience in shocked silence while others shouted at him "unidad" (unity).

Other Problems of the New M-L Movements

One must also note the limited connections of the new revolutionary movements of the 1960s with the revolutionary traditions of the CPUSA of the 1930s and later. By the 1960s, the CPUSA's fall into revisionism was quite complete, and its influence on the mass movements was either non-existent or negative, in the view of this writer. It played a role in one of the two large anti-war movements, but it tied the movement to pacifism and support for the Democratic Party. It had almost no role in the anti-imperialist student movement. It had a brief influence on the

* Later, in 1988, Cuba defeated South Africa in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, which led to the liberation of South Africa's colony of Namibia, formerly South West Africa, and the weakening of the apartheid regime in South Africa itself.

Black liberation movement through Angela Davis. Davis was arrested, tried and acquitted of charges of conspiracy in the armed takeover of the Marin County courthouse in California in 1970, in which Jonathan Jackson, a 17-year-old Afro-American revolutionary, and three others were killed. While this did give a slight boost to the reputation of the CPUSA, it had no long-term influence on this movement.

There were a few revolutionaries in this period who had been with the CPUSA in its heyday. The best known was probably Harry Haywood, one of the first Afro-Americans to join the CPUSA, in the 1920s. His autobiography, *Black Bolshevik*, brought out the revolutionary history of the CPUSA, especially on the Black national question, as well as some aspects of its later turn to revisionism. Another lesser-known revolutionary was Jack Shulman, the former driver and secretary to William Z. Foster. As editor of *Albania Report*, he made known the achievements and positions of socialist Albania. This had a certain influence on some of the new revolutionary groups.

Beyond their political and ideological errors, many of these groups were seriously affected by “small-circle spirit.” They preferred to be a big frog in a small pond rather than a small frog in a much bigger pond. Of course, there were certain differences of principle, such as whether one saw U.S. imperialism as the chief enemy of the workers and oppressed peoples in the U.S. and worldwide, or whether one saw it as an ally against the Soviet Union. But many other questions were basically tactical, and could have been fought out in a united, genuine communist party.*

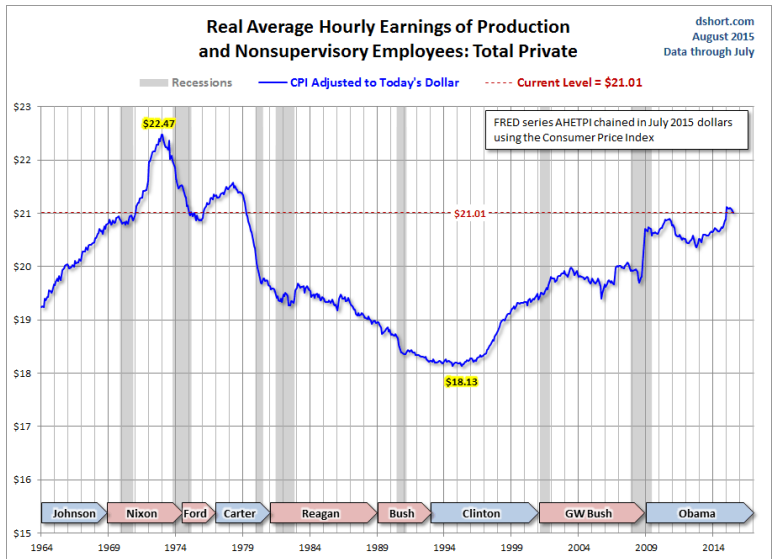
There is also, of course, the role of the state apparatus in holding back the formation of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party in this period. This is a factor that has only recently been examined by progressive writers (see chapter bibliography), as compared to the numerous books and articles on the assassination of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, on the dissolution of the

* In retrospect, some of the divisions that were linked to the break-up of these groups seem crazy today. For example, one debate was over what was the key link in this period: party building, ideology or political line.

Black Panther Party, and on COINTELPRO generally. The role of the state is of course important, but in the opinion of this writer this was secondary to the weaknesses within the revolutionary groups in this period. For apart from outright massacres and mass arrests, the state can only intervene by making use of these groups' internal weaknesses.

After the heroic victory of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian people, other potential rivals of the U.S. started to come into their own. For example, Japan's investment in south Korea grew faster than U.S. investment there. West Germany super-exploited Turkish and Yugoslav workers, and to a lesser extent Polish workers, who travelled to West Germany looking for jobs. This marked the beginning of the slow and continuing decline of U.S. imperialism, and so also the decline in bribes available for U.S. workers. After 1973, real wages in the U.S. fell by almost 20%, and are still over 7% lower than in that year.

To sum up, there were several objective and subjective factors that would have made it difficult, but not impossible, to form a revolutionary party at that time. One is that the working class as a whole was not on a revolutionary course. Second were the weaknesses of the newcomers to Marxism-Leninism, their sectarian attitudes, and the small number of revolutionary old-



timers with experience in the CPUSA who could have spread its history. Third was the role of the state in splitting and disorganizing the revolutionary movements. These problems in the main prevented the formation of such a party.

Bibl: Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, 1978

Mao's conversations with Kissinger, Ford and Nixon, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Volume XVII, China, 1969-1972, and *1969-1976*, Volume XVIII, China, 1973-1976. These are available on Internet at www.RevolutionaryDemocracy.org/archive/index.htm#capchina.

<https://marxistleninist.wordpress.com/2010/11/14/fan-the-flames-a-revolutionary-position-on-the-chicano-national-question-a-pamphlet-by-the-august-twenty-ninth-movement-m-l/>

<https://marxistleninist.wordpress.com/2008/09/10/the-struggle-for-chicano-liberation/>

Various articles in the Encyclopedia of anti-Revisionism On-Line (EROL):

<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/erol.htm>

For an analysis of the Greensboro massacre, see

<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-5/greensboro/index.htm>

Two books on the role of FBI infiltration of the communist movement, both by Aaron Leonard and Conor Gallagher, are:

Heavy Radicals: The FBI's secret War on American Maoists, 2015, and

A Threat of the First Magnitude: FBI Counterintelligence & Infiltration, 2017.

For the role of the FBI in creating phony Marxist-Leninist groups in the U.S., particularly two groups that helped form COUSML, later The Marxist-Leninist Party, see: www.mltranslations.org/US/fbiml.htm and several articles under this.

32. A Period of Ebbs and Flows

With the ebb of the revolutionary national movements and the anti-war movement (the latter partly due to a period of about eight years with no major imperialist wars), there was a temporary lull in the mass movement. This was also a period in which the U.S. monopolies, stung by their defeats in Indochina, began to push harder to reduce the wages and rights of workers at home (see graph, previous chapter).

One of the most significant attacks was on the strike of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO) in 1981. The leadership of this union was one of the most conservative, having supported Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party in the elections in 1980. However, this did not prevent Reagan from cracking down on their wages and union rights. When PATCO walked out on strike, Reagan immediately fired the 11,000 striking workers, and they were not allowed to return to their jobs after the strike was over. He kept air traffic control going by using all available supervisors and mobilizing military controllers for civilian duty.

This government action could have been beaten by a united struggle of the airline workers (the air transportation industry has one of the highest rates of unionization in the U.S., with everyone from pilots to flight attendants to mechanics in unions, although each is in their separate craft unions). However, pilots, flight attendants, mechanics and air traffic controllers were each in their own craft union. Moreover, the union leaderships were only concerned with their narrow interests, and so not only the airline workers but



March in support of "War Zone" strikers, 1995

the trade union movement as a whole suffered a serious setback. The 1981 Labor Day March on Washington, which raised the issue of the PATCO strike, was basically an impotent effort.

This period also saw some sporadic signs of a reawakening of the workers' movement. There was a significant strike by Arizona copper miners at Phelps Dodge in 1983. At Hormel Foods, in Austin, Minnesota, in 1985, the P-9 union workers held a 10-months-long strike to uphold their wages and union rights. In the mid-1990s there was a three-year struggle in Decatur, Illinois, in what became known as the War Zone: strikes at the Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone and Staley plants. In 1995 began the 1½-year long strike at the *Detroit News*, which was supported by a mass but passive rally in 1997 of hundreds of thousands of workers, particularly from the United Auto Workers.

There were also important but sporadic struggles against police terror. In 1979, the police killed a black man, Arthur McDuffie, in Miami, Florida. The acquittal of the cops led to an uprising there. In March of 1991, Rodney King, an Afro-American taxi driver, was stopped and savagely beaten by several uniformed cops in Los Angeles. Videos of this beating spread not only across the U.S. but around the world. The shocked response of many people forced the government to try the cops involved the following year. However, the trial was moved to the mostly white suburb of Simi Valley, to insure a "fair trial" for the cops. When the verdict of "not guilty" came down, one of the largest and most deadly insurrections broke out. Some 53 people were killed, almost all by the police and military. Militant



demonstrations were held throughout the country, and many workplaces closed early as the capitalist media spread fear of "riots." After the rebellion

was put down, the Federal government held a civil rights trial of the cops in the city of Los Angeles itself. Two of the cops were found guilty and two others acquitted. The ones found guilty served 2½ years on charges that could have led to 10 years imprisonment. The verdict was an attempt to placate the people.

The International Situation

In the late 1970s and '80s, the revolutionary struggle in Central America heated up. In Nicaragua in 1979, a guerrilla movement, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) overthrew the decades-old reactionary Somoza dynasty, which had been installed by the U.S. The next year, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) was formed to overthrow the reactionary, pro-U.S. government in El Salvador. The U.S. responded by training and financing the Contras (armed counter-revolutionaries) in Nicaragua and pouring money and arms into the Salvadoran government. Within the U.S., a progressive movement, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), was formed to oppose U.S. aid to the Salvadoran government. At its height, CISPES had about 300 chapters throughout the country, and in 1982 it brought some 35,000 people to a rally in Washington DC. But by 1990, the pressure was strong enough for the Sandinistas to lose national elections to a pro-U.S. government. In 1992 peace accords led to the demobilization of the FMLN. Similar accords were signed with the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) in 1996. CISPES continued to exist, but simply as a fund-raising organization, having given up on mass activities.*

Of course, one of the most significant international events in this period was the downfall of the revisionist regimes in the Eastern European bloc and in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union Gorbachev liquidated the few formal remnants of socialism and encouraged the break-up of the bloc. This began when the Hungarian government allowed several thousand people

* Later, in 2006, the FSLN returned to the Presidency in Nicaragua, and in 2009 the candidate of the FMLN won the Presidency in El Salvador. But neither government played a genuine revolutionary role, and basically administered neocolonial regimes.

from countries in Eastern Europe to pass through to the West. This was followed by mass demonstrations, largely of petty-bourgeois elements, throughout the Eastern bloc, calling for Western-style elections and the right to travel freely to the West. When Gorbachev visited West Germany in June of 1989, many people came out wearing t-shirts with his image. In November of 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down. There was no mass support for these revisionist governments, as workers clearly and correctly saw that these governments no longer represented them. The only “resistance” was from the Romanian Securitate police, which fired on demonstrators. During this time, the revisionist leadership of Ramiz Alia in formerly socialist Albania was also overthrown.

In March of 1991, a referendum was held on the question of preserving the Soviet Union. Although the authorities in a few Soviet republics refused to hold it, 80% of voters turned out in the 9 republics where the referendum took place. Some 78% supported the preservation of the Soviet Union. Despite this, Gorbachev declared the Soviet Union dissolved. Imperialism proclaimed that this was the “end of history” and that capitalism would last forever. They also proclaimed that the “end of the Cold War” would lead to a prolonged period of “peace and prosperity.”



The coming decades would prove this to be a total lie. In the former Soviet Union, many state-owned industries were closed, particularly those that could compete with ones in the West. Others were sold at bargain-basement prices, largely to members of the former party, state and managerial elite. In 1993, there were the first signs of a fight back when Russian President Yeltsin tried to dissolve the Parliament. He ordered troops to fire on the House of Soviets, killing 187 people by official estimates, although unofficial estimates are much higher, about 1,500. There were many strikes by new workers' unions, as the bosses often did not pay the workers for months at a time. The dissolution of the revisionist CPSU also led to the formation of many Leninist, pro-Stalin, communist parties, in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union.

33. From the 2000 Elections to the Attacks of September 11, 2001

The 2000 presidential elections were one of the most fraudulent in U.S. history. Vice President Al Gore ran on the Democratic Party line against Texas Governor George W. Bush (son of former President George H.W. Bush) on the Republican line. The election depended on the electoral vote in Florida, which was too close to call. The massive voter fraud in that state included the purging of thousands of voters with the same names as people convicted of felonies, who were ineligible to vote. This disproportionately affected the right of Afro-Americans to vote.

A recount in certain key counties was demanded, but this was stopped by the U.S. Supreme Court. George W. Bush thus became the president elected by a majority – of the nine members of the Supreme Court. The results had to be certified by a joint session of Congress, and 20 members of the House (mostly from the Congressional Black Congress) objected. The debate could continue only if at least one Senator objected, but none did. Gore himself conceded the election in order to preserve the stability of capitalist rule. This was another exposure of the fraudulent nature of U.S. capitalist democracy.

As the whole world knows, on September 11, 2001, two hijacked planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City, and in less than two hours, the two buildings collapsed. Another plane struck the Pentagon in Washington DC. A fourth was forced down by passengers over a field in Pennsylvania before it could be crashed into another target. Almost 3,000 people were killed in the attacks.

Within three days the U.S. government, which had appeared unable to do anything to stop the planes, announced the names of the 19 alleged hijackers. I do not know whether they just pulled out 19 Middle-Eastern sounding names from the passenger lists, or whether they cross-checked those lists with those on CIA payroll who had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan, or anything else. Even more incredulously, the government claimed that the passport of one of the hijackers turned up near the rubble of the World Trade Center.

There is much speculation that it was not the planes themselves that brought down the Twin Towers. This writer does not claim to know what caused their collapse, but there are many unexplained things in the official story. For example, the heat generated by the collision and the burning of jet fuel, about 1500° F, is well below the 2750° F temperature needed to melt structural steel. Also, it has been stated that the hole in the Pentagon is not wide enough to permit the fuselage of a Boeing 757 to enter, and little of the wreckage of that plane has been shown. Finally, in an interview on the PBS TV documentary *America Rebuilds* in 2002, Larry Silverstein, the owner of the World Trade Center complex, stated about the 47-story World Trade Center 7, the third building that came down later that afternoon, that a decision had been made to “pull it.” This is an industry term for a controlled demolition, when a building is blown up by pre-placed explosives. There is no other reasonable explanation for the collapse of WTC7, since it was only struck by debris that could in no way have brought about its collapse.

For those who dismiss all this speculation as “conspiracy theories,” we must remember that many wars, including those started by the U.S., have begun with hoaxes. When the U.S. battleship blew up in the harbor in Havana, Cuba, the U.S. blamed Spain for the attack, leading to the Spanish-American War of 1898 (see Chapter 12). Now the government admits that this was not true. Similarly, the alleged attack by torpedo boats on a U.S. destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Vietnam in 1965, which led to the start of the bombing of the Democratic Republic of (north) Vietnam, was



WTC7, which went down on 9/11 at 5:20 PM, although it was not hit by any plane

later admitted to be a hoax. In 1933 the German Nazis burned down their own Reichstag (parliament building), trying unsuccessfully to blame the fire on the Communist Party, allowing fascism to come to power in Germany. And when Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, it took some concentration camp inmates, dressed them up in Polish military uniforms, and shot them at the Polish border, claiming that it was Poland that attacked Germany.

Whatever actually happened on September 11, 2001, there is no doubt that the U.S. government took full advantage of it. In September of 2000, some leading conservatives in a think tank called Project for a New American Century (PNAC) in Washington, who later became key figures in the George W. Bush administration, published a document called “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.” This called for stepped-up spending on new military technologies and U.S. military bases all over the world, so that the U.S. would have the ability to “fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theater wars.” It pointed out that, for this to be accepted by the people of the U.S., “the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.” Was it coincidental that the destruction of the WTC took place almost exactly one year afterwards?

Bibl: http://www.911hardfacts.com/report_07.htm# (with video on collapse of WTC 7)

PNAC, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses,” 2000. at:
<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/pdf/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf> (see p. 51)

34. “Terrorism” and Endless Wars

The U.S. government quickly responded to the attacks of September 11, 2001, with new wars of aggression. The U.S. was eager to get rid of the new Taliban government in Afghanistan, which had withdrawn from a project to let a U.S. consortium led by Unocal build a gas pipeline from the Central Asian republic of Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and then to the Indian Ocean.

Although there was no evidence that the 19 alleged hijackers on September 11 had anything to do with Afghanistan (15 were from Saudi Arabia, a key U.S. ally in the Middle East; none were from Afghanistan), President Bush claimed that Osama bin-Laden, the supposed leader of the al-Qaeda network, was based in Afghanistan. Though the Taliban leaders stated that they would turn over bin-Laden to the U.S. if they were shown evidence that he was behind the attacks, this offer was ignored (and barely mentioned by the capitalist press). Also barely mentioned was the fact that Bush had business dealings with members of the bin-Laden family, particularly through the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm, and that bin-Laden’s family was allowed to fly out of the country at a time when all other U.S. flights were grounded.*

On October 7, less than a month after the September 11 attacks, the U.S. air force began bombing Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries in



U.S. forces bombed a hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, in 2015, killing 22 civilians

* <https://archives.globalresearch.ca/articles/NEW304A.html> and <http://listverse.com/2018/01/06/10-bush-bin-laden-connections-that-raised-a-few-eyebrows/>

the world. “Bunker-buster” bombs were used to blow up hillsides, with the claim that these would demolish caves in which bin-Laden might be hidden. Once the country was “softened up,” the U.S. sent in ground troops. They soon overran the capital, Kabul, and shortly after took the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar. But Afghan fighters from various groups continue to resist in the countryside. Today, after 17 years and using tens of thousands of troops, at a cost of over \$1 trillion, the U.S. and its puppet government have not been able to put an end to the resistance.

The war on Afghanistan led to a renewed anti-war movement in the U.S. This was a very broad movement, including many liberals and pacifists, as well as anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces. It also included relatives of people who were killed, injured or escaped from the attacks on the Twin Towers as well as those injured or escaped themselves. They all opposed more killing by the U.S. government in Afghanistan. One of their slogans was: “Our grief is not a cry for war.” In the beginning, they were united into an amorphous mass movement. It is noteworthy that New York City, the main center of the September 11 attacks, was also a center of the anti-war movement. One important group formed at that time was New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW), which organized rank-and-file trade unionists and some local union leaders against the war.

Invasion of Iraq

While the U.S. was still trying to pacify Afghanistan, the war-mongers prepared for a new attack, this time on Iraq. The government of Saddam Hussein had earlier been a willing client of U.S. imperialism. After the 1979 revolution in neighboring Iran that overthrew the Shah, another U.S. puppet, and established the Islamic Republic, the U.S. encouraged and aided Iraq in its long war against Iran (1980-1988). But later, Hussein became too independent of the U.S. Iraq used its huge oil resources to provide benefits like free education and health care for its people. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush had launched an air attack on Iraq, slaughtering between 20 and 35 thousand people (mostly soldiers), and placing sanctions on Iraq which were estimated to have led to the deaths of 1.5 million civilians. (Sec-

retary of State Madeline Albright, interviewed on “60 Minutes” on May 12, 1996, was asked: “we have heard that a half million children have died.... Is the price worth it?” She replied: “I think this is a very hard choice, but... we think the price is worth it.”*)

Beginning in 1973, international oil sales, even those not involving the U.S., were conducted in dollars, called petrodollars. In 2000 Hussein said that Iraq would accept other currencies for the sale of its oil, and other oil producers were considering doing the same. This would have obviously been to the detriment of the U.S., and largely to the benefit to the European Union, which is overwhelmingly dependent on the consumption of foreign oil.† This was one of the precipitating factors for the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

The U.S. population as a whole was largely opposed to a new war against Iraq. The largely petty-bourgeois anti-war movement thought that, if they turned out in sufficient numbers, it might be possible to prevent the war. On a bitterly cold day in February of 2003, some half million people crowded the streets of New York City to march to the headquarters of the United Nations on Manhattan’s East Side. The numbers were so huge that there was no room to march. Moreover, the protestors totally overwhelmed the police, who were unable to force them behind the barricades that had become a regular presence under Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg. A month later, the U.S. government, ignoring the desire of the people of the U.S. for peace, exploded bombs across Iraq at the same time as it exploded illusions that the U.S. is a democracy. As many people do not have a scientific understanding of imperialist wars, this led to a great deal of demoralization (not apathy).

In the wake of this, the U.S. anti-war movement split into three main groups. One, made up of liberals, pacifists and revisionists, became United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ). The two others were anti-imperialist groups, Act Now to Stop War and

* https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Madeleine_Albright

† France had good relations with Saddam Hussein’s government (remember Bush’s renaming French fries “freedom fries”), and only recognized the U.S.-puppet government in order not to be shut out of any oil deals with Iraq.

End Racism (ANSWER) and the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC). These two latter groups were more divided by personalities than politics. The differences became so silly and confusing to the mass of the anti-war population that the groups called two separate anti-war demonstrations in Washington DC on two different weekends in September of 2007 with almost identical slogans. Ordinary people seeing the posters, one for September 15 (ANSWER) and the other for September 29 (TONC), could only have thought that this was a mistake or that the date had been changed.



Demonstrators filled the streets of New York on February 15, 2003; a month later the U.S. invaded Iraq

35. Scapegoating of Muslims and the USA PATRIOT ACT

The events of September 11, 2001, led to a renewed upsurge of attacks on Arabs, Muslims and others thought to be Muslims, such as Sikhs.* Muslims were taunted on the streets, many were physically attacked, and several were killed. These attacks continued with the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In New York City there were protests against the planned construction of a mosque and Muslim community center in downtown Manhattan, not far from the former World Trade Center site.



Dearborn, Michigan, Islamic Center vandalized, 2007

* This was not new. Anyone who saw the news reports in the initial days after the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building in 1995 will remember the efforts to implicate Muslims in this attack – until it was revealed that the bombing was carried out by white U.S. right-wing fanatics.

But this was not just the actions of private citizens. It was encouraged first of all by President Bush, when he stated after the attacks: “They hate us for our freedoms,” followed up by the demonization of Muslims in the press. There were massive round-ups and deportations of Muslims in that period. In particular, a large section of the Pakistani population in Brooklyn was affected. Although many of the people arrested were undocumented, they included people who had lived peacefully in the U.S. for decades. There was also the special registration of all non-citizens from predominantly Muslim countries, who had to appear for questioning, fingerprinting and photographing. And there was the capture, kidnapping, lengthy imprisonment and frequently torture of prisoners from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq at the U.S.-occupied base in Guantanamo, Cuba. The U.S. also “renditioned” (captured and sent to other countries without any legal procedures) many people to secret CIA bases abroad (in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Poland and elsewhere) where they could be tortured without fear of punishment.

But these attacks were not aimed only at Muslims. Their scapegoating was used to carry out new steps to limit democratic rights. One of the worst was the USA PATRIOT* Act. Its provisions included allowing for indefinite detention of immigrants, the search of people’s homes and offices without even informing them, and the search of email and bank records without a court order. The functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service were transferred to the newly-created Department of Homeland Security, and non-citizens were not even allowed to staff x-ray machines at the airports. New measures to “prevent terrorism” were instituted. One of the most farcical of these was the “random” police inspection of bags at the entrance to various subway stations in New York City. This was just meant to get people used to increased militarization and make it look like the police are protecting us.

* The name itself is an acronym for “United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.”

Dr. Aafia Siddiqui

In this connection, we must mention the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui. Dr. Siddiqui, a citizen of Pakistan and a U.S. resident, was a well-known doctor of neuroscience in Boston. In 2003 she was disappeared while on a visit home to Pakistan. She reappeared 5 years later as a prisoner on a U.S. military base in Afghanistan. According to the U.S. government, while she was being interrogated she grabbed a rifle and shot at several U.S. soldiers, without hitting any of them.* The soldiers then fired at her, her, seriously wounding her in the stomach. She is 5' 4" tall and at the time of the incident weighed only 90 pounds.

Dr. Siddiqui was kidnapped a second time and brought to the U.S., where she was tried in Federal Court in New York City.[†] There was no corroborating physical evidence (such as bullet casings, the alleged rifle, or Dr. Siddiqui's fingerprints) for the government's case, and the witnesses against her were FBI agents and soldiers, who were obviously under pressure to testify



Dr. Aafia Siddiqui,
before and after imprisonment

* It is a standard rule of interrogation, whether on a U.S. military base, prison or police station, that the interrogators are not armed, precisely to prevent such a situation.

[†] In an unprecedented move clearly meant to intimidate observers, no one was allowed into the courtroom (or even into the overflow rooms which only had video screens of the trial) without providing identification, with names and numbers being written down and kept by the court officers.

to the government's version of the events. Dr. Siddiqui was found guilty and sentenced to 86 years' imprisonment. She remains in a Texas penitentiary today.

Dr. Siddiqui is just one of many Muslims framed for terrorism. There have been many other cases in which the government arrested Muslims for operations that they themselves set up.*

* See, for example: <https://www.wrmea.org/007-september-october/from-sting-to-frame-up-the-case-of-yassin-aref.html> and <https://www.amny.com/opinion/columnists/leonard-levitt/limo-owner-was-well-known-to-nypd-fbi-1.22059097>

36. May Day 2006 and the Immigrant Rights Movement

May Day, International Workers Day, was born in the U.S. in the fight for the eight-hour day (see Chapter 10). For decades it was celebrated by masses of workers not only throughout the world, but also in the U.S., as the day when workers would sum up their struggles and achievements. However, this was interrupted during World War II, and despite a weak revival after the war, it was downplayed due to government persecution and the fall of the CPUSA into revisionism. By the beginning of the 21st century, there were only a handful of elderly celebrants in Union Square.

In 2004, there was a revival of interest in May Day, beginning with the “Million Worker March” in Washington in October of that year. Only some 10 thousand people attended, partly because of the active discouragement by the AFL-CIO bureaucrats of participation in a “radical” event, especially with a Presidential election approaching. However, it was an important beginning in getting militant workers to come out in their own interest.

On May Day 2005 in New York City, various groups, including the Million Worker March, Troops Out Now Coalition, Bayan USA (a Philippine-American organization), and leading members of Teamsters Local 808 and TWU Local 100, organized a revived May Day rally in Union Square. Several hundred people held a march around the area, connecting May Day with local workers struggles, such as against hospital closings, etc.

Some
11 mil-
lion im-
migrants
have
come to
the U.S.
because
of deteri-
orating
economic
and polit-



The wall between the U.S. and Mexico already exists along large parts of the border

ical conditions in their home countries. These conditions were largely caused by the destructive influence of U.S. imperialism in these countries, and particularly by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It is estimated that the dumping of cheap, genetically-modified corn by Monsanto and other corporations in Mexico destroyed the livelihood of some 5 million peasants in that country.

Large numbers of immigrant workers, most without documents, were forced to come to cities and towns across the U.S. This gave the excuse to ultra-reactionary elements in Congress to put forth the Sensenbrenner Bill, which would have criminalized undocumented immigrants, subjecting them to felony arrests and then deportation from the U.S.

This bill outraged many immigrants. They are a source of super-exploited labor who made up a large section of the working class in important areas of the economy, such as agriculture, construction, fast food, etc. Several huge demonstrations were called, led mainly by religious elements and certain sections of the trade union bureaucracy.

People around the Million Worker March and other political forces, particularly the Workers World Party, correctly saw this as an opportunity to connect this movement with the revival of



May Day, Union Square, New York City, 2006

May Day. Despite a stand-off attitude by most of the churches, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the AFL-CIO, which had helped organize the earlier marches, these forces united immigrant workers, union workers and oppressed nationality (Black and Latino) communities, calling for a mass march from Union Square to Foley Square, the site of the Federal Building in Lower Manhattan. Immigrant workers have always played an important role in May Day. In 1886, these were mainly German, Italian and Irish workers (see Chapter 10). In May Day 2006, they were largely from Latin America, but also from the West Indies, Asia and Africa, and even Poland, as well as U.S.-born workers.

The result was that about one million workers turned out for the march in New York City. Thus was born the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, which has kept up the tradition of May Day ever since. The movement was strong enough to force many of the AFL-CIO unions to call for May Day rallies, sometimes together with the May 1 Coalition and sometimes separately. These union leaders did not want their members to be “contaminated” with the radical politics of the May 1 Coalition, which put the blame for the conditions of immigrants squarely on the shoulders of the monopoly corporations and the U.S. government.

37. The Crisis of 2008 and the Decline of U.S. Imperialism

In 2008, a major capitalist crisis (the “Great Recession”) broke out, the most severe since the Great Depression that began in 1929. The immediate cause was the collapse of the “sub-prime” mortgages, which low-income borrowers were encouraged to take out. The interest rates on these mortgages were initially low, but they gradually rose until many mortgagors were unable to make payments. This led to some four million home foreclosures in 2011, about five times the number before the crisis. It also brought about the collapse of many large investment banks such as Lehman Bros. and the sale of Bear Stearns and Merrill Lynch at bargain prices. It threatened to lead to the collapse of the banking system.

The government under President Bush came to the rescue of the big banks with loans of \$700 billion, with another \$700 billion loan the next year under President Obama. In total, some \$7 trillion were used to bail out the banking system. Of course, there was no similar rescue for the millions who lost their homes or jobs during this period.











As a condition for bailing out the auto giants GM and Chrys-



ler in 2009, Obama forced the United Auto Workers to agree that new hires would earn a starting salary of only half that of current workers. Many of the new jobs that people have been able to find have been in the low-wage service industry.

This was a severe cyclical crisis of over-production that strikes the capitalist economies about every 10 years (what the capitalist economists call a “boom-bust cycle”). But it is also part of the general crisis of capitalism that has been going on since the start of the 20th century with the monopoly stage of capitalism, imperialism (see Chapter 12). U.S. imperialism, which had been the leading power in the capitalist world since the end of World War II, has for quite some time seen a slow but continual decline. Let us look at some facts.

In the era of imperialism, finance capital is of increased importance. But in 2018, out of the 10 largest banks in the world, only two (numbers 6 and 9) are U.S. banks.*

Rank	Bank name	Total assets (U.S. \$billion)
1	 Industrial and Commercial Bank of China	4,009.26
2	 China Construction Bank Corporation	3,400.25
3	 Agricultural Bank of China	3,235.65
4	 Bank of China	2,991.90
5	 Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group	2,784.74
6	 JPMorgan Chase & Co.	2,533.60
7	 HSBC Holdings PLC	2,521.77
8	 BNP Paribas	2,357.07
9	 Bank of America	2,281.23
10	 Crédit Agricole	2,117.16

Take the automobile industry, one of the key industries in the United States. In 1992, U.S. companies made 78% of the cars produced in the United States. But by 2017, that figure fell to 31%, pushed out mainly by Japanese companies with plants in

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_banks

the U.S. In Mexico, one of the main countries dependent on U.S. imperialism, the percent of cars produced by U.S. companies fell from 62% in 1992 to 23% in 2017, pushed out by Japanese and German companies.* On a world scale, in 2009 for the first time China produced more motor vehicles (cars and trucks) than the U.S. (9,233,000 to 8,673,000). In 2017, China produced almost three times the number of motor vehicles as the U.S. (29 million or 30.2% of world production, compared to 11 million or 11.6% for the U.S.).

* The U.S. does better in truck production, with U.S. companies in 2017 producing 61% and 63% of trucks in the U.S. and Mexico respectively.

38. Continuing Imperialist Wars, Inter-Imperialist Crises and Internationalism

Imperialism in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East

Militarily, the U.S. is still by far the strongest military power in the world. Its troops and military bases around the world far outnumber those of other countries. But even in this field, the U.S. is not fully in control, losing influence to its rivals. For example, after NATO ended its bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and established its protectorate in “independent” Kosovo, the German Mark and not the U.S. dollar became the main currency there. Before the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, France refused to back the U.S. because it received good deals for oil from Saddam Hussein’s government. After the U.S. pulled most of its troops out of Iraq at the end of 2011, the Iraqi government that was established under U.S. auspices became more openly friendly with Iran. Meanwhile, U.S. troops returned in June of 2014, supposedly to fight against ISIS.

This is not to say that the influence of U.S. imperialism is in constant decline. It did succeed in overthrowing the independent government of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in October of 2011.* But the forces it had to rely on there, basically ones connected to al-Qaeda, are not a stable client, as the killing of the U.S. ambassador in Benghazi in 2012 clearly showed. Thus, even U.S. “successes” can turn into their opposite.

Today, the U.S. government sees China and Russia as its primary long-term rivals. This is leading to continuing imperialist wars and wars by proxy throughout the world.

Eastern Europe: In 1990, the U.S., declaring the end of the “Cold War,” had promised Gorbachev that NATO would not advance into Eastern Europe. However, not only has NATO moved to include various Eastern European countries into NATO. The U.S. and EU have been trying to bring as many of

* When Gaddafi was brutally sodomized and murdered, Hillary Clinton said, laughing: “We came, we saw, he died.” See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlz3-OzcExI>

the former Soviet republics as possible under their influence and away from Russia.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. admits it provided \$5 billion to lead Ukraine to its (Western) “European future,”* backing the pro-fascist coup regime that overthrew the pro-Russian government of Yanukovich. The leaders of this coup openly praised the Ukrainian fascists that had fought on the side of the Nazis against the Soviet Union in World War II. But this coup has already led to the secession of the Crimea and its return to Russia. Even more importantly, eastern and southern Ukraine have been in a state of revolt against the Kiev government, and have formed People’s Republics with the support of communist forces.

Africa: The U.S. is building up its forces in that continent. In 2008, it formed Africom (U.S. Africa Command), a military mission designed to bring as much of Africa (which consists of 54 separate countries) under its control. The U.S. works with



Fascists burn trade union building in Odessa, Ukraine,
in 2014, killing at least 46.

* See talk by Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2fYcHLouXY>, especially from 7.25-7.53 minutes.

governments it likes and tries to undermine those that it does not like. Besides overthrowing Gaddafi in Libya and maintaining sanctions on Zimbabwe (which it cannot forgive for the expropriation of the land of the white settlers), it has troops in Nigeria, Kenya and many other countries. It even has good relations with post-Apartheid South Africa (though it also had such relations with the former Apartheid government there). The U.S. has its largest African military base in Djibouti, strategically placed at the southern end of the Red Sea, through which much of the oil trade between the Middle East and the Mediterranean flows. Meanwhile, China is establishing its own base in that country.

In the Congo, U.S. imperialism has supported or overthrown one government or another, beginning with the 1960 coup against Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of an independent republic there; he was assassinated the following year. In the ongoing civil war, it is estimated that some 6 million people have been killed. Congo is a source of immense natural resources, from diamonds, coal and oil to uranium, cobalt and coltan (a chief ingredient in cell phones and other electronic devices). The U.S. and other Western corporations have received over \$157 **billion** in mineral and mining concessions (see Kovalik, p. 97). However, Congo is the poorest countries in the world, with an average per capita income of under \$400 a year.

We have already seen U.S. intervention in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, particularly in Angola (see Chapter 31 in the section on Maoism).

Asia: Since Obama's presidency, the U.S. has been following a policy of "pivot towards Asia." It is expanding its Pacific Fleet and missile "defenses" in Asia. It is stepping up naval and air patrols in the South China Sea. It is routinely stationing marines in Darwin, in the north of Australia. This is primarily to confront China. China, in order to overcome its military weakness with regard to the U.S., is trying to build up its own bases, such as on the floating islands in the South China Sea. Both the U.S. and China have been trying to woo countries in Southeast Asia and other countries in the Pacific area. This was the main purpose for the U.S. behind the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, before Trump withdrew the U.S. signature.

The U.S. is now involved in a trade war with China. In 2018, Trump announced a 25% tariff (tax on imported goods) on \$50 billion worth of goods imported from China. In retaliation, China announced a similar tariff on U.S. imports. Additional tariff increases have been delayed pending negotiations between the two countries.

Latin America: The U.S. has traditionally considered Latin America its “back yard.” In 2009, the U.S. backed the overthrow of President Manuel Zelaya, who was carrying out progressive reforms in Honduras. Berta Caceres, an indigenous rights and environmental activist from that country who was murdered in 2016, denounced Hilary Clinton, Secretary of State at the time of the coup, for pushing for new elections instead of backing the return of Zelaya to office.

The U.S. supported two coups against former president Aristide in Haiti (and brought him back to office once), to prevent an increase in the minimum wage (currently about \$6 per day. After the 2010 earthquake there that killed over 200,00 people, international organizations raised over \$9 billion, but over 90% of this money went to non-Haitian organizations, with very little



Aircraft carrier in Philippine Sea, 2016

going to help the people of that country. This was while Bill Clinton was co-chair of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission and Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State.*

The U.S. has been trying to overthrow the progressive Maduro government in Venezuela. It is backing the new right wing governments that have come to power after the overthrow or failure of many of the reform governments there. The U.S. backed the constitutional maneuver that got rid of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, and now supports the pro-fascist Bolsonaro, considered the Donald Trump of that country. The U.S. has use of 7 military bases in Colombia, which has joined NATO (officially it is called a “global partnership”). These bases can be used to threaten or invade neighboring Venezuela.

Meanwhile, China bought up 83% of Ecuador’s oil exports in 2013 (selling part of it to the U.S. and Western Europe). As of 2015, China invested \$15 billion in industry, mining and banking in Peru in. China is now Peru’s largest trading partner. China has plans to build a railroad that would connect the Pacific Coast of Peru with the Atlantic Coast of Brazil, and a new canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific through Nicaragua. However, there is a question as to whether either of these projects will go through (the latter one being put in question by the losses by its private financier, Wang Jing, in the Chinese stock market decline of 2015-16).

Middle East: Now, the U.S. is fomenting the war in Syria,

U.S. troops around the world

Source: United States Department of Defence (Dec. 31, 2011)



aiding the various reactionary and Islamist forces, from Saudi Arabia to Turkey to ISIS (one of the main forces among the Syrian “rebels”) that are trying to bring down the independent government of Bashar Assad. However, Russia is working to prevent this, if only because Syria has been host to Russia’s only naval base in the Mediterranean since Soviet times, at Tartus. Of course, the U.S. has naval, land and air bases all over the region, with its forces aimed at Russia.

The U.S. continues to give military and strategic support to Saudi Arabia in its genocidal war on Yemen. It carries out constant threats against the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is continuing its aid to Israel for use against the Arab countries in the region.

However, these moves by the U.S. are just increasing the contradictions on a world scale. When the U.S. and NATO bombed Libya, both Russia and China abstained in the vote in the Security Council that was used as the excuse for the attack. Russia only later established relations with the new pro-U.S. Libyan government to try to regain its position there.*

China also helped Pakistan develop a deep-water container port in Gwadar, near Karachi, on the Arabian Sea. It is rivaling the U.S. and France for markets in Africa. China, Russia, Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics have set up the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, forming a bloc that is competing with the U.S. and EU.

The Class Nature of Russia and China Today

This writer holds that both Russia and China today are imperialist countries, which are rivals of the U.S. superpower. There are some sources for this in the bibliography at the end of this chapter. It is important to understand this if one wants to have a scientific understanding of the contradictions in the world today, and how they lead to war. In particular, Lenin pointed out: “Once the relation of forces is changed, what other solution of

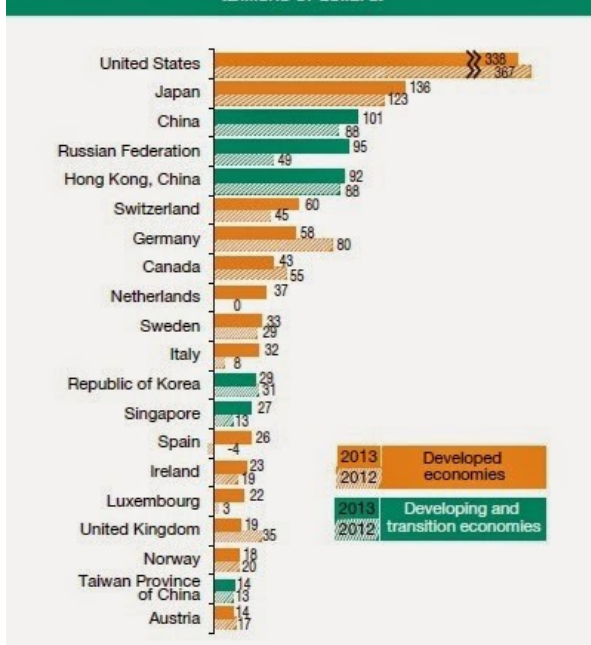
* Russia and China have both consistently approved sanctions on north Korea in the UN Security Council, where both have veto power. (See for example <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/09/11/550301634/u-n-security-council-approves-new-north-korea-sanctions>)

the contradictions can be found *under capitalism* than that of *force?*” (See *Imperialism...*, Chapter VII.)

But regardless of one’s view of Russia and China, we must recognize that our main enemy is “our own” ruling class, U.S. imperialism. It makes no sense for U.S. revolutionaries to concentrate on Russian and Chinese imperialism.* It is necessary, in forming a united front against U.S. imperialism, to also unite with forces who see the Russian and Chinese ruling class as our friends, as long as these forces really want to take up the fight against U.S. imperialism.

Similarly, we must be ready to form a united front with liberal and pacifist forces, who do not understand the nature of imperialism, as long as they are willing to fight against the particular wars of U.S. imperialism, against attacks on the civil and national rights of the oppressed peoples, against austerity and attacks on the workers movement. But we must put forth our own scientific understanding at all times.

Figure 3. FDI outflows: top 20 home economies, 2012 and 2013
(Billions of dollars)



* One of the problems with some of the forces that considered themselves Marxist-Leninist in the 1970s was that they took the position that the revisionist Soviet Union was the main enemy, and ended up defending U.S. imperialism. See Chapter 31.

We have already seen the lie of the “peace dividend” that was to be brought about by the temporary downfall of the Soviet Union. It seems most likely that a new war would involve the U.S. and EU on one side, and Russia and China on the other. And all the major countries in these blocs are armed with nuclear weapons! Right now, it seems as if neither side is as yet ready for an open war. However, if today’s conflicts become a general, inter-imperialist world war, then we will have to take up Lenin’s slogan from World War I: “Turn the imperialist war into a civil war.” In this, we will either win over some of our previous allies, or we will have to leave them behind.

Bibl: Dan Kovalik, *The Plot to Scapegoat Russia*, 2017. Despite the title, this book covers many of the U.S. military adventures particularly since the “end of the Cold War.”

Joel Andreas, *Addicted to War*, 2015. An illustrated book covering many of the recent U.S. wars overseas.

John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, 2005.

John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 1978. Stockwell was a former CIA officer in Angola

John Gerassi, *Great Fear in Latin America*, 1965.

Friends of Congo web-site: <https://friendsofthecongo.org/>

Black Alliance for Peace: www.BlackAllianceforPeace.com. See the pamphlet: *AFRICOM: U.S. Military Invasion of Africa*, at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HL0bYvJya2UUi2ROVbeDHCAiyX-U0Fc1/view>.

Film: Raoul Peck, Director, *Lumumba*, 2000.]

Lalkar, January/February 2012

(<http://www.lalkar.org/article/540/us-imperialism-on-warpathagainst-china>) and September/October 2012

(<http://www.lalkar.org/article/620/usimperialism-steps-up-war-plans-against-china>). Although Lalkar still mistakenly considers China a socialist country, its exposure of U.S. opposition to China is very informative.

Emiliano Cervi and Salvatore Vicario, *The Need for Clarity on the Nature of the Capitalist Economic Structure of Russia*, 2015, at:

www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv21n2/russia.htm

N.B. Turner, et al., *Is China an imperialist country?*, 2014, at:
<http://www.red-path.net/analysis/is-china-an-imperialist-country>

Position Paper of the PCML of Ecuador to the 19th International Seminar “Problems of the Revolution in Latin America,” 2015, at:
www.MLTranslations.org/Ecuador/Ecuador19eng.pdf

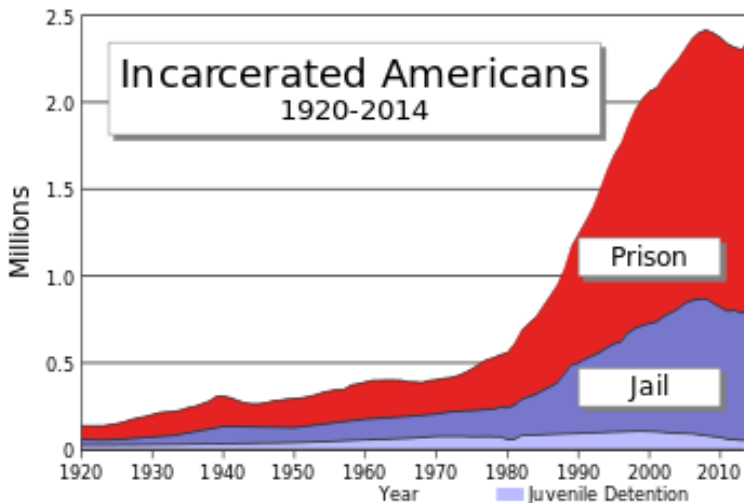
Position Paper of the Peruvian CP (ML) to the 19th International Seminar “Problems of the Revolution in Latin America,” 2015, at: www.MLTranslations.org/Peru/Peru19eng.pdf

39. Oppressed Nationalities

Mass Incarceration

The attacks on Blacks, Latinos and other oppressed nationalities have not only been under Republicans. Under the presidency of Bill Clinton (1993-2001), there were several reactionary offensives that disproportionately targeted oppressed people. One was ending “welfare as we know it.” Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the main welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, was replaced by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). This new program limited both the number of people on welfare and the time they could remain on it. This forced many people to take low-paying jobs in the expanding service industry. Even now, Blacks and Latinos make up 66% of the people on welfare*, though numerically whites make up the majority of people on welfare since they are a much larger percentage of the population.

One of the most outrageous policies was mass incarceration. Before about 1975, there were only about 500,000 people in



* https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/americans-welfare-perceptions-survey_us_5a7880cde4b0d3df1d13f60b

prison in the U.S.,* but today there are some 2.5 million, the largest number in the world, more than the 1,650,000 in China with a population almost 4 times as large as that of the U.S. Blacks and Latinos make up almost 60% of the incarcerated population, though they make up less than 30% of the U.S. population. There is a greater percentage of Blacks in prison in the U.S. today than there were in South Africa under Apartheid.

Much of this increase was a consequence of the “war on drugs,” which sentenced people to long prison terms for possessing even small quantities of drugs. This policy was compounded by increased penalties for “crack,” used more by Afro-Americans, compared to powdered cocaine, used more by whites. Although the discrepancy was reduced in 2010, it is still substantial. Furthermore the “3 strikes you’re out” policy, which exists in some form in 28 states, enforces a mandatory life sentence for 3 violent felonies.

One further consequence of this mass incarceration is that in several states a person generally cannot vote if they were ever convicted of a felony. Florida was the state with the highest number of disenfranchised voters, up to 1.5 million people.† This should change with the approval in a 2018 referendum of a state amendment restoring voting rights to most former felons.

Recent Police Killings and Black Lives Matter

In the last decade there has been a rash of murders by police and others that led to a renewed mass movement. On early New Year’s Day of 2009, a young black man, Oscar Grant, was killed in front of a group of his friends on the platform of the Oakland, California Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station. The BART cop was found guilty of the lowest charge he could have been convicted of, **involuntary** manslaughter. He served less than a

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incarceration_in_the_United_States

† This affected the results of the 2000 election, in which Al Gore, vice-president under Clinton, lost to George Bush (see Chapter 33). The election pivoted on Florida’s 25 electoral votes, and was decided by an official Bush majority of 537 votes out of 6 million votes cast in Florida. However, 827,000 people could not vote because they had been convicted of a felony. (Some 10% of all adults and 20% of all black adults in Florida cannot vote because of past felony convictions.)

year in jail. On February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin was killed by a white civilian, George Zimmerman, in Sanford Florida. Zimmerman was found not guilty on grounds of “self-defense.”

Other recent murders have led to massive demonstrations. On August 9, 2014, Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri. Twelve-year-old Tamir Rice was shot on November 22, 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio, and died the next day. Fred Gray died in police custody on April 12, 2015. Walter Scott was shot in the back and killed in North Charleston, South Carolina on April 4, 2015. The cop who shot him was sentenced to 20 years in prison, as there could be no excuse for shooting someone in the back.

In New York City there was the police murder of Eric Garner in Staten Island on July 17, 2014. Garner was known to have sold “loosies” (loose cigarettes, illegal since the government cannot collect its cigarette tax). Police Officer Daniel Pantaleo grabbed him around the neck in a chokehold (a violation of police procedure). While he was being choked to death, Garner, who was asthmatic, repeatedly cried out; “I can’t breathe.” The whole murder was caught on cell-phone video, in which one can clearly see at least six other cops standing around doing nothing to help Garner as he was dying. This should once again disprove the view that there are only a few “bad apples” in the police department, which is there to “serve and protect.” Of course Pantaleo, like almost all other cops who kill unarmed people, has never been indicted, much less convicted of these killings. However Ramsey Orta, a friend of Garner’s who took the video of the police, was sent to jail on a minor drug charge. This was clearly in retaliation for circulating the video, which went viral on the internet.

The response to these killings has been massive, militant and often integrated. It did not generally take the form of the urban rebellions of the 1960s and ‘70s, as experience had shown that the result was frequently further killings of demonstrators by the police and destruction in one’s own community. However, there were mass marches targeting the police and local government authorities. Many high school students, both black and white, came out. At an open microphone set up at Union Square after Garner’s death, this writer heard several students saying that this

was the first time that they had gone to a protest, but they felt they had to do something.

Black Lives Matter is more a slogan than a movement. It reflects the need for action against these murders, even though most participants do not yet fully understand the role of the police as an organ of state repression against oppressed nationalities and the working class as a whole. One should note that, in the South, the police grew out of the slave patrols that were formed to catch runaway slaves.



Struggles of Other Oppressed Peoples

Similarly to the formation of the police in the South, the Texas Rangers were instituted during the Texas war for “independence,” used against the Mexican army and the Mexican population there.*

Filiberto Ojeda Rios was a leader of the Ejercito Popular Boricua (Puerto Rican Popular Army), or Los Macheteros, an armed group fighting for independence in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. On September 23, 2005, he was shot by FBI agents in his house in Homigueros, Puerto Rico, and left for hours to bleed to death.

One of the major actions by Native peoples was the fight of the Standing Rock Sioux in the Dakotas in 2016 in defense of their water rights and their right to self-determination. The Energy Transfer Partner company wanted to build an oil pipeline that would pass near their territory under the Missouri River. This pipeline is liable to oil spills that would contaminate the water supply of Standing Rock and much of the area. There were many clashes between the Native people and their allies with company

* Remember the 1950s television series “The Lone Ranger,” also featuring his sidekick Tonto (meaning “stupid” in Spanish).

guards and the National Guard, with over 140 arrests. One woman was blinded in an eye. In a fine example of solidarity, some 2,000 U.S. veterans went to Standing Rock to side with the Water Defenders.

Standing Rock is only the best-known example of such actions. Other similar activity included the struggle against an oil pipeline by the native group L'eau est vie (Water Is Life) in Louisiana.

Bibl: Maxine Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 2010.

Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue*, 2014.

Film: *Fruitvale Station*, a 2013 biographical drama about killing of Oscar Grant.

Film: *Stranger Fruit*, a 2017 documentary about the police killing of Michael Brown

40. Environmental Destruction and Capitalism

Fracking

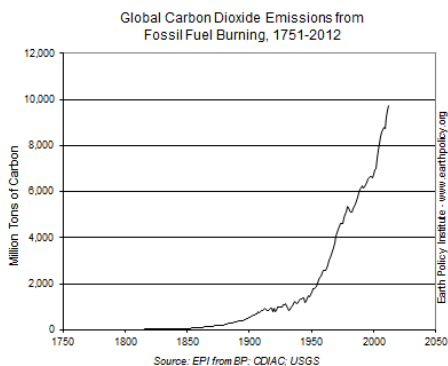
Fracking is the process of drilling into shale rocks and injecting a water mixture to release gas as well as oil. In the last few years, fracking has made the U.S. a leading gas and oil producer and exporter.

While fracking has been a bonanza for the big oil and gas monopolies, it has potentially severe health and environmental consequences for people in the U.S. and world-wide. First, the water used in fracking becomes contaminated; this can affect drinking water as well as the soil used for agriculture. Moreover, the drilling itself can potentially cause earthquakes in the surrounding area. These dangers have led some countries (and some states in the U.S.) to ban or temporarily prohibit fracking.

Fracking is also having an effect on inter-imperialist rivalry. Most of Western Europe has no significant oil or gas reserves, and has largely been dependent on Russia for its energy supplies. However, the Ukraine has the third-largest shale gas reserves in Europe. Since the pro-fascist coup in that country (see Chapter 38), Ukraine is in a position to provide gas for Western Europe. This is an example of the connection among the environment, economics and politics.

Global Warming and Climate Change

Although previously some scientists denied this, it is now generally acknowledged (except by some crackpots around President Trump) that global warming is a serious problem. Much of this is due to burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas). Most governments acknowledge the danger, and signed the Paris Agreement of 2015. This



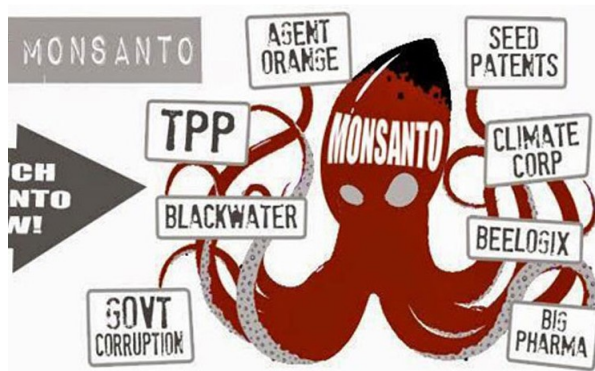
agreement provides that governments attempt to keep the global temperature rise to well below 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels. But many believe this is too little and too late. Sea levels have already risen between 4 to 8 inches over the past century, but the annual rise over the last 20 years has been at twice the rate of the previous 80 years.*

The limits on carbon emissions specifically exempted those produced by military forces, and the U.S. military is the largest single user of petroleum anywhere in the world. Moreover, a year ago Trump announced that the U.S. is pulling out of the agreement.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and Monsanto

Humans have been modifying the nature of plant and animal organisms for hundreds, or even thousands, of years. For example, dogs have been consciously bred for hunting (smell, etc.). New plants have been created by grafting. The Soviet scientist Michurin stated. “We must not wait for favors from Nature; our task is to wrest them from her.” He is noted for the vernalization of winter wheat to make it grow in the harsh climate of Siberia.

However, production of GMOs is something quite different. The genetic material of GMO organisms has been manipulated



in a laboratory, with far-reaching and unknown consequences. These foods have been nicknamed “Frankenfo

* <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/sea-level-rise/>

ods.”* This is an example of how new technological processes run in advance of social control of them. † The vast majority of corn, soy, canola, and sugar beets grown in the U.S. are genetically modified, and most packaged food contains these ingredients. The production of GMOs is done not for use, but for the maximum profit of monopoly corporations.

Monsanto is the main creator of genetically modified (gm) seeds worldwide. Monsanto’s contracts with farmers who buy its seeds require that they continually buy new seeds from Monsanto as opposed to using seeds from the current harvest. Monsanto is aiming at creating a world monopoly on seeds.

One of the supposed “benefits” of gm seeds is that they are resistant to pesticides. Thus glyphosate, the most widely used pesticide, can be used without killing the plants but has long-range deadly effects on human beings. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Monsanto’s weed-killer Round-Up. While Monsanto claimed that glyphosate is safe for humans, it is now known to be a carcinogen.‡ The effects of GMOs have led to their being banned or limited in 38 countries, including much of Europe.

Monsanto is also a good example of how monopolies operate and how they overlap with government agencies. One section of Monsanto merged with Pfizer drugs, and now Monsanto has merged with the Bayer Corporation.§ Monsanto uses high-pressure tactics to force farmers to use its gm seeds. It also hired the notorious firm Blackwater (whose name has changed several

* For a worthwhile article on the risks of GMO potatoes by the person who developed them, see:
<https://www.naturalblaze.com/2018/10/creator-gmo-potatoes-reveals-dangerous-truth.html>

† This is similar to nuclear energy being used for nuclear weapons instead of its potential for peaceful uses.

‡ Note the recent TV ad by lawyers who won a court case providing hundreds of millions of dollars to a victim of cancer from Round-Up. One group of capitalists is always ready to take on another group when they can make a profit out of it.

§ In the 1920s, Bayer merged into I.G. Farben, the German chemical company notorious for the production of Zyklon B, the gas used during World War II in Nazi extermination camps. After the war, Bayer was spun off from I.G. Farben.

times) to spy on anti-GMO activists. Michael Taylor moved back and forth between Monsanto and the Food and Drug Administration, the agency charged with approving the safety of food and drug products. (Similarly, high-level members of the Department of Defense move back and forth to top military contractors.) Monsanto was also one of the companies producing Agent Orange, widely used as a herbicide and defoliant during the Vietnam War, which caused cancer to both Vietnamese and U.S. GIs.

Chemtrails and Geo-Engineering

This is one of the most controversial aspects of climate change. If one looks up in the sky, one will see aircraft with trails that do not dissipate in a few seconds. Normal aircraft produce what are called “contrails” (condensation trails) coming from ordinary exhaust, while chemtrails are from chemicals sprayed by U.S. military aircraft.

Most web-sites dealing with chemtrails just state that these are based on conspiracy theories, a way of ignoring the evidence that exists for them. At the same time, they admit to considering using various chemicals (including aluminum) to spray in the atmosphere, supposedly to reduce global warming by reflecting some of the sun’s rays back into space. This writer does not claim to know what are behind such trails.

However, there is no question that weather warfare has been used at least since the Vietnam War, when rainmaking was used to limit Vietnamese troop movements. This was acknowledged in the cover story of the New York Times of July 3, 1972, for example.* Even earlier, on September 25, 1961, President Kennedy made a speech at the UN proposing a global system of weather prediction and weather control.† The following year, on May 27, 1962, Vice-President Johnson made a speech at Southwest Texas State University, talking about weather control, ending with the words: “he who controls the weather controls the

* <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/07/03/archives/rainmaking-is-used-as-weapon-by-us-cloudseeding-in-indochina-is.html>.

† <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqPKmtCII1Y>

world.’’* Clearly the government has greatly increased its ability to wage weather warfare in the more than 56 years since that time.



Sky over Secaucus, New Jersey (personal photo). Can these be ordinary condensation trails?



Bibl.: Stefan Engel, *Catastrophe Alert!*, 2016 (available from Verlag Neuer Weg, Germany).

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSckAwdkcAU>

41. Trump and Increased Reaction

In the 2016 Democratic primaries there was an unusual candidate, Bernie Sanders. He called himself a democratic socialist, which he defined by saying: “we must create an economy that works for all, not just the very wealthy” (<https://berniesanders.com/democratic-socialism-in-the-united-states/>).^{*} Many people were disgusted with “politics as usual,” but did not understand that the problem was capitalism, and the solution was genuine socialism, not social-democracy.

Once Sanders lost the Democratic Primary, in reality the choice was between Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. According to a large poll, 12% of those who had voted for Sanders in the primaries voted for Trump in the general election.[†] These people and many other Trump supporters mistakenly saw Trump as an “outsider” who did not represent the U.S. political machine the way Clinton did.

This is not meant in any way to support Trump. He represents increased reaction, although he is not (yet) a fascist. He and his top appointees have worked hard to stir up hatred against Blacks, immigrants and Muslims; he displays extreme attitudes against women, and has even made jokes about disabled people. If we do not fight against increasing reaction, we will be powerless to fight fascism. We need to form a united front of all those who oppose attacks against the working class, racism and war.[‡]

^{*} This is not the same as scientific socialism, which means that working class must smash the capitalist state and take over the means of production for the benefit of all. The Party of Communists USA took a good position on Sanders, as stated in its leaflet: “Vote for Bernie Sanders in the Primary, but...” (See www.mltranslations.org/US/sanders.pdf)

[†] <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/24/545812242/l-in-10-sanders-primary-voters-ended-up-supporting-trump-survey-finds>

[‡] Dimitrov points out, in *The United Front* in the section, “The Class Character of Fascism,” that “before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and adopt a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism. Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of

The Role of the Democratic Party

There have been many demonstrations against Trump and his policies, beginning immediately after his election and at his inauguration. Some, such as the women's marches in Washington DC and New York City, have been huge. However, most of the marchers have been from the petty-bourgeoisie ("middle class") and often ignore demands of concern primarily to workers and members of the oppressed nationalities. For example, in the women's marches, there were many signs correctly calling for the preservation of abortion rights, while there were relatively few opposing cuts to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps). Similarly, many people oppose Trump's attacks on immigrants and particularly his policy of separating and jailing children apart from their families. However, many of these marches (particularly in New York City) included very few immigrants. Some of the union demonstrations, such as against the reactionary Supreme Court decision on the Janus case,^{*} brought out good numbers of public-sector workers, but they were tightly controlled by the union bureaucrats and generally limited their demands to just the Janus ruling.

The Democratic Party has played a behind-the-scenes role through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in many of these demonstrations. For example, George Soros's "Open Society Foundation" gave hundreds of millions of dollars to groups involved in the official women's march.[†] The Democratic Party has given lip service to criticizing Trump's anti-immigration policies, but they have remained silent about the fact that President

fascism at these preparatory stages *is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but, on the contrary, facilitates that victory.*"

Narrowly, the Janus decision allows employees in the public sector who are not members of a union but are covered by its contract to not pay fees to the union. More broadly, it will undermine the finances of public sector unions and limit the bargaining power of these unions. On the other hand, it will force the union bureaucrats to maintain more contact with the public sector employees, and not limit themselves to business unionism and being dues collecting agencies.

[†] See <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/7/george-soros-gave-246-million-partners-womens-marc/>

Obama deported more immigrants than any previous president.

Moreover, the Democrats have cheered Trump on his military attacks on Syria, only saying that he should have carried them out sooner. They also criticized his supposed attempt to ease relations with north Korea and to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria.

The Democratic Party's main criticism of Trump is over alleged Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election. Of course, there is little talk of the documented U.S. interference in the 1996 election in Russia. The U.S. openly provided leading campaign strategists to then President Yeltsin, and pushed through a \$10 billion IMF loan to Russia a few months before the election, allowing Yeltsin to beat Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.* Moreover, there has been no documentation of the alleged Russian interference, though it has



* see http://articles.latimes.com/1996-07-09/news/mn-22423_1_boris-yeltsin and https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/business/1996/03/27/imf-approves-102-billion-loan-for-russia/6820c3ac-496a-482f-a01e-500c2e6a7d40/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.db7abbe31ba9

been endlessly repeated by the U.S. mainstream media. If the Democrats decide to impeach Trump or force him to resign, this will clearly be the main argument they will use against him."^{*}

The Need for a United Front

There have been very positive movements by sections of working people for their own demands. The best example was the teachers' strikes in the first half of 2018 in West Virginia that spread to Oklahoma, Arizona, Kentucky, etc. All these were states that voted for Trump in 2016, and are states where teachers' salaries are among the lowest in the country. The strikes were begun by rank-and-file teachers, who forced the union leaderships to go along. By and large they were also able to avoid the penalties prescribed against strikes by public-sector workers.

The left as a whole (that is, all parties that call themselves anti-imperialist, socialist or communist) has learned some lessons, but not others. Many groups work together in coalitions (UNAC – United National Anti-War Coalition – is probably the best example of this). However, they have very weak ties with the masses of the workers and oppressed. Thus they will hold rallies with dozens of even hundreds of leftists, while most people just walk by or at best stop to take pictures.

One of our most important tasks will be work among the working class and oppressed nationalities. For this to be successful the left groups would have to put aside their small-circle spirit (though they could certainly maintain their separate organizations), while the workers' movement would have to put aside their fear of socialism and communism. The objective conditions for this are much riper than in the 1960s and '70s – the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. While wages have been stagnant, expenses on basic necessities have risen. Half of the people in the United States are living below or near the pov-

^{*} Clearly the Democrats (and most people in the U.S.) would also not want Pence as president. However, just as Agnew was forced out to make room for Ford before Nixon resigned (see Chapter 28), Pence could be forced out and replaced by a non-descript Republican.

erty line.* If we do not take advantage of this we will be repeating the mistakes of the earlier period. There are already several local workers' groups and organizations which have supporters of scientific socialism working within them. If these latter forces could unite on questions of ideology and politics they could form the basis of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party.

Let us learn the lessons of our history. I hope this book can make some small contribution in this regard. As Marx and Engels said at the end of the *Communist Manifesto*: "Workers of the World, Unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains." And to add to the parody of Woody Guthrie: "This land is their land;" it must become ours!

Bibl: Georgi Dimitrov, *United Front Against Fascism*, 1935.

* <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/10/16/yes-half-americans-are-or-near-poverty-heres-more-evidence>

The Internationale

The words for The Internationale were written in French by Eugene Pottier, a member of the Paris Commune (see Chapter 9) in June 1871, and set to music by Pierre de Geyter in 1888. It has since been translated into many languages and become the unofficial anthem of the world communist and workers movement.

For the first two stanzas set to music, go to:
<http://www.northstarcompass.org/internationale-en.mp3>

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!
Arise, ye wretched of the earth!
For justice thunders condemnation:
A better world's in birth!
No more tradition's chains shall bind us;
Arise, ye slaves, no more in thrall!
The earth shall rise on new foundations:
We have been naught, we shall be all!

‘Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The International working class
Shall be the human race!

‘Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The International working class
Shall be the human race!

We want no condescending saviors
To rule us from their judgment hall;
We workers ask not for their favors;
Let us consult for all.
To make the thief disgorge his booty
To free the spirit from its cell,
We must ourselves decide our duty,
We must decide, and do it well.

‘Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.

The International working class
Shall be the human race!

‘Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The International working class
Shall be the human race!

Toilers from shops and fields united,
The union we of all who work:
The earth belongs to us, the workers,
No room here for the shirk.
How many on our flesh have fattened!
But if the noisome birds of prey
Shall vanish from the sky some morning,
The blessed sunlight still will stay.

‘Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The International working class
Shall be the human race!

‘Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The International working class
Shall be the human race!

General Bibliography:

Richard O. Boyer & Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, 1955

Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 1980

Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, 1978

Slide show, *Free the Afro-American Nation*, 1982

Anthony Bimba, *History of the American Working Class*, 1937

William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the USA*, 1952

Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air*, 2002

Wikipedia (various)

There are also separate bibliographies at the end of most chapters. Although many of these works are hard to find, some are available, both in print and on the internet, from Red Star Publishers at: www.RedStarPublishers.org.