III. ON THE ROAD:
IMPRESSIONS OF US HISTORY

One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk.

Tashunka Witko
(Grazy Horse)

The man over there says women need to be helped in carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, or gives me the best place — and ain’t I a woman? Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me — and ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man — when I could get it — and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most of ’em sold into slavery, and when I cried out with mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me — and ain’t I a woman?

Sojourner Truth

I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with Blood. I had as I now think vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.

John Brown
A people’s history is a powerful weapon. In the hands of the oppressors, history is twisted and caricatured. In the arsenal of the revolution, it helps us draw the difficult lessons from past struggles and identify the resistance which has always opposed the enemy.

But history is a weapon only if used honestly, only if reverses as well as high-points, accommodation with empire and white supremacy as well as resistance to it, are looked at straight-on. Looking at the “Founding Fathers” as our radical predecessors or viewing our history as all struggle and no compromise does nothing to help us understand our present situation.

The real history of the US is almost totally unknown to the US people. The most important parts have been buried, falsified, hidden from our view. US history is a product of the conflict between European invaders and Native Americans, white masters and Black slaves, the colonizing army and the colonized, bosses and workers, male supremacists and women, imperialists and anti-imperialists. What must be unearthed are the possibilities for liberation at any given time, how far these were carried, what held us back, what basis was laid for future struggles, including our own.

This history is not meant to be definitive; it is not a complete or chronological analysis of the US past. We focus on and analyze the periods which mark intersections or qualitative turning points in the people’s struggle. Many critical periods are not examined, others are looked at only in passing. This analysis represents the beginning of a process, not its final conclusion. With the US government now organizing for a patriotic outburst in 1976, this is an important time to begin learning real lessons from US history, preparing to take them to the people. The Bicentennial Period can be transformed into a time of action and organizing, demolishing the myths, drawing on the examples and the battles which have come before us.
The true history of the Americas begins with the original peoples of the hemisphere: the rise of the brilliant societies of the Mayas and the Toltecs, the Caribs in the Indies, the Incas of Peru, the Aztecs of Mexico, the Tainos of Borinquen (now Puerto Rico), the Iroquois of the Northeast and the Pueblos in the Southwest of the US. This history continues today from Latin America to Alaska.

The first significant European intervention was by Christopher Columbus, an Italian in the pay of Genoan capital, who sailed under the flag of Spain. Columbus noted his first day on American soil that “the people are ingenuous and would make good servants.” When Columbus returned to Hispaniola (Haiti-Santo Domingo), the occupying army he left to oversee the mining of Hispanolian gold had been wiped out by the Carib people. Columbus attacked again, this time subduing the resistance and beginning systematic genocide against the Indians. In 1492, there were somewhat under 300,000 American Indians living in Hispaniola. By 1512, there were less than 14,000 Indians left on the Columbus plantations.

Whole areas lost their native populations in this way as the Spanish colonialists worked millions of Indians to death. Since mines and plantations are run for profit, and couldn’t work without slaves, the Spanish did two things: they turned to the trade in African slaves to “repopulate” the Caribbean, and they also “rationalized” their plantation system. This was to insure that the new slaves would live long enough to “breed.”

In Mexico and South America, the Spanish adopted a system of peonage, a form of serfdom. A class of Mestizos, persons of Spanish and Indian descent, developed. This system was carried to what is now the Southwest and California.

The British colonies were populated mainly by settlers. A whole group of dissenters, poor farmers, and workers fled poverty and oppression to come to the New World. Many were indentured servants, or chronically unemployed. Others were poor people sentenced to long prison terms or deportation for small crimes. There were also some rich “gentlemen farmers” and mercenaries out for loot.

There was plenty of land in North America to be had by stealing it from the American Indians. In the South, land was suitable for tobacco, indigo, rice, sugar cane, and eventually, cotton. These crops required a plantation economy and a large labor force. But with so much land for the taking, who would labor cheaply enough to make the plantation owners rich?

Only forced labor — slaves. Chattel slaves — that is, not people but commodities, having no family worth respecting, no personal rights or property, bound for life and generations to come.

Historically, the cultural and social justification of slavery had been religious. This was true during the Crusades in Europe and in the Mideast, and was carried by feudal Spain into its conquests in the Caribbean and South and Central America. Religion was the main ideological control of feudal society and early capitalism. Chattel slavery was defended as the means of saving the souls of “ignorant heathens” from eternal hell-fire by
giving them the “blessing” of Christianity.

When Columbus exterminated the Indians of the Caribbean and replaced them with Black slaves from Africa, several important changes occurred. The plantations grew cash crops for the market and became highly profitable. Slavery became the most powerful lever of expanding capitalism. The slave trade in human bodies was itself most profitable; together with cheaper food and raw materials, this assured the victory of booming mercantile capitalism over the weaker economy of feudalism.

Slavery was never a separate economy in the Caribbean or the Southern colonies of North America—it served the capitalist market and capitalist production from the very first. Huge profits from the slave trade went to the commercial ports of the budding industrial areas of the Northeast and New York. In short, the cornerstone of “free enterprise” is the enslavement of Black Africans.

In the British colonies of North America, unlike the Spanish colonies, there was a population of poor workers and farmers, competing religious groups, plus traditions of dissent and ideas about “free-born Englishmen.” No matter how idealized these notions might have been, the fact of class struggle by a mainly Anglo, Dutch, and German white population made the problems of control different than those of the Caribbean where there were no Spanish workers, other than soldiers. The Spanish Catholic Church, as a unified institution of the Spanish authoritarian state, was itself a powerful means of control with its missions, which were actually plantations as well.

In the southern part of the British colonies of North America, conversion of Blacks to Christianity tended to break down the traditional barriers between poor, indentured whites and Black slaves. During the 17th century, Blacks and whites escaped together from forced labor, intermarried, rebelled together in the West Indies, Virginia, South Carolina and Maryland. Virginia planters passed a Fugitive Act in 1643 which ordered that runaway slaves should serve additional time twice the length of their absence and should be branded with an R (for rogue) for a second offense.

Struggles continued to develop around length of service and working conditions. The faintest possibility of unity among the different classes of the oppressed terrified the slaveowners. Because of this, distinctions of color and origin were promoted into an entire system of racism. Africans were made slaves for life, while the white servants were to be freed after a set period. The planters began the conscious cultivation of the whites as overseers, using the myth of the “free-born Englishman” in contrast to the African—now deemed an animal, less than human.

Discrimination based on color did already exist in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. However, these ideas were still incidental and subordinate to concepts of native or foreigner, Christian or pagan, aristocrat or peasant.

Racism as a prime social and cultural dividing line was born in North America, out of slavery—it was born out of greed for profit, perpetrated by deception and a monopoly of firearms, not of biological superiority real or imagined. The notion that slavery is somehow based upon racial and cultural inferiority of African and other Third World peoples has been deeply embedded into every US institution as the chief means of brainwashing and using the white population.
The importance of this to us is that it begins to focus on the other, hidden side of our history that the rulers conceal.

Racism is not only directed at Black people—it is also aimed at controlling whites to keep Black people in slavery, and the rulers firmly in command.

The institutionalizing of white supremacy created a structure to divide the white worker and small farmer from the Black slave. Coupled with the economic bribe of white privilege, it is the corner-stone of US history, the rock upon which capitalism and imperialism have been erected. It is not the material bribe alone that is effective; it the bribe plus self-justification, social approval and status, backed up by punishment for non-conformity, that does the trick.

The US invented a new kind of racism and a more horrible form of slavery. It has been building on this ever since, and exporting its variety of racism to the rest of the world.

The African slave trade was an unprecedented event in human history. The modern slave trade went on for 350 years. It came to an end about 100 years ago. Africans were kidnapped on the West Coast of Africa and brought to the West Indies in exchange for tobacco, cotton, rice and molasses. In turn, slaves and the sugar products were carried to the mainland colonies, which sent food to the West Indies, tobacco and rice to Europe, and distilled rum (from molasses) to Africa. The first African slave arrived here in 1619. By 1770, 4/5 of all colonial exports was rum to Africa. Ten to fifteen million Africans were landed in the Americas. More than that—estimates range from between 20 and 200 million—died on the way. This was the triangular slave trade, the very foundation of rising capitalism.

NATIVE AMERICAN RESISTANCE: The Early Stages

Will we let ourselves be destroyed in our turn without a struggle, give up our homes, our country bequeathed to us by the Great Spirit, the graves of our dead and everything that is dear and sacred to us? I know you will cry with me, "Never, Never!"

Tecumtha

In North America, Native Americans prevented their enslavement as a people by fighting for their land and freedom. Indians waged protracted wars of resistance, holding out in parts of the US until 1890. In spite of the destruction of whole nations, Indian culture and Indian people survive and fight to this day.

Perhaps two million Native Americans within what is now the US were killed in battle, died as slaves due to extreme overwork and little food, or from white man's diseases like measles and small-pox. They could not be captured in sufficient numbers to supply the labor force needed to enrich the European slaveowners and merchants.

When the attempt to enslave Indians failed, the colonizers went on to destroy Indian power and seize their land. King Phillip, leader of the
Wampanoags (the rescuers of the starving Pilgrims—an event ritualized at Thanksgiving) understood what was happening. He worked to bring together neighboring nations and drive the settlers out. His armies fought hard, attacking 52 of the 90 New England colonial towns. Internal disputes, a hard winter, betrayals and superior fire-power defeated the rebellion, which ended in August, 1676. Many Indians, along with King Phillip, were killed.

During the colonial period, except at the very first when the settlers were weak and couldn’t make it on their own, few whites accepted Indians as human beings. Some backwood people, a number of runaway servants, religious outcasts and dissenters were friendly. Considerable numbers of escaped slaves also developed ties with Indian people, notably the Seminoles in Florida.

But, the prevailing attitudes were expressed by the Dutch patroons introducing tomahawks in New Amsterdam (later to become New York City) to frontiersmen eager to scalp Indians for $100 bounty—a huge sum for those days. This was the origin of the saying, “The only good Indian is a dead Indian.” The colonist came from poor, depressed parts of Europe, eager for land. The desire for land, and with it freedom from servitude and wage labor, dominated early colonial and US history. Land ownership was a viable resolution of many social and class contradictions.

In 1763, the British forbade colonial expansion beyond the Appalachian mountains. This curbed the land speculations of the wealthiest colonialists, like George Washington, Ben Franklin and Patrick Henry. It was one of the causes of the Revolution of 1776.

After the Revolution, the speculators felt free to move into the West. Many Indian tribes understood the government’s intentions. While the American Revolution was fought against the fetters imposed by British colonialism on the rapidly developing colonial economy, it was certainly not fought in the interests of either Native Americans or Black slaves. Consider the following condemnation of King George in the Declaration of Independence:

He has excited domestic insurrection amongst us and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of the frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

Declaration of Independence

Washington’s troops burned Iroquois villages during the Revolutionary War. Not one major tribe lined up with the colonists during the Revolution.

In 1787, Congress authorized the takeover of the Ohio Valley. The Shawnee and the Miami, united by thirty years of struggle, fought back. Led by Little Turtle, they defeated a 1400-man US force in 1790, and in 1791 routed St. Clair’s army of two thousand. In 1794, Mad Anthony Wayne invaded Indian territory, defeated the Shawnee at Fallen Timbers, and celebrated the victory by burning every Indian village on the way back to his fort. The victors forced the Treaty of Greenville upon the Indians and poured in missionaries, whiskey and settlers. But the Indians still did not capitulate.
From the Shawnee arose a great American Indian leader, Tecumtha (Panther-Lying-in-Wait). He rallied the nations, travelling from Canada (Iroquois land) to Missouri (Osage territory) to Florida (Seminole nation). He argued for unified resistance, denounced alcohol, and with the help of his brother, called for revival of Indian culture and ways. He saw the moment as a strategic one: “a last chance such as will never occur again for us Indians of North America to form ourselves into one great combination.” Tecumtha allied with the British in the War of 1812, starting off by capturing Detroit. The British betrayed Tecumtha, who died fighting a year later.

President Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. This territory, almost equal in size to the entire US of that date, was actually the land of the Sauk, Fox and other Indian tribes. Andrew Jackson, known as Sharp Knife to the Cherokees, rose to the Presidency by winning fame as an Indian killer and village burner. He used charges of Indian violence to move into Florida, Texas and Canada. Jackson was a popular hero: nearly everyone wanted more land, the only disputes were over how best to grab it from the Indians. Spearheading the land grab, the US Army established forts throughout the Indian territory, and began offensive operations. General Winfield Scott, a leading figure in US wars against Mexico, was responsible for the Trail of Tears of the Cherokees in 1838. An entire people were forcibly removed from their homeland in the Southeastern US and marched all the way to a reservation in Oklahoma. The wars against the Indians, like the war against Mexico in 1848, was a war of conquest, a war for land.

Demands now being made by Native Americans for land for their own sovereignty as separate nations challenge all the terms upon which the US built its empire, and this is why the Native American movement has a special significance for people fighting US imperialism.
BLACK RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY AND
THE RISE OF THE ABOLITIONIST AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

The growing conflict between the Northern and Southern systems of production laid a basis for the Civil War. The Southern system was based on slavery and the cultivation of cotton as a main crop. In 1793, the invention of the cotton gin gave the cotton industry, and with it slavery, a new economic boost. It made cleaning the Southern short-staple cotton fairly efficient. More abundant and cheaper cotton also helped expand the textile industry in the Northeast, which became the center for manufacturing. Cotton cultivation exhausted the soil, which created the continuing need for expansion of the plantation system into new territory.

Up to 1860, the Southern slaveowners attempted to expand the slave system. Seaboard Atlantic states turned to slave breeding, while the expansionists eyed Cuba and Central America. Northern collaboration and compromise aided the planters. The seizure of Texas in 1836 from Mexico and its admission to the Union was part of slave-owners’ plots to introduce six new slave states into the Union.

But many Northern industrialists and financiers recognized that the further spread of slavery would stifle their own ambitions; more profits and more political stability could be had by opening up the West and Southwest to industrial exploitation and “free farming.” The planters won a great legal victory in 1857, with the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision which sanctioned the introduction of slavery into any free territory, even against the will of the majority of the settlers.

It was the continued resistance of Black slaves and their allies which finally brought matters to a head. As early as 1793, Toussaint L’Ouverture led a famous slave revolution in Haiti against the French. The Haitian Revolution terrified the Southern slaveowners who feared that the example would spark similar uprisings in North America. Toussaint’s forces used drums to communicate with each other; drums were now banned from the Southern plantations. Each rebellion spread panic throughout the slave-holding South: Gabriel Prosser’s in Virginia in 1800; Denmark Vesey’s in South Carolina in 1822; the Amistad Mutiny led by Joseph Cinque (from whom Ruchel Cinque Magee and SLA Field Marshal Cinque take their names today) in 1831; and Nat Turner’s uprisings in Virginia in 1831. In 1829, David Walker, a freed Black man, published David Walker’s Appeal, which called upon the slaves to rise up in revolution against their bondage.

Escape was a major form of slave resistance. Black soldiers returning from the War of 1812 brought back the news that slavery was outlawed in Canada. Routes of flight, twisting networks of paths, developed across the Appalachians, up thru the Ohio and along the Eastern seacoast. These were the routes of the Underground Railroad, which in the 1840’s prided itself on being the only railroad guaranteed not to break down. In the 1850’s, something like five hundred Black people a year penetrated the South under the most dangerous conditions to lead others to freedom. Harriet Tubman —called Moses by the slaves— was the most famous conductor. Not intimidated by a huge bounty on her head, she led hundreds North without ever losing a passenger. She said:
“There are two things I’ve got a right to, and these are death and liberty. One or the other I mean to have. No one will take me back alive.”

Public Sale of Negroes,
By RICHARD CLAGETT.

On Tuesday, March 5th, 1833 at 1:00 P. M. the following Slaves will be sold at Potter’s Mart, in Charleston, S. C.
Miscellaneous Lots of Negroes, mostly house servants, some for field work.

Conditions: ½ cash, balance by bond, bearing interest from date of sale. Payable in one to two years to be secured by a mortgage of the Negroes, and appraised personal security. Auctioneer will pay for the papers.

A valuable Negro woman, accustomed to all kinds of house work. Is a good plain cook, and excellent dairy maid, washes and irons. She has four children, one a girl about 13 years of age, another 7, a boy about 5, and an infant 11 months old. 2 of the children will be sold with mother, the others separately, if it best suits the purchaser.

A very valuable Blacksmith, wife and daughters; the Smith is in the prime of life, and a perfect master at his trade. His wife about 27 years old, and his daughters 12 and 10 years old have been brought up as house servants, and as such are very valuable. Also for sale 2 likely young negro wenches, one of whom is 16 the other 13, both of whom have been taught and accustomed to the duties of house servants. The 16 year old wench has one eye.

A likely yellow girl about 17 or 18 years old, has been accustomed to all kinds of house and garden work. She is sold for no fault. Sound as a dollar.

House servants: The owner of a family described herein, would sell them for a good price only, they are offered for no fault whatever, but because they can be done without, and money is needed. He has been offered $1250. They consist of a man 30 to 33 years old, who has been raised in a genteel Virginia family as house servant, Carriage driver etc., in all which he excels. His wife a likely wench of 25 to 30 raised in like manner, as chamber maid, seamstress, nurse etc., their two children, girls of 12 and 4 or 5. They are bright mulattoes, of mild tractable dispositions, unassuming manners, and of genteel appearance, and well worthy the notice of a gentleman of fortune needing such.

Also 14 Negro Wenches ranging from 16 to 25 years of age, all sound and capable of doing a good days work in the house or field.
The success of the Underground Railroad resulted in the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which ordered Northerners to return escaped slaves to the South and legalized the practice of vigilantes and slave-hunters. Quakers, New Englanders, Pennsylvanians, Ohioans cooperated with Black people to rescue some 75,000 slaves in this brave episode in our history.

Black resistance defined the militant terms of the anti-slavery fight, and was an example to the two mass movements which grew up alongside the Black struggle—the Women’s Movement and the Abolitionists.

During the early 1800’s large numbers of women entered the textile mills and factories of New England for the first time. Often they found themselves at odds with the 19th century standards of factory decorum and with the fact that they were paid far less than men doing the same work. The first strike by women took place in Dover, New Hampshire mills in 1828. Proletarianization of US women in the Northeast, the social contact in the mills, was a background for the upsurge in consciousness and protest among women which would develop over the next few decades. Bourgeois women, recently freed from household chores like weaving, sewing and soap-making, also began to chafe at the limitations imposed on them because of sex.

From the earliest days of the anti-slavery fight, courageous women like Fanny Wright and Maria W. Stewart defied scorn and ridicule in order to speak out in public. Soon Female Anti-Slavery Societies were formed throughout the North, trying to recruit activists for the Underground Railway, to write, persuade, and awaken their sisters to the tyranny of slavery. Women raised both the issue of abolition and equality for women. Slaveholders and male supremacists responded with threats of mob violence and bitter attacks on the women’s character and reputations. Angelina and Sarah Grimke, born to a Southern slave-holding family, spoke out on “both freedoms” and opposed more conservative elements in the anti-slavery movement who were afraid of losing support if the subject of women’s freedom was raised.

In 1840, the Anti-Slavery Convention in London refused to seat women. Experienced and tireless US women abolitionists were forced to sit behind curtains while the main debate went on. Charles Revson, a Black abolitionist, and William Lloyd Garrison, joined the women as a protest. Eight years later, the women’s convention at Seneca Falls, New York, called for unconditional equality for women:

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man towards woman, having in direct object the establishment of absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

Seneca Falls

For over a quarter of a century, until a serious split developed after the Civil War, the two movements—to free the slaves and to liberate women—nourished and strengthened each other. White women openly advocated freedom for Black people; white and Black women walked calmly
John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on.

John Brown's body lies a-mouldring in the grave,
While weep the sons of bondage whom he ventured all to save,
But though he lost his life in struggling for the slaves,
His soul is marching on.

John Brown died that the slaves might be free,
John Brown died that the slaves might be free,
John Brown died that the slaves might be free,
But his soul goes marching on.

He captured Harper's Ferry with his 19 men so true;
He frightened Old Virginny till she trembled through and through;
They hung him for a traitor, themselves the traitor crew,
But his soul is marching on.

America's working folks are all remembering the spot,
America's working folks are all remembering the spot,
America's working folks are all remembering the spot,
It's the grave of old John Brown.

Now has come the glorious jubilee,
Now has come the glorious jubilee,
Now has come the glorious jubilee,
When all mankind shall be free.

Glory, glory hallelujah!
Glory, glory hallelujah!
Glory, glory hallelujah!
His soul goes marching on.
together thru mobs of angry men, openly challenging the paranoia of plantation morality with its emphasis on the protection of dependent white women. This was a bold blow to racist and sexist ideology.

Contrary to the lies of official bourgeois history, the abolitionists were not abstract moralists, but a social movement based on the urgent necessity to end slavery. There were fierce struggles within the movement over goals and tactics. The abolitionists were split over the question of revolutionary violence, with a substantial number of white abolitionists unwilling to accept the terms of the anti-slavery struggle. The leadership of free Black people and escaped slaves like Henry Garnet, David Walker, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth consistently pushed the abolitionists to more militant stands. National conventions of Black people in the North advocated the armed overthrow of the slave system while some abolitionists put forward notions of slaves going quietly back to Africa. Douglass' paper, The North Star, was a voice for immediate emancipation and full rights for Blacks. Douglass argued for militant resistance to slavery:

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will.

At their best, the abolitionists refused to ignore, and more, refused to let anyone else ignore, the reality of slavery. We see in the abolitionists the beginnings of a tradition of mass white support for Black liberation; the tensions and disagreements within the movement were not unlike those our own movement has faced –especially concerning Black people's right to direct their own struggle.

Abolitionists were called fanatics, lunatics and promoters of rebellion. Garrison's defense of the Nat Turner Rebellion, in which 60 white people were killed, brought the wrath of the slavery forces upon him. But he escalated, carrying out a speaking tour of New England. From the large crowds which turned out to hear him came the first meeting for the New England Anti-Slavery Society held on January 1, 1832. They called for immediate emancipation of slaves without any compensation to the slaveowners.

Simultaneously, a campaign for education and literacy went on clandestinely in the South, more openly in the North. The precious and outlawed right of Black people to read became a battleground—as it yet is today. Prudence Crandall opened her school in Connecticut to twenty or thirty Black girls in 1831; this led to her imprisonment, the burning down of her house, and attempts to suppress the school.

Abolitionists like the Grimke sisters, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Wendell Phillips engaged in struggles for prison reforms, against capital punishment, in support of Indian rights, and equal rights for women. Theodore Parker hid Black fugitives in his Boston church and protected them with guns.
And then there was old Osawatamie, John Brown. Brown led the four years of guerrilla warfare in Kansas, which kept that state from falling to the slavers. It was this victory in Kansas which drove the South to secede before the anti-slavery forces grew too much stronger. W.E.B. Du Bois marked this as the start of the Civil War.

In 1859, John Brown, with a band of Kansas free-soilers and ex-slaves, attacked the Harper's Ferry arsenal in Western Virginia, in direct response to the Dred Scott decision. Harriet Tubman planned to participate but was too ill to go along. John Brown’s courage and sacrifice have been maligned as insanity, but he had a practical plan which almost worked. Even in defeat, he accomplished his stated goal of polarizing the mass of Northerners against slavery. Brown’s action helped destroy the slave economy of Virginia as many plantation owners, terrified by the accelerating number of slave uprisings following Brown’s raid, sold their slaves in panic.

The Harpers' Ferry action was an effective use of armed struggle to sharpen an already-ripe political situation. John Brown is an example to us of dedication, belief in people’s power to affect history and the willingness to risk everything in the cause of liberation.

RECONSTRUCTION AND BETRAYAL

The Civil War began as a war fought by white people over the “future of the Union.” At first, the US government ignored Black people; there was no attempt to recruit them into the Union Army, they were not allowed to enlist. Union soldiers were forbidden to sing “John Brown’s Body.” Slavery, the underlying cause of the war, was a suppressed issue.

Over time, pushed by its wartime need for laborers and soldiers, and by the eagerness of Black people to fight against the slave-owners, the North moved toward emancipation. Fugitive slaves, including Harriet Tubman, joined the Northern forces. General Tubman led her troops in dangerous scouting and guerrilla operations during the war.

With emancipation in 1863, thousands of Blacks joined the army. Before the war’s end, 200,000 Black people fought for the Union, often in the front lines as shock troops; 300,000 more helped as laborers, scouts and spies for the North. Many other Black women and men left the plantations, in a general strike against the planters. This crippled the slave economy and the Southern war effort.

The Emancipation Proclamation legally freed four million Black people from chattel slavery. Abraham Lincoln acted in order to win the war and because the slaves were already freeing themselves. This was an important victory for Black people and the Abolitionist movement they had inspired. A sense of optimism and determination to consolidate and extend their gains swept thru the Black population in the South. In the post-war Reconstruction period, unique in US history, Blacks and their white allies began a remarkable effort to transform the Southern system.

Black historians—notably DuBois—have challenged the lies of the standard history of Reconstruction, which all of us were taught in school. In his book Black Reconstruction, DuBois catalogues the tremendous achievements of the Reconstruction era: poor and Black people participating
in government for the first time, voting and holding office; the introduction of progressive income tax; the first massive public school program in the South; tentative attempts at land redistribution; the temporary disenfranchisement of many planters/slaveholders; the abolition of imprisonment for debt; the expansion of women's rights in marriage. Black people raised the demand for "forty acres and a mule" for every ex-slave, since without land reform, emancipation would leave them at the mercy of the planter class. This demand was never met because its content challenged not only the planters but also the Northern interests who were in the process of taking over Southern agriculture.

Gains made in public education are testimony to the progressive character of Reconstruction. At the end of the Civil War, there were no public schools in the South; by 1870 there were 250,000 children in 4300 schools. This was the result of an astonishing effort by hundreds of Northern volunteers and abolitionists, with the substantial support of Southern Black communities and families. 45% of the teachers were women — Black women from the South, white women from the North. The schools they built survived the overthrow of Reconstruction, but were later rigidly segregated by race.

This was a time of slow, painstaking efforts by Blacks to build working relationships with the dispossessed whites of the South, alliances which never developed fully. They were finally shattered when Northern capital and the remnants of the old planter class re-assumed control. The support of poor whites, working people and other progressive whites for Reconstruction also involved tens of thousands of Northern white men and women who came South as volunteers — the "carpetbaggers," slandered and defamed by later generations. Reconstruction was one of the high points of unity between Black and white overcoming white supremacy and racism in our history. This is why it has been written out of the history texts.

The pro-Reconstruction forces had great strength for a while. They failed by only one vote to convict President Andrew Johnson after impeaching him for supporting the ex-slaveowners and sabotaging Reconstruction. Johnson won because the capitalist North, victorious over its former and future partners, the Southern planters, was eager to get on with the conquest of the West. Crushing Reconstruction involved the conscious reinstatement of white supremacy patterns in order to destroy a kind of people's unity which, if not defeated in the South, could have spread to class war in the North itself.

The counterrevolution came disguised as the "compromise of 1877." The word "compromise" should read "betrayal:" Northern Republicans sold out the Black population by allowing federal troops to be withdrawn from the South, leaving ex-slaves and white Reconstructionists open to the terror-campaigns of the planter class. Some of these troops were then sent North to help break strikes; others were used in the final military campaigns against the Oglalas, Hunkpapas, Cheyennes and Nez Perce.

A new power alliance emerged in the US: old and new Southern planters were restored to local power by accepting Northern capital's domination in both Southern agriculture and industry. This rule was enforced by the terror of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was established by the
planter class to prevent Black people and their white allies from consolidating their political gains. Through the Klan, like the old slave patrols, poor whites helped terrorize and control Blacks. Black people were forced back into subjugation through mob violence and lynching, Jim Crow laws and wholesale disenfranchisement, and white skin became the cultural definition of power once again. While there were scattered attempts at Black-white unity in these days, they fell apart as many poor whites destroyed the basis for genuine alliance by defending white supremacy.

With the planters restored to the land, Black people were thrust back into a new form of slavery — sharecropping. Sharecroppers rented plots of land from the planters, and in return, kept a small share of what they produced. Sharecroppers provided the planters with the bulk of the cotton crop, and had to rent tools and other necessities from them. Black sharecroppers were in debt, bound to the planters, enslaved. The consolidation of class rule and the crushing of the popular movement wrecked the hopes for a new South; the South remains an underdeveloped region of the US to this day.

Defeating Reconstruction was a prerequisite to the completion of continental expansion and the strengthening of capitalist power. It was accomplished by terror, the lynch rope and treachery. Supposed white allies deserted Black freedmen and women. The hopeful possibilities of the era were shattered by all the forces of racist order and a decisive step was taken on the road to full-blown, modern US imperialism.

EXPANSION AND CONQUEST: THE BIRTH OF MODERN US IMPERIALISM

Throughout this time, the US was consolidating its hold over Mexican and Indian land. Once New Mexico and California were seized, the looting of land and minerals proceeded rapidly. Through the destruction of Mexican land titles, Mestizo farmers were reduced to laborers on their own land. Mexicans, along with imported Chinese and Filipino laborers, became the chief cheap labor supply for the farms, cattle ranches, mines and railroads of this strategic part of the West. California provided important deep water ports on the Pacific Ocean, industrial sites and gold.

Northern industrialists had moved ahead with the Transcontinental and Santa Fe Railroads. The former was built by Chinese and Irish labor, the latter by Mexicans. As railroads moved West, the last of the Indian lands were conquered. By the late 1870’s, the heart of the Indian resistance was shattered. Crazy Horse was assassinated by government agents in 1877 at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. In 1890, the US Army committed the Wounded Knee Massacre. Rumors of an Indian resurgence had been sweeping the country. The Ghost Dance, a Paiute prophecy of a return to Native power, had taken root at Pine Ridge Reservation. When the US Army attacked on December 29, 1890 it was not a spontaneous crime. It was an attempt to wipe out “hostile” Indians, to commit genocide against the Oglala nation. Over 300 Indians were killed, many women and children — afterwards, 18 cavalry-men received Congressional Medals of honor for “gallantry” and “bravery.”
This was the age of the robber barons, the time when Rockefeller, Morgan and Carnegie made their first stolen fortunes. The normal cycles of capitalist production glutted markets and caused a series of depressions. In the 27 years between the panic of 1873 and 1900, over half were years of depression. As the big industrialists and financiers made their money, the people went hungry and were forced out of work. Capitalism squeezed its domestic work force to the bone, and the workers in the new Northern and Western industrial centers of the working class raised the spectre of class warfare at a time when the frontier, the traditional safety valve for class discontent, was shrinking. Workers were crowding the cities, forming new communities, understanding the need for collective action.

The era of monopoly capitalism was dawning. The ruling class looked to colonial expansion as the solution to economic crisis and rising class discontent.

Revolt within the Spanish Empire opened opportunities in the Caribbean and the Philippine Islands. Rival imperialist powers were engaged in full-scale contention over the penetration of China, so the idea of a strategic base in the Philippines was tempting.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 was a case of imperialist aggression cloaked in democratic slogans. The McKinley Administration at first justified the war as an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist support to the rebelling Cuban, Puerto Rican and Filipino peoples. The Battle ship Maine was sent to Havana and sunk as a final incitement.

Puerto Rico was seized as a US colony. Cuba was not seized outright: it was instead made a protectorate with control imposed by the US through the hated Platt Amendment. The US occupied Guantanamo and set up a naval base there. This base remains a constant US colonial presence in liberated Cuba.

In the Philippines, Theodore Roosevelt, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Senator Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts hatched plots with Admiral Dewey to seize Manila and prepare armed intervention to recolonize the Island. By the time Dewey got there, the Filipino liberation forces had taken all the rest of the country from the Spanish. A phony attack on US lines outside of Manila was staged (a model for the “attack” Johnson staged on the US Navy in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1965) and the counterrevolutionary war was on. It lasted six years, required a US force of 90,000 soldiers at its peak, and ended with 600,000 Filipinos dead on Luzon Island alone. Those who lived found themselves under harsher rule than even that of Spain. Filipinos to this day are fighting guerrilla warfare against US-supplied troops and a US-backed neocolonial regime.

As the war went on, and US soldiers died from wounds and diseases, the truth about Filipino resistance came out and direct racist and economic appeals to workers and businessmen replaced cover-ups about fighting for Filipino freedom. William Randolph Hearst made his fortune by whipping up racist war fever in his columns. The Hearst papers ran banner headlines, arguing that the “yellow peril” must be defeated.

There was opposition —individuals like Mark Twain, an anti-imperialist league in Massachusetts which grew to have branches in Chicago and the Far West, some workers’ organizations (especially among the Boston Irish), plus a few abolitionist and populist veterans. But it is important to understand why, in spite of strong anti-colonial traditions going
back to Revolutionary War days, most people finally accepted this leap into full-fledged and open imperialism.

Class struggle at home was muted by plunder abroad. Many workers supported imperialist expansion as an acceptable way to ease economic crisis in the US. With the war against the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba, many US citizens condoned imperialism in the same way they had grown accustomed to justifying genocide against Native Americans or lynching of Black sharecroppers.

The ruling class organized for world empire in the same ways it organized for continental conquest. Racism against Mexican farm-hands and Chinese laborers was now turned against Cubans, Filipinos and Puerto Ricans. Internationalism—the commitment to unity in struggle with other people in other lands against the common enemy—does not spring automatically from a culture poisoned by slavery, internal colonization and the slaughter of the native population. It has to be fought for constantly.

Moreover, when leaders of the American Federation of Labor, like Samuel Gompers, ended up supporting the war against the Philippines, they began more and more to sabotage the struggles of millions of unorganized immigrant laborers, women and unskilled workers. They looked down on these workers as outcasts, and often showed the same contempt for them as the despised Filipinos and Blacks.

The AFL came to represent mainly the aristocracy of labor. Daniel de Leon, a socialist organizer, called the AFL the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.” Based in the highly skilled crafts, elitist, all white, opposed to militancy, the AFL even then served as an emergency brake on the class struggle.

THE OPPOSITION:
Miners, Women, Immigrants, Wobblies

Alongside this history of accommodation to imperialism, there are also the great movements and acts of opposition—the stirrings, the militant strikes, the courage of the Haymarket martyrs, the women’s shirtwaistmakers, the Wobblies, the Molly Maguires, the Western Federation of Miners, the day-to-day survival struggles of the immigrants. In this disloyal opposition, we can recognize our roots.

On May 4, 1886, in Chicago, a workers’ rally was called to protest the murder of striking McCormick Harvester employees a few days before. As it ended, a bomb was tossed killing one policeman. Seven labor and anarchist leaders were framed and convicted and four were executed for the act. From this struggle, people all around the world commemorate May Day. The city of Chicago erected a monument to police power—the statue of a policeman which, until recently, stood in Haymarket Square.

In the 1890’s, miners in Colorado and Idaho faced the guns of federal and state troops as they fought for the eight hour day. After long hours in the mines, workers would meet, teach each other to read, argue politics, talk about socialism and revolution. In 1892, the Western Federation of Miners formed, an organization which led major strikes
throughout the next decade. In the same year, the Homestead Strike was crushed when federal troops massacred striking steelworkers in Pennsylvania.

In the early 1900’s, the labor force underwent a rapid transformation as fifteen million immigrants came to the US. Those who came from Europe settled in the industrial and commercial centers in the East and Midwest. Subject to discrimination, viewed as “unamerican” by much of the population, they initiated and led some of the fiercest US labor struggles.

A movement arose in this period called the Industrial Workers of the World—the Wobblies. The preamble to the IWW constitution, written in 1905, reads:

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes, a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

The Rebel Girl, that's the Rebel Girl!
To the working class she's a precious pearl,
She brings courage, pride and joy
To the fighting Rebel Boy;
We've had girls before, but we need some more
In the Industrial Workers of the World,
For it's great to fight for freedom
With a Rebel Girl.41

WORDS & MUSIC
BY JOE HILL

61
The Wobblies came from the miners' strikes in Colorado, from the immigrant textile workers of the Eastern commercial centers, from women workers, from the lumberworkers of the Far West. The IWW challenged the narrow and elitist craft union approach of the AFL and advocated industrial unionism—organizing all the workers of an industry into one union. The Wobblies organized the unorganized and the dispossessed.

The Wobblies had serious weaknesses—they underestimated the need for strong organization, downplayed political agitation and action, and never developed an effective long-range strategy.

Although the Wobblies were never the chief force in the labor movement, their influence was widespread. They participated in thousands of strikes and actions and helped lead effective mass strikes in Lawrence, Mass. in 1912, Patterson, N.J. in 1913, and Seattle, Wash. in 1919. The Wobblies refused to sign labor contracts, always reserving the right to strike. They advocated revolution and socialism, opposed imperialist war and made great breakthroughs in work with immigrants, women and children. The Wobblies were among the first organizers to recognize the importance of explaining to the children of strikers the political issues involved in the strikes. Wobbly children's meetings helped in keeping families together through the long and difficult strikes.

There were many immigrants among the masses of women who now entered the factories. Often, the bosses placed women of different nationalities next to one another on workbenches, hoping that language barriers and cultural differences would hinder the possibility for unity.

Women worked as domestics, in the textile industries of New England and New York, garment sweatshops, laundry and food services. In 1909 and 1910, the women shirtwaistmakers strikes erupted in New York City. Sixty percent of the workers were women, 70% were between the ages of 16 and 25. They worked 56 hours a week in dingy lofts. Women pushed the corrupt male union leadership to support their demands for shorter
hours and decent working conditions. At one pre-strike meeting, Clara Lemlich, a young organizer, interrupted the speeches of union officials to decry the go-slow attitude and call for a strike. In the two months of the strike, over one thousand strikers were arrested. The shirtwaistmaker’s militancy spurred the organizing of union shops throughout the entire garment industry.

These early strikes confronted the Women’s Suffrage Movement with the importance of joining the life-and-death struggles of their working sisters. In 1914, the Rockefeller-owned state militia burned a striking miners’ tent colony in Ludlow, Colorado, killing two women and thirteen children. Thirty miners were shot down in the ensuing battle. Attica was not the first massacre ordered by a Rockefeller. A suffrage leader named Elizabeth Freeman led pickets against Rockefeller’s Standard Oil offices in New York to protest the Ludlow Massacre.

Strikes often stretched out for long months, involved desperate hunger and want, loss of life and many times despair at crumbling fighting strength. In these situations, family hardship is tremendous, and the strength and fighting capacity of women and children become critical. Organizing retaliation, strike support, food, medical help and supplies, fighting on the picket lines, persuading scabs not to scab, and holding out, leading, persisting have all been done by women. Women held special women’s meetings in the Lawrence and Patterson strikes. They opened up the struggle against the lord-and-master attitude of many of the men, demanded that the full burdens of housework and raising children be shared.

The official labor movements were worse than indifferent for the most part. When textile workers and the women in the food industry were first organized, it was at the initiative of the women themselves or of radical left-wing organizers like the Wobblies.

There is a male monopoly on the decisive post of leadership in traditional unions of women workers. Yet there are names to remember of great women class fighters: Mother Jones, Ella Reeve Bloor, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Kate Richards O’Hare, Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman.

Women organized and led other social and cultural movements parallel to the labor struggles and the suffrage movement. Anti-lynching crusades were waged by heroic Black women, with the sometimes-support of suffragists and feminists. As summarized by Mary Church Terrell, “Lynching is the aftermath of slavery.” Between 1865-1895, over 10,000 Black men were killed without trial. Pretexts for this reign of terror changed over time, settling finally on avenging assaults on white Southern women. These cruel rationales were challenged and repudiated by Ida B. Wells Barnett, a Black journalist who for 40 years investigated each case of lynching and proved that lynching was a systematic campaign of economic and political terror. She was founder of the Negro Women’s club movement and challenged white women’s organizations to take a stand against lynching. She later became a founder, along with W.E.B. Du Bois, of the NAACP.

Women like Jane Adams and Lillian Wald exposed and fought the oppressive conditions in immigrant sectors of crowded cities. Women agitated for decent health care, birth control, education and child labor laws.
Racism as a prime social and cultural dividing line was born in North America, out of slavery—it was born out of greed for profit, perpetrated by deception and a monopoly of firearms, not out of biological superiority real or imagined. The notion that slavery is somehow based upon racial and cultural inferiority of African and other Third World peoples has been deeply embedded into every US institution as the chief means of brainwashing and using the white population.

John Brown is an example to us of dedication, belief in people’s power to affect history and the willingness to risk everything in the cause of liberation.

Reconstruction was one of the high points of overcoming white supremacy and racism in our history. This is why it has been written out of the history texts.

Internationalism—the commitment to unity in struggle with other people in other lands against the common enemy—does not spring automatically from a culture poisoned by slavery, internal colonization and the slaughter of the native population. It has to be fought for constantly.
The long struggle for women's suffrage was won in 1920. Women organizers worked for almost one hundred years to gain the vote, in the process transforming the consciousness of the whole country. They were opposed every step of the way. Incredible effort, militancy and patient organizing were carried out decade after decade for the basic recognition of women's humanity and role in society.

The cost paid for this victory, however, was great. The suffrage movement came to include open arguments for giving women the vote on anti-immigrant grounds and in order to maintain a white majority (since Black women would face disenfranchisement in the South). Anti-foreign and anti-Indian rationales were used by suffragists who posed the vote for enlightened, church-going women against the spectre of the coarse vicious and ignorant population of the slums. Sisters who knew better began saying that the Black question and the question of women were not related. Proposals from Black women urging fights against segregation were dismissed as "outside issues." The pact between white supremacy in the South and suffrage for women was sealed in 1903 on the issue of states' rights, when a Women's Suffrage Convention decided that locals could decide on all policy questions of membership. This insured that many suffrage associations were segregated.

By 1913, at the March on Washington for Suffrage, Ida Wells Barnett was asked not to march in the Illinois delegation, and at the final hour, six thousand Black women who applied for membership in the National Association of Women's Suffrage were told to wait because suffrage was imminent.

While many other women activists were involved in the militant social movements of the day, linking the oppression of women to a class analysis of US society, the suffrage movement became trapped in a more and more narrow fight for the vote. The victory, when it came, was rendered hollow by the compromises with white supremacy that had been made along the way.

This is a familiar pattern in US radical history. Most US radicals traditionally downplayed the Black revolution. "Problems of race" were seen as secondary to the "real" class struggle of white workers. One of the earliest unions, the National Labor Union, refused to organize Black workers. Eugene V. Debs' American Railway Union barred Black people from membership. The Socialist Party had segregated party cells in the South. Racism in the US labor movement was seldom challenged by the left.

A test for all opposition movements came with the onset of World War I. The First World War was a fight of rival imperialist powers for colonies, investments, raw materials and world hegemony. Millions of people died while the different governments experimented with germ warfare and tested out new weapons systems. Although most of the Socialist parties in the Second International supported their own governments in the war, there were major revolts against the war by workers, soldiers and poor people. The Third International was formed by Lenin in 1919 in opposition to the national chauvinism of the organized parties of the time. In the US, many individual Wobblies actively opposed the war, although the IWW did not take an active anti-war stance. Eugene V. Debs and other left-wing socialists, William Z. Foster and other labor organizers, Jane Addams, Jeannette Rankin and other women activists, all opposed the war.
The greatest event of the war years, as far as oppressed people were concerned, was the victory of the Russian Revolution in 1917. Establishment of the world’s first socialist revolution sent waves of energy thru radical movements around the world. The IWW supported the Bolsheviks. So did Seattle AFL longshoremen, who refused to load machine guns headed for the US anti-Bolshevik expeditionary force in Siberia. It was in this period that the Socialist Party split and the Communist Party formed. The example of the Bolshevik Revolution was powerful—and the capitalist fear of revolution was equally strong. The US government launched a major campaign to crush the US left forces.

The Wobblies came under intensive state attack. Organizers in Chicago were rounded up in 1918, thrown into Cook County Jail to await a conspiracy trial which then went on for months. Frank Little, a Native American and prominent Wobbly organizer was lynched in Butte, Montana in 1917 for his opposition to World War I. He and Joe Hill, legally lynched by the state of Utah in 1915, were martyrs in the Wobbly cause. The Palmer Raids hit in 1920. J. Edgar Hoover headed the “radical squad” in the Justice Department and made his reputation thru these raids. Ten thousand people were rounded up and thrown in jail. Some were tortured, many like Emma Goldman were deported. The government whipped up anti-red and anti-immigrant hysteria—a climate which led to the frame-up and murder of Sacco and Vanzetti a few years later.

The Wobblies were finally crushed. Beset by internal division and lack of effective organization, they were unable to deal with the smashing force of state repression. Some of their great leaders, like Big Bill Haywood, were forced into exile.

Gompers and the AFL leadership joined in the anti-Bolshevik campaign. They became the mouthpiece for the rulers, the labor wedge in the onslaught against US leftists. “Americanism” was once again the watchword—the enemy was the immigrant, the Black, the Mexican, the militant woman striker—all the forces of opposition. This is similar to AFL-CIO President George Meany’s “patriotic” attacks on the anti-war movement during the Vietnam War.

Attacks on the left were aimed at defusing the revolutionary movement in the wake of the Russian Revolution, and also at ensuring that US gains made during World War I could be consolidated. With its European rivals badly battered from the war, the US tightened its hold on Latin America and made aggressive moves toward China. The US entered a new era as a major world power. While opposition continued (Debs drew one million votes in the Presidential campaign of 1920), masses of people were mobilized behind the goal of expanding the empire as the sure way to prosperity. William Green, who succeeded Gompers as President of the AFL, argued that strikes were no longer needed, that imperialism would bring the US working class great economic benefits. This kind of opportunism and national chauvinism within the US labor movement helped isolate the radical forces.

Parallel to these developments was a marked increase in terror directed at the Black population. This was reflected in a wave of lynchings, organized attacks on Black communities, and the rapid growth of the Klan in the post-World War I period.

Between 1910 and 1920, over 300,000 Black people had moved
North and begun life in the cities. For years, Northern industries had refused to hire Black laborers, instead relying on the seemingly endless supply of cheap immigrant labor. But with European immigration disrupted by the war—and following on the heels of a severe depression in the cotton industry—Northern labor agents came South to recruit Black workers.

Thousands of Black workers entered heavy industry. They worked in auto, steel, ironworks and the railroads—at the toughest jobs, with the least pay and no job security. This process began the trend, which is still occurring today, of Black and Third World workers entering basic industry. This has now markedly changed the racial composition of the working class in these areas and has brought the Black liberation struggle to the industrial center of the US.

Black men also joined the segregated armed forces. Over a third of all US troops in Europe were Black. Returning home after the war, they were often the target of racial attacks—and they fought back. This trend has continued after every US war, as more and more Black men came home armed and angry. The cities were tense places, as white mobs assaulted the just-settling-in Black people. Black communities defended themselves with arms in Chicago and Washington, D.C. In the Tulsa battle of 1921, the white mayor ordered an aerial bombardment of the Black section of town. The tenacity of the Black defenders temporarily turned back the white civilian attacks.

It was under these conditions of Black people developing new urban communities and defending them, combined with a race pride and identification with African anti-colonial struggles, that the Garvey movement grew strong and a Harlem renaissance of Black music and art flowered. Marcus Garvey claimed a million members for his Universal Negro Improvement Association. This movement expressed an upsurge of Black consciousness of oppression as a colonized people. It also expressed a well-grounded lack of faith in the reliability of white allies. Garvey set up a steamship company and developed plans for an exodus to Africa. The collapse of some of these projects combined with state repression of the UNIA contributed to the organization's decline. But its spirit lived on, as evidenced in Black nationalist movements of today.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The myth that the US economy was somehow headed for continued prosperity outside the normal laws and cycles of capitalist development was rudely shattered by the Great Depression which started in 1929. From the US, it rapidly spread to the rest of the capitalist world. Only the socialist USSR remained untouched.

Production in the US fell to 60% of the previous year. At least seventeen million people were out of jobs at the worst point—over one third of the labor force. Piles of food, coffee, grain, beans were burned, dumped in the ocean, or contaminated with fuel oil, to get them off the glutted market and raise food prices, while millions went hungry. Small businesses were
ruined; teachers and professors were out on the street; farmers were forced off their farms. On the breadlines, at the Red Cross offices, at relief centers, city halls, state capitals, federal offices, the unemployed and the dispossessed began to fight back.

Veterans marching to Washington, D.C., got beaten, gassed, and thrown out of the city by troops commanded by General Douglas MacArthur, on orders from President Herbert Hoover. The Communist Party, along with the Unemployed Councils, led demonstrations and actions. When evicted tenants had their furniture dumped on the street by order of their landlords, members of the Unemployed Councils would organize and haul the furniture back into the house, often past armed sheriffs and deputies. The CP began to grow and train the organizers who later helped establish the CIO. A major campaign for unemployment insurance was launched, which in a few years led to the creation of the Social Security System.

As industry began to recover, some workers were rehired, the unemployed and students began to get jobs. Communists and other militant organizers began a drive to transform the existing company unions in the basic industries into real weapons of class struggle. Auto, steel, meat-packing, maritime trades, lumber, food-processing, were major targets.

This became the period of sit-down strikes and other direct action innovations. In Toledo, Ohio, workers and the unemployed together violated a ban on mass picketing during the 1934 strike at Autolite. The 1934 West Coast Maritime Workers' strike united several craft unions in defiance of conservative AFL leaders. The police murder of two San Francisco strikers during the first days of the strike touched off bloody battles in the city, and resulted in the San Francisco general strike.

Black people were hit hardest by the depression. Between the start of the depression and the onset of World War II, Blacks lost one third of their jobs in industry, and most of their positions in the skilled trades. In 1940, unemployment rates for northern Black people were 133% higher than for whites. In 1935, Black people in Harlem boycotted stores which refused to hire Black workers. Their slogan was “Don’t Buy, If You Can’t Work.” This campaign led to a rebellion in Harlem in the summer of 1935 after a Black youth was shot by store detectives in one of the affected stores.

In the South, Black sharecroppers engaged in major struggles some of them jointly with poor white farmers. The Alabama Sharecroppers Union helped organize the first series of protests against the Scottsboro Case, the frameup of nine Southern Black men accused of raping two white women. Meetings of the Sharecropper’s Union had to be kept secret, for fear of police terror. Ralph Gray, a Black leader of the group, was lynched by a white mob during one of the sharecroppers struggles. The sharecropper movement was the most significant upsurge in Black action and protest in the South since Reconstruction days.

This was the era of the unorganized and unskilled — those workers long excluded from the labor movement. Many of the strikers were women; many were Black. Few were organized into AFL unions. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), led by John L. Lewis, was formed in 1935, for the purpose of “organizing the unorganized” in the major industries. Communists were at the core of the CIO drives. They were great union organizers, and Lewis was realistic enough to rely on them to crack the toughest anti-union strongholds.
In the next few years, the CIO campaigns won basic rights for millions of workers. The CIO opened up its membership to Black people, breaking the "whites only" practice of most AFL craft unions. 200,000 Black workers joined the CIO in the years preceding World War II. This was a time of great unity and militancy, of life and death battles for the right to organize and picket, for union recognition, decent pay, decent working conditions, human dignity. The AFL hierarchy was pushed aside as the masses of US workers took centerstage.

In 1936, workers at the General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan, staged a forty-four day sitdown strike. This forced GM to grant union recognition and also galvanized the working class throughout the nation. A major victory was also won in 1937 in the fight to organize the steel industry.

By the end of the Second World War, the CIO no longer played this revolutionary role. Many CIO unions had enforced no-strike pledges against their membership during the war; many CIO leaders, like Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, were functioning almost within the Roosevelt administration. The CIO also had a Southern organizing committee, but never organized in the South. It backed off from the task of confronting white supremacy in Southern industry and accepted the formation of Jim Crow unions.

Reflecting their own acceptance of the privileges and ethic of the US empire, especially during the period of the World War II economic boom, and pushed by state pressure and conservative leadership, many labor unions lined up behind anti-Communism. At the 1946 CIO convention, Phillip Murray —the President of the CIO— put the finishing touches on this corruption by reading Communists out of the labor movement. Communists and left-led unions were expelled from the CIO and finally the CIO merged with the AFL. The AFL-CIO became an ardent defender of the Cold War, and its national leadership now functions, for all intents and purposes, as an arm of US imperialism. They no longer represent the unorganized, the poor and the dispossessed.

Roosevelt granted some concessions to the labor movement in order to save the system as a whole. The Wagner Act of 1935 recognized the rights of most workers to unionize. This was a victory, although the act left out the militant Chicano farmworkers in the West, as well as most industries employing large numbers of women. Roosevelt's aim was to use the power of the labor movement as a wedge in convincing a sector of the ruling class that state regulation of the capitalist system was needed to ensure stability. Roosevelt also tried to ally with the labor leadership and bring it under the wing of the US government. These were the strategic goals of the New Deal.

From the depression years until after the Second World War, the CPUSA was the main force of the organized left in the United States. The CP was in the front lines of countless struggles of the unemployed, the homeless, Southern Black sharecroppers, women textile workers —groups hit hardest and most ready to fight. Around the CP flourished a cultural upheaval: writers, painters, poets were mobilized into struggle and produced a unique people's art.

The CP stressed the special importance of Black liberation. Black people were recognized as an oppressed nation in the South (then called a
Negro nation) with the right of self-determination, which white revolutionaries were bound to support. This was a great breakthrough. Communists engaged in persistent battles against white chauvinism and white supremacy both within and outside the Party. CP organizers challenged racism in the labor movement. The CP did active work in the Scottsboro Case, making it a central part of Party work in the shops as well as in the defense committees. Many Black people joined the Party in this period: the Harlem branch was one of the biggest and most active; Black organizers were among the most effective CP spokespeople.

Communists circulated work of Black scholars and did important historical research themselves which uncovered Black and revolutionary history; this was like a flash of light. They failed, however, to analyze the culture of US empire-building within the oppressor nation, or to deal with it in practice. This became a cause of the CP's eventual political bankruptcy.

In a great demonstration of international solidarity, Communists joined the fight against fascism in Spain in 1935—nearly 2,000 people fought in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade there, and many gave their lives.

The center of the world struggle at this time was the battle to defeat fascism. But the US government, along with those of Britain and France, wanted Hitler to attack the Soviet Union and hopefully destroy it before they would enter the war against Germany. The Western imperialist powers had long isolated the Soviet Union, setting her up for Nazi attack. In 1936, Communist Parties around the world adopted the strategy of a United Front Against Fascism. Communists everywhere were urged to unite with all progressive forces in their respective countries to defeat fascism and protect the Soviet Union.

In some countries like China, the United Front strategy was applied effectively, with the Chinese Communists maintaining their own separate identity, program and army. In the US, the CPUSA submerged its identity within the CIO. It fought for economic gains, but did not keep alive a vision of socialism and revolution. It stopped fighting its own imperialism. This is opportunism. While concealment from union officials and company spies was sometimes necessary in order to work and organize, Party members retreated from doing open Communist organizing in their day-to-day work.
This made it easier for the CIO to denounce “hidden communists” in the witchhunts after the war.

In 1941, when A. Phillip Randolph organized a march on Washington for more Black jobs, the CP refused support in the name of the war mobilization effort. This was correctly viewed as desertion by Black people.

During the Second World War, the US and the Soviet Union were allied in the fight against German and Japanese imperialism. This presented a complex situation for the CPUSA. Its response was to abandon almost all its opposition to US imperialism. It failed, for instance, to condemn the imprisonment of Japanese families in concentration camps on the West Coast. It abandoned its position on the central nature of the Black liberation struggle—with Earl Browder (the wartime leader of the Party) declaring that Black people had chosen the path of integration. This was part of the CP’s betrayal of its revolutionary critique of imperialism: a new version of American exceptionalism. Browder also declared that “the Age of Imperialism has ended” in a speech at the end of World War II.

After the war, these CP policies were reversed for a while. Browder was expelled from the Party. But the changes did not last. When Cold War repression came, the CP found that its non-struggle direction could not be reversed easily. The CP had lost its capacity to fight. Tens of thousands of supporters and Party members deserted the struggle.

The CP retreated further into reform politics. It joined in the Soviet denunciations of China, renounced revolutionary violence and began supporting liberal Democrats.

It still has not done a full self-criticism of these positions or of the mistakes of the forties and fifties. This means the CP has not changed in a revolutionary way and the lessons of struggle have not been passed on for the future.

We have much to learn from the experience and wisdom accumulated over the years by CP workers of that period. The CP in its early history was a great advance in the US revolution. Its reversals and wrong directions are defeats for us all—that is why the lessons must be drawn sharply.

In the fifties the CP was hit head-on with a vicious campaign of anti-communism and counter-revolution. Truman was consolidating a base for imperial war, for a massive atomic arms race, for the invasion of Korea—by hunting and terrorizing US Communists. It was then that Richard Nixon began his political/criminal career with the Alger Hiss case. Smith Act trials jailed the Party leadership; for not cooperating with the McCarthy investigations many Communists and progressives were expelled from trade unions, lost teaching jobs, went underground, and were tormented by the FBI.

A bitter example of the US attack on internal opposition to the Cold War was the frameup and execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg in the Atom Spy case. Their murder, at the hands of the Eisenhower/Nixon government, was committed after a trial in which their socialist beliefs, anti-fascist stands, and refusal to falsely inform on friends were used as proof of conspiracy to steal the non-existent “A-bomb secret.” Hundreds of thousands of people around the world stood vigil on the night of the execution. The assassination of the Rosenbergs was meant to silence all
opposition to US imperialism.

The truth about the Rosenbergs is just today being understood —another step on the long march toward exposing the crimes of this empire and uncovering the truth about our own past.
When you deal with the past, you're dealing with history, you're dealing actually with the origin of a thing. When you know the origin, you know the cause. If you don't know the origin, you don't know the cause. And if you don't know the cause, you don't know the reason, you're just cut off, you're left standing in mid-air. So the past deals with history or the origin of anything—the origin of a person, the origin of a nation, the origin of an incident. And when you know the origin, then you have a better understanding of the causes that produce whatever originated there and its reason for originating and its reason for being. It's impossible for you and me to have a balanced mind in this society without going into the past, because in this particular society as we function and fit into it right now, we're such an underdog, we're trampled upon, we're looked on as almost nothing.  

Malcolm X
We will simply say that imperialism can be defined as the worldwide expression of the search for profits and the ever-increasing accumulation of surplus value by monopoly financial capital, centered in Europe, and then in North America. And if we wish to place the fact of imperialism within the general trajectory of the evolution of the transcendental far-ranging factor which has changed the face of the world—capital and the process of its accumulation—we can say that imperialism is piracy transplanted from the seas to dry land, piracy reorganized, consolidated, and adapted to the aim of exploiting the natural and human resources of our peoples. But if we can calmly analyze the imperialist phenomenon, we will not shock anybody by admitting that imperialism—which everything points to as being the last stage of capitalism—was a historical necessity, a consequence of the development of the productive forces and of the transformation of the methods of production in the general contour of humanity as a whole in movement. A necessity, just as the national liberation of the peoples, the destruction of capitalism, and the arrival of socialism are at present.

Amilcar Cabral
US imperialism is the greatest destroyer of human life on earth. It is a whole: an economic, political, and cultural system. It feeds on piracy of the Third World. It colonizes Black and Third World people within the US and divides, exploits, rapes and attempts to buy off poor and working people. Because of imperialism people live in shanty-towns in Saigon and Rio De Janeiro. The same system is responsible for the sub-standard conditions of one quarter of the housing in this country. US imperialism is a parasite on the Third World, and traps us in a culture of waste and death. For the benefit of imperialism we live in a society either at war or producing and preparing for war all the time.

Imperialism has its origin in the necessity for capitalism to expand or face stagnation. Imperialism is therefore the defining characteristic of modern capitalism as a whole. Its penetration into the Third World produces the conditions which give rise to movements for national liberation and socialism. It is precisely because this expansion is necessary that national liberation movements are a vital blow to imperialism.

Imperialism is on the defensive today. Wherever people reclaim control over their lives and their nation’s wealth, it removes another brick from imperialism’s foundation.
US imperialism is a stage in the development of capitalism—the monopoly stage.

Long before the present age of monopoly, capitalism was born out of the trade and commerce and empire building of the medieval world. The industrial revolutions of Europe and North America had their roots in the subjugation and looting of Africa, India, and the Americas.

In the US the end of the Civil War began a tremendous boom in industry in the North. The years between 1880 and 1900—in Britain, France, and Germany as well as here—marked the transition from competitive capitalism to the concentration of industry and finance in the hands of a few financiers and huge industrial corporations. By the turn of the century, the most basic industries were monopolized—energy, railroads, machinery, steel. The power of the banks and financiers grew to finance modernization and expansion.

The capitalist countries fought for control of the world in a series of long and costly colonial wars. The people of Africa, Asia and Latin America resisted. But eventually, skillful manipulations of divisions among the people, combined with the battleships and machine-guns of the industrial nations, prevailed over the colonies. Africa was divided up among the European countries in 1886; in Asia, France controlled Indochina while the European powers tried to divide up China; England dominated the subcontinent of India. The US, having already seized North America from the Indians and Mexico, and staked out its claim to Latin America in the Monroe Doctrine, proceeded to grab Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines from the weakened Spanish empire, began frequent military interventions into Latin America and attempted to penetrate China thru the Open Door policy.

The laws of capitalist competition, expand or perish, did not cease to operate with the triumph of monopolistic finance capital. Actually the competition was reproduced on a bigger scale and at a much greater level of tension and conflict. Modern arms and technology, thought-control and social engineering, try to disguise the facts of oppression behind the mask of neo-colonialism. Nevertheless, conquest and domination have become more devastating, and even more enormously profitable.

What causes this drive for colonial conquest and empire?

—Large companies are more efficient in exploiting labor because they are able to use their great accumulation of capital in developing technology. This leads to producing much more than can be sold domestically at a profit, since the workers can never be paid enough to buy back the product of their labor. This “crisis of overproduction” is inherent to capitalism at all stages, but intensified under monopoly capitalism. New markets must be found and new areas for investment of idle capital.

—Colonized nations hold the promise of labor at starvation wages, unorganized and easily available. The monopolist goes in search of new sources of cheap raw materials in the Third World.

—The profits of monopoly capital are so enormous that the supply of capital outstrips the profitable investment opportunities in the US. This
capital is invested in other capitalist countries, but most profitable are investments in colonies. Whole factories and branches of industry are now exported to the Third World.

—A by-product of the huge profits reaped from the Third World is the strategy (and ability) to create labor peace domestically by buying off a privileged strata of the US working people, reaching even into large sectors of the industrial proletariat.

By the 20th century, capitalism had reached the stage of modern imperialism; since the US is always competing with other imperialist nations for power, control of the Third World is not only an economic necessity, but also a political and military necessity.

---

IMPERIALISM MEANS UNDERDEVELOPMENT

The condition for the massive development of one sector of the imperialist system—the oppressor nation—is the systematic and violent underdevelopment of the other—the colonies and neocolonies of the Third World. The wealth of one is a product of the impoverishment of the other. This has involved nothing less than an unparalleled looting of the labor, resources and cultures of the people of Africa, Asia and Latin America by the imperial powers.

This begins with the very first expansions of early capitalism. For example, when the British entered India in force, the primitive textile industry of each country was at a similar stage of development. The British deliberately wrecked the Indian textile industry to force India to import British textiles. Vast amounts of Indian feudal wealth were stolen in order to provide what Marx called the “primitive accumulation of capital” in
England. Indian food agriculture was destroyed to make way for cash crops and raw materials needed for British industry. By the late 18th century, the result was the first mass famine in India. In England, the imperialists justified their rule as necessary to care for the “backward and ignorant” Indians. Rudyard Kipling and other imperial writers built elaborate justifications for British Empire which rallied generations of English people.

In Cuba, when the people lived under US neocolonial control, the entire life of the island was based on the sugar plantation system. People worked three months and spent nine months unemployed. No other industries were allowed to develop. This gave the sugar companies a ready supply of cheap labor, since the alternative for the Cuban worker was no work at all.

The most modern form of forced underdevelopment can be seen in the workings of the multinational corporations in the Third World.

The rise of the multinationals can be traced, in large part, to the post World War II growth of US empire. Over 200 US-based corporations could now be characterized as multinationals—that is, major corporations having headquarters in one country and a number of subsidiaries in other countries.

The multinationals have attempted to cultivate a liberal image. The Polaroid Corporation, for example, has defended its heavy investments in South African apartheid as the “Polaroid experiment.” Polaroid claims that it pays higher wages to South African workers than local South African industry does. But this hides the crucial point: while the multinationals, with their enormous amount of capital, research and development facilities and highly-organized sales apparatus, can pay workers a bit more, the profits they extract from this labor are even more staggering. Salvadore Allende pointed this out in his December, 1972 speech before the U.N. Describing workings of the two US-based multinational companies, Anaconda and Kennecott, he said:

These enterprises exploited Chile’s copper for many years; in the last 42 years alone taking out more than $4,000 million in profits although their initial investments were no more than $30 million. In striking contrast, let me give one simple and painful example of what this means to Chile. In my country there are 600,000 children who will never be able to enjoy life in a normal, human way because during the first eight months of life they did not receive the minimum amount of protein. Four thousand million dollars would completely transform Chile. A small part of that sum would ensure protein for all time for all children of my country.

By controlling the copper industry, Kennecott and Anaconda were able to determine how much copper would be mined and what price it would be sold for. Since copper exports account for 80% of the total value of Chilean exports, these multinationals had the Chilean economy in their greedy grasp.

The multinationals would sell raw copper to their own subsidiaries
in the US well below the world market price; in return, these subsidiaries would smelt the copper ore and sell the refined product at the going market price. Profits were thus maximized in the US—and minimized in Chile. Before the Popular Unity government nationalized the copper mines in 1971, no Chilean government could even raise the taxes on these corporations, let alone influence their production policies. Any attempts in this direction were met by Kennecott and Anaconda with cutbacks in production and wholesale layoffs of copper workers.

At the same time, the multinationals were able to pay Chilean copper workers higher wages than most other Chilean industries. They used this to attempt to create a labor aristocracy in Chile, a force to oppose the interests of other Chilean workers. AFL-CIO organizers were sent in by the US to help organize anti-communist unions.

Some of the methods by which imperialism creates underdevelopment in the Third World can be summarized as follows:

- The labor of Third World people has been stolen through slavery, super-exploited at low wages, and channeled into production meant to benefit the oppressor nation. Profits are drained from the Third World. Where reinvestment takes place within the oppressed nation, the priorities of the corporate powers determine where it will go.
- The natural resources and raw materials of Third World countries have been expropriated by the imperialist powers, particularly the US. The recent actions of the oil-producing countries and the copper-producing countries are important attempts by Third World nations to wrest back control of these resources, and with them, of their own destinies.
- Diversification of industry, real progress and rational economic growth are prevented by imperialism. Where industrialization is allowed to occur, control remains firmly in imperialist hands and, most often, consumer-oriented industries are pushed rather than agriculture or heavy industry. This keeps the "developing" country dependent on imperialist technology and aid.
-Often cash crops—like sugar and coffee—are cultivated at the expense of agricultural production which could feed the people. This is a main cause of famine and malnutrition in the world. Coffee alone is the primary economic life-blood of ten underdeveloped countries. This exploitation is maintained only through force and violence. Corporations like Kennecott, ITT, Polaroid and Exxon rely on state violence to insure their investments and continued profits. Most simply, imperialism means super-profits for US corporations at the expense of human lives and possibilities in the Third World.

IMPERIALISM MEANS RACISM AND GENOCIDE

Imperialism has intensified and spread worldwide the most virulent racist practices and ideology. Racism is built into US imperialism and imperial culture feeds on and creates racism. Racism is institutionalized as a system of control and containment, necessary to enforce the exploitation and oppression of colonized people. In the Third World, racism takes the form of cultural warfare, the displacement of populations and genocide. Imperialism perpetrates a mythology of biological and cultural inferiority. As W.E.B. DuBois describes it:

The white race was pictured as "pure" and "superior"; the Black race as dirty, stupid and inevitably inferior; the yellow race as sharing in deception and cowardice . . . everything great, everything fine, everything really successful in human culture was white.

Imperial control aims at the thorough domination and humiliation of the subjugated. Ruthless suppression of the oppressed has as its other side the practice of treating colonized women and men as children, attacking their integrity and dignity, enforcing dependency with the underlying threat of superior force.

Imperialism systematically subverts peoples' history and culture—social forms, language, art, respect for old people—everything that identifies a person in society. As with the economy, imperialist penetration cuts off the growth of the culture. It distorts the historical development of the oppressed people. The old culture is used to imprison the people and adapt them to imperialism's needs. As Fanon points out, the goal is rather a continued agony than the total disappearance of the pre-existing cultures.

The displacement of whole populations is another racist weapon of imperialism. The Bantustans of South Africa, for example, comprising 13% of South African territory, are "reserved" for the African population who are uprooted and forcibly removed to these poor quality lands. This is enforced by a rigid Polaroid-provided I.D. pass system. The Bantustans are guarded by white South African troops. From them, African men are recruited as a labor pool for the mines and factories, while women are forced into prostitution in order to survive.
Another example of the violent displacement of a whole population is the complete destruction by automated war of the society of Lao people in the Plain of Jars. Every day for five years the US carried out secret air war to destroy the social and economic infrastructure of areas governed by the Pathet Lao. The people of the Plain of Jars—with a 700-year recorded history—retreated to caves and dugout tunnels as hamlets were razed and the land made barren. Finally, under massive attack, the youth of the Plain retreated with the Pathet Lao and the remaining people were forcibly placed in refugee camps or airlifted to Vientiane to become peddlers, waitresses, maids and coolies. From 1964 to 1969 over one million Laotians were killed, wounded or made homeless by an officially denied air war.

The final weapon of racist warfare is genocide: the systematic destruction of a people, their means of subsistence and future generations. Today, the native Indian people of Brazil are being decimated by US industry and Brazilian government expansion into the Amazon basin regions. These tribal people are forced off their land, killed by raids and whiteman’s diseases, and pacified by government programs, their cultures destroyed. It has been charged that 100,000 Indians are being eliminated. The US government used genocidal weapons against the people of Vietnam: chemical and biological substances it had agreed to outlaw, which burn the flesh, cripple future generations, and obliterate growth on the land. This was intended to break the Vietnamese and to be an example to other oppressed people.
Even in the face of this terrible suffering the people resist. The culture of the colonized people survives reservations, epidemics, air war, near-genocide. The culture changes, takes on new forms to meet the changed conditions, as Black people transformed the church into a unifying center during slavery. Colonialism is not able to destroy the strong basis of the national culture. The people themselves embody it, preserve it, carry it and hand it down through generations. Imperialism encourages the rejection of the national culture and adoption of the garb and forms of the imperial culture. The neocolonial bourgeoisie which is created by imperialism often “passes” into the culture of the imperialists. But the people’s culture does not die out. It lies hidden in secret practices and in the memory of the people until the opportunity and necessity for struggle calls it into life. In the people’s culture lie the seeds of resistance and rebellion.

Movements for national liberation are often born with a popular rejection of imperial culture and a renaissance of culture of the colonized peoples: the culture contains the basis on which unity is built. The movement to reclaim and take pride in national culture gives vitality, spirit and fierceness to the political movement. This is a rejection and defeat of the racist tactics of imperialism.

Racism is imperialism’s most deadly weapon for brainwashing, controlling and mobilizing the US population in support of wars of conquest. As Fanon says, “Racism bloats and disfigures the face of the culture that practices it.” The imperialists create racial identification with one’s oppressors among the domestic white population in support of wars of conquest. They also draw on xenophobia and national chauvinism.

Racism is the chief justification for US expansion and colonial ventures. The imperial army has been rallied with vile epithets since “the only good Indian is a dead Indian” and led into conquest by men like Teddy
Roosevelt who boasted of “killing rabbits” in the war against Puerto Rico in 1898. Racism is at the root of US unconcern about the indiscriminate murder of civilians that is the horrible face of the war in Indochina. To William Calley and the perpetrators of the My Lai war crimes the unarmed Vietnamese villagers including the children were the faceless and nonhuman “enemy.”

**IMPERIALISM MEANS SEXISM**

The systematic domination of women is an underpinning of imperialism: under imperialism, the organization and fabric of society—the family, production, reproduction, and all social relations—keep women dependent and powerless. Sexism is this institutionalized and encouraged system of control. In the Third World, imperialism imposes the most brutal forms of modern sexism. Women are murdered/tortured, sterilized/raped, stifled/crippled, owned/exploited under the banner of male supremacy.

Imperialism fosters the most reactionary (backward) aspects in feudal and colonized nations, including male supremacy. The more humane aspects are suppressed. Thus, for women in the Third World, the most oppressive aspects of both imperialism and the former society are fused and intensified. Imperialism maintains and heightens the oppression of women on a global scale.

Imperialism lays claim to all the natural resources of the colonized society, including the women. They are valued and controlled as laborers, breeders, and sexual commodities.

Women are cut from the economic lifeline. Where imperialism causes rapid and forced urbanization, women are uprooted into unfamiliar cities where there is no economic activity for them—forced to be dependent on men. Sex segregation in the work force is encouraged by the imperialists. For example, in Africa, the European colonizers taught and recruited only men to use technology and to work in their factories. Women were excluded from the “modern economy.” If the woman is left behind to do field labor or work on a coffee or rubber plantation, she is also kept at the edge of subsistence, subject to an economy based on imperial needs and disruptions, where the traditional agriculture has been destroyed.

The reproductive power of Third World women is under direct attack by the imperialists. Population control and forced sterilization is now a major US strategy directed against Third World people. These massive programs are intended to prevent social upheaval by restricting population in the underdeveloped world. They have disarmed many because these programs masquerade as concern for the poor peoples of the world—just like foreign aid and military protection.

Who is behind these programs? “Family planning” for Third World women is being pushed by Rockefeller, the Ford Foundation, Kissinger, International Planned Parenthood Foundation, Protestant missionaries, and academic apologists. US agencies in the Third World have made sterilization and forced birth control programs a requirement for receiving foreign aid.
money. These programs concentrate in Latin America, parts of Africa and India and Indonesia. By 1965, 34% of all women of child-bearing age in Puerto Rico had been sterilized. Sterilization and IUDs are carried to the villages of Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti. Women are offered a lipstick or $1.50 to be sterilized. Population control has its counterparts within the US: Third World women in particular are sterilized without their consent.

This is not the first time imperialist strategy aimed at the control of reproduction. In 1945, Congress almost passed a bill to sterilize all the Japanese women in concentration camps within the US. This motion was defeated by one vote.

The same men who are responsible for US policy in Vietnam say that overpopulation creates social unrest and revolution. They claim that population control is their strategy for hunger. But such a strategy will eliminate neither hunger nor social unrest and revolution. People are not the problem. Injustice, the conditions caused by US imperialism, create revolution. So does the lack of power over our lives and the future of our children.

Women want decent birth control. Women want the choice to control our own reproduction. Instead, birth control has become a weapon of empire — Third World women are used as guinea-pigs for testing and experimentation. Instead, we get coils and pills and sterilizations under threat of losing aid or a few crumbs of welfare. This kind of coercion, for economic and racist reasons, constitutes forced sterilization. It is a direct form of genocide against the future, through the bodies of women.

Imperialism enforces a systematic terror against women. The staggering number of rapes of Vietnamese women of all ages by US soldiers, taken together, draws a picture of the intimate relationship of violence and sex under imperialism. Rape and sexual abuse is the prerogative of the conqueror, a means of undermining women’s resistance, a murderous assault, part of the arsenal of control and domination. The rape of Black slave women is one of this country’s major crimes. White men claimed the right to rape Black women, and any attempt to defend a Black woman meant death by the lynch rope. Signs of a deep love relationship between slaves led to one of them being sold; mothers and children were systematically separated.

The invader attempts to “possess” and degrade the colonized woman and, thru her, to assault the entire culture. Wherever US imperialism goes, its tourism and its armies produce mass prostitution: Havana (pre-1959), Manila, Saigon, Bangkok, San Juan. Women are used as sexual objects and discarded. There are nearly 500,000 women in prostitution in South Vietnam, leading masses of women to drugs and suicide. There are more brothels than schools. In 1969, there were 214 agencies which recruited young women from the provinces for 21,000 brothels, bars, and hotels. Operations to conform Vietnamese women to American standards of beauty became big business —women’s breasts were enlarged and their eyes rounded.

In US-built prisons in the Third World, women are tortured with the special methods developed by the CIA, AID, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. There are over 100,000 women in South Vietnamese prisons, thousands in Brazil and Uruguay. They are tortured by electric shock, beatings, drugs and sexual violence.

Women have begun to transform their lives by participation in
national liberation movements throughout the Third World. In striking opposition to their conditions under imperial and reactionary societies, women are overthrowing their oppressors and creating conditions of dignity, equality and unity. Women have become organizers, heroines, and leaders in liberation struggles... and under socialism. They are organizing the masses of women in their countries. They are opposing backward superstitions, patriarchal family relationships, polygamy, bound feet, and traditions based on the inferiority of women. Women are armed, fighting imperialism, building long-haired armies and women's militias, defending the new societies they are helping to build. They are working, learning to read, organizing health care and child care. They are implementing new marriage and divorce laws and practices around birth control beneficial to all women.

Imperialism has its origin in the necessity for capitalism to expand or face stagnation. Imperialism is therefore the defining characteristic of modern capitalism as a whole. Its penetration into the Third World produces the conditions which give rise to movements for national liberation and socialism. It is precisely because this expansion is necessary that national liberation movements are a vital blow to imperialism.

Imperialism is on the defensive today. Wherever people reclaim control over their lives and their nation's wealth, it removes another brick from imperialism's foundation.
Sexism is a cornerstone of imperialism's power to organize the population in its home base. Competition, sex and violence are unified by imperial culture and forged into a weapon against women. In the process of humiliating and dominating women, men are mobilized to be the enforcers. Sexism, like racism, is pushed to the level of fanaticism to justify an otherwise naked grab for wealth and power, and to try to ensure the loyalty of the imperial army. GI's are promised manhood and glory. Proof of manhood and sexual prowess is built around the weakness of women. Men are rallied to kill and not care. An army training cadence goes like this:

- This is my rifle (holding up his M16)
- This is my gun (hand at crotch)
- One is for killing
- The other for fun

Our movement must be involved in the fight against the domination and torture of our sisters in the Third World. We have a common enemy. The greatest male supremacists are the leading imperialists. They are Rockefeller, Moynihan, Kissinger. We cannot betray the struggle of women in general and our Third World sisters in particular. When we embrace these struggles as our own — and merge them with our own — we create a basis for revolutionary sisterhood and an international women's movement against imperialism.

NEOCOLONIALISM

The US has practiced neocolonialism for over 70 years in Latin America. But in the context of rising Third World nationalism after World War II, it became the main form of US world control. Neocolonialism removes the most glaring symbol of the subordination of the colonized, the colonial government. It grants formal political independence. At the same time, it attempts to guarantee continued dominance thru economic, military and cultural penetration.

Neocolonial economies are subordinated to the demands of the imperialists. By the sheer scale of invested capital, multinational corporations can mold these economies to fit corporate needs.

Neocolonialism trains and supports a bourgeoisie within the colonized country — not a capitalist class comparable to the one in the oppressor nations, but a class in service to and totally dependent on the imperial force which sustains it. The bastions of traditional strength such as landlords in Latin America are manipulated and strengthened. Neocolonialism relies on reactionary and militaristic forces as a bulwark against social demands from the people, and plunges the vast majority into greater poverty.
While neocolonialism is a brutal system, it contains inherent weaknesses and instability. The battles for political independence in the Third World over the last 25 years have been transforming ones, and have brought oppressed people a new sense of dignity and power. With independence came many hopes for a better life—something which neocolonialism has not provided. These popular measures have in the past forced elected governments like Goulart in Brazil or Bosch in the Dominican Republic to break with the various forms of US domination.

The most serious death-blow dealt neocolonialism in Latin America was the overthrow of the Batista regime in 1959 and the successful Cuban Revolution. From the landing of the Granma to the Bay of Pigs to the building and defense of socialism today, Fidel Castro has been the heroic and wise revolutionary leading the fight. The “first free territory of the Americas” has been a continuing inspiration to the people of Latin America and the US.

The Cuban Revolution, the only socialist revolution in our hemisphere, has grown and consolidated for fifteen years. The revolution has transformed people’s daily lives, eliminating the scourges of the Latin American continent: illiteracy, staggering rates of infant mortality and epidemic diseases, mass hunger and malnutrition, inadequate housing and unemployment. It has created popular forms of organizing revolutionary justice, taking care of people’s neighborhoods and communities, and more recently, building a worker’s movement to deepen mass participation at all levels of decision-making connected with work. The revolution has launched an offensive to transform education and culture into powerful revolutionary tools.
Cuba is a beacon for everyone in its principled and dedicated support for international revolution; Cuba has made terrific sacrifices to aid other struggles. Cuba's heartfelt support for Vietnam is unmatched anywhere. In Cuba, the whole people mobilized to produce for the Vietnamese, and volunteered to go and fight if needed. Cuba's unwavering defiance of Yanqui imperialism has encouraged other Latin American nations to confront US neocolonial policy and has been exemplary for other Latin American movements of national liberation. US revolutionaries have a special responsibility to defend the Cuban Revolution and recognize its decisive importance to the revolutionary struggle in the Americas. We support the Cuban Revolution.

The US response to any challenge to its rule has always been savage. In 1961, the imperialist Bay of Pigs invasion was turned back by the Cuban people, but the US has never ceased in its attempts to arm and build a para-military force to hurl against Cuba. The US-enforced blockade around Cuba as well as the boycott of Cuban sugar are the major attempts to destroy the revolution thru economic aggression which must be opposed and defeated by our movement. Repeated US-backed plots to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro by the participants and forces involved in Watergate have been foiled.

VIOLENT COUNTERREVOLUTION

Throughout Latin America the old neocolonial facades of "democratic alternatives" to communism have been overthrown, to be replaced by openly fascist dictatorships: Banzer in Bolivia, Pinochet in Chile, the junta in Brazil, Bordaberry in Uruguay. These counterrevolutions are the work of the Nixon-Kissinger Doctrine. The Nixon-Kissinger Doctrine means the export of fascism to the Third World. Its theme is that the US will arm, train, finance and support counterrevolution and reaction without necessarily intervening directly with ground troops in every area in which its interests are threatened. The price of the Vietnam War was too high to pay again and again. This strategy has the broad backing of the ruling class and is not affected by governmental crisis, domestic differences or Watergate.

Neocolonialism and the Nixon-Kissinger Doctrine are ultimately based on violence. The US has the most colossal military establishment the world has ever seen. Over 3000 bases encircle the globe, B-52's are always in the air, and a frightening nuclear arsenal stands ready. There are 600,000 US troops stationed abroad, even when the US is not engaged in a war. This is the ultimate threat behind each policy.

The US has been building a strong network of imperialist alliances linking Western Europe and Japan with a series of fascist governments, reactionary "junior partners" in imperialism. Thieu, the Greek junta, the Brazilian dictators, Lon Nol, the Shah of Iran, the governments of Rhodesia and South Africa are all US-backed regimes, armed against insurgents in their own countries, set up to police their respective regions. In Africa the US has increased support to Portugal, in the Mideast the US arms Israel and Jordan, in Latin America the US and Brazil have backed fascist coups in Bolivia, Uruguay and now Chile. In no way is neocolonialism a more liberal or enlightened or peaceful system of domination. Neocolonialism is Vietnamization on a world-wide scale.
ARMED AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS ABROAD 1865—Present

(World Wars are not included)
Neocolonialism does not resolve the conflicts within imperialism; it only pushes the struggle to a new stage. To revolutionaries in the Third World, it has made even clearer the necessity to carry the struggle to its final conclusion.

What does national liberation mean in the world today?
Amilcar Cabral provides a clear formulation:

The liberation struggle is a revolution . . . it does not finish at the moment when the national flag is raised and the national anthem played. A nation's national liberation is the recovery of the historical personality of that nation . . . National liberation exists when, and only when, the national productive forces are completely freed of all kinds of foreign domination.

Cabral spoke as an African revolutionary who had watched African independence turn into its opposite under neocolonialism. He argued that the immediate enemy of the people of Guine-Bissau was Portugal, but that the fight was against neocolonialism as well.

We support progressive nationalist policies or action which weaken the US empire, like Peru's nationalization of the Exxon and Cerro corporations and the Arab oil boycott. These developments are in opposition to imperialism. However, the movements we look to for leadership are those which fight for the complete freedom of the historical and productive forces from foreign domination, controlled by and for the masses of the country.

CHANGES IN WORLD POLITICS

Since the ceasefire in Vietnam the center of world conflict is not so clearly focused. Many contradictions are coming to the fore. The contradiction between the Soviet Union and China is deepening. We are studying these issues and offer the following points:

—National liberation movements and the socialist nations of the Third World are today at the center of world history, providing concrete leadership and inspiration to the world struggle. They are faced with the awesome responsibility of consolidating their victories and advancing in the face of predatory designs of US imperialism. They have the right to full self-determination; this includes the right to take aid from anyone. They are the best judges of their own needs and the realities of building socialism.

The Soviet Union has given substantial aid to liberation movements and to socialist countries like Cuba and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Soviet military aid to the Vietnamese was put to the best possible use—shooting down US bomber planes.

It is national chauvinism for US revolutionaries to attack a socialist country like Cuba for accepting Soviet aid. The same attack has been made in the past on the DRV. These "left-sounding" positions display arrogance toward the struggles of Third World nations.
—The Chinese Revolution is a wonderful development in the advance of humanity. Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party have made many important breakthroughs in developing revolutionary strategy in the semi-feudal, semi-colonial world. The thought common to Mao and Ho Chi Minh—that the central revolutionary force of our time is the oppressed nations and peoples of the world leading the liberation struggle against imperialism—is the guiding strategic principle of this era.

The Chinese have followed a popularly-based revolutionary course, educating and involving hundreds of millions of people in discussion and decisions about the economic and political direction of their country. The Chinese have also warred on their own bureaucracy. By launching the Cultural Revolution in 1966, they found a way to combat the rebirth of an exploitative class in China. The Chinese example of continuing the class struggle within socialist society has revolutionized people's vision of the possibilities of socialism.

China, a poor country, has given important political and material assistance to the Vietnamese. In 1950, Chinese volunteers joined the people of Korea to halt the US invasion. China is now helping Tanzania and Zambia build the Great Uhuru railroad, a big step in freeing Southern Africa from dependence on the transport system of the racist governments in Rhodesia and Mozambique.

—The policy of the government of the USSR, reflected in its ideological stands as well as its state practice, contains conflicting tendencies. While aiding many liberation movements, it has, since Kruschev's 20th Party Congress speech in 1956, put forward the revisionist line that "peaceful transition to socialism" is the correct path to revolution. This has been an argument against taking up arms to fight and has forced revolutionaries around the world, including ourselves, to break sharply with Communist Parties which adopted this line.

—Nixon and Kissinger have used detente as a public relations device to mystify the US people about their real intentions. Their rhetoric about "peace" in the Mideast went hand-in-hand with issuing a worldwide military alert which horrified people around the globe. Nixon used his trips to the Soviet Union and China, coming at the time of the massive bombardments of the DRV, to attempt to undermine the Vietnamese resistance. Nixon's lack of success should not obscure his purpose.

Revolutionaries everywhere work for world peace and oppose nuclear war. This is a question of particular concern to the US movement, since the US is the only country ever to have used nuclear weapons. The devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a chilling reminder of the tragic consequences of nuclear weapons in the hands of the imperialists.

Revolutionaries in the US have as our main enemy US imperialism. Defeating this enemy will require a lot of work—and is the unique contribution we can make to the world revolution.
The Nixon-Kissinger Doctrine means the export of fascism to the Third World. Its theme is that the US will arm, train, finance and support counterrevolution and reaction without intervening directly with ground troops in every area in which its interests are threatened. The price of the Vietnam War was too high to pay again and again. This strategy has the broad backing of the ruling class and is not affected by governmental crisis, domestic differences or Watergate.

Neocolonialism removes the most glaring symbol of the subordination of the colonized, the colonial government. It grants formal political independence. At the same time, it attempts to guarantee continued dominance thru economic, military and cultural penetration.

Imperialism fosters the most reactionary (backward) aspects in feudal and colonized nations, including male supremacy. The more humane aspects are suppressed. Thus, for women in the Third World, the most oppressive aspects of both imperialism and the former society are fused and intensified. Imperialism maintains and heightens the oppression of women on a global scale.

Day Care Center, People's Republic of China
THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Let's look at three areas which have been major focal points of world struggle recently: Puerto Rico, Guine-Bissau and the Palestinian liberation movement. Each is different; they each involve the full complexity and diversity of the struggle for national liberation.

PUERTO RICO

On December 14, 1973, the U.N. General Assembly overwhelmingly passed the report of the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization. This resolution buries the US claim that it has no colonies. It reaffirms the "inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence."

Puerto Rico became a US colony in 1898, after years of Spanish rule. Its people have a proud history of resistance—from El Grito de Lares, the great 1868 rebellion against Spain, to the Nationalist uprisings in the 1930's and 1950's, to the present-day resurgence both here and on the island.

The Puerto Rican people are a divided nation, with about 2,700,000 Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico and about 2,000,000 living in the US. This is the result of a conscious US strategy; its scheme to industrialize Puerto Rico in the 1950's was promoted to create a haven for US corporations seeking cheap labor and tax-free production. This led to the destruction of Puerto Rican agriculture and the forced migration of millions, pushed off the land and unable to find work in the crowded cities. Called "Operation Bootstrap," this was the widely-heralded model of the Third World. It was an attempt to destroy a nation and people for the benefit of US corporate profit.

Emigration continues to be encouraged by the US as a means of defusing Puerto Rican resistance and dealing with mass unemployment on the island. While helping to tighten US control, the forced migration has also provided a cheap labor supply for low-wage employers in the US. Sixty percent of all Puerto Rican workers in this country make less than $100 a week. They work at punishing jobs in the garment and textile industries, as secretaries, in hospitals, and as migrant labor on capitalist farms under the most inhumane conditions. Low pay goes hand-in-hand with staggering unemployment rates—the permanent condition of the reserve army of labor.

Characterized by both special oppression and strategic importance, Puerto Rico has a unique relationship to US imperialism. Puerto Rico is the fifth largest market for US goods in the world; over one half of all US investments in Latin America are there—a staggering figure of $6,800,000,000. Eighty-five percent of Puerto Rico's industrial capital, one of the keys to a country's development, is in the hands of North Americans. San Juan bears the tell-tale mark of empire—prostitution, hotels, gambling, slums.

Puerto Rico is the military center for the US in the Caribbean. There are two nuclear weapons bases and 13% of the best arable land is used for US military purposes. Troops from the island were used in Panama in 1964 and the Dominican Republic in 1965. This military presence is a
warning to all Puerto Ricans and a threat to the rest of the Caribbean, particularly socialist Cuba.

One of the chief examples of Puerto Rico's colonial relationship to the US is the superport: a petrochemical and mineral processing complex which US-based multinational oil companies, the Puerto Rican colonial government and the Nixon administration are proposing to build in Puerto Rico. The complex is due to be finished over the next 25 years. Its completion would mean the physical destruction of Puerto Rico as a nation. More rich agricultural land than ever would be destroyed, and the area around the plants would become a vast wasteland. The devastation from oil spills would be incalculable. Estimates are that as many as one million Puerto Ricans would be forced to leave the country. The attempt to stop the superport is a major focus of the Puerto Rican independence movement.

When we look at the importance of Puerto Rico to the US, we can begin to understand the historic significance of the Puerto Rican movement. The Puerto Rican nation will not die. It is born again and again thru the culture and the struggles of the people on the island, and the people here.

Living in the barrios of major cities, mostly on the East Coast, Puerto Ricans in the US are subjected to many attempts to destroy their culture and their nation. The economic basis of the Puerto Rican community—low-skill jobs and small bodega ownership—is increasingly shaky. Puerto Ricans face conditions of rotten housing, poor health care, brutal police treatment and institutionalized racism. Colonialism is at work in the schools. Puerto Rican children are denied the dignity of their nation's history and language, not taught to read, and tracked into useless "general diploma" programs.
Against this background the Puerto Rican nation re-emerged inside the US too. In Dec. 1969, the Young Lords took over a church in Spanish Harlem and invited “All New York” to the People’s Church. Puerto Rican communities were stirring, many fronts were opened up: the struggle for people’s control of Lincoln Hospital in New York City, where Blacks and Puerto Ricans were being abused daily; the ongoing battle for genuine community control of the schools of District One in New York; the continuing day-to-day work of groups like El Comité around tenants’ and welfare rights; the fight to free political prisoners like Martin Sostre, Gabriel and Francisco Torres, and the Nationalist fighters; the defense of Carlos Feliciano and Pancho Cruz.

The present-day resistance has its roots in the movements and the fighters who have come before: in Don Pedro Albizu-Campos, the great Nationalist leader; in Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores and Andres Figueroa Corderó, still in jail after twenty years imprisonment for the armed attack on the US Congress in 1954; in Oscar Collazo, another Nationalist fighter who remains in prison for the attempted assassination of Harry Truman in 1950.

Many forces and organizations now carry on the struggle. The U.N. resolution was presented by the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). The PSP was invited as an observer to the recent Non-Aligned Nations Conference in Algiers. The Puerto Rican movement has continued its armed resistance to US imperialism through the actions of the Armed Commandos of Liberation (CAL) who have attacked US-owned companies and the Condado Hotel strip, center of US tourism. Within the US, MIRA—an armed revolutionary Puerto Rican group—has attacked many businesses and large stores.

The Puerto Rican movement is a living bond to national liberation struggles in Latin America, an explosive threat to US power. As it continues to grow stronger and more forceful, activists from every movement are pushed to give concrete support through action and organizing. Learning the history of Puerto Rico, understanding and supporting the Puerto Rican movement, and learning to speak Spanish—the people’s language—are all necessities for movement organizers in the US.

INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE!
FREE ALL PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS!
STOP THE SUPERPORT!

INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE!
FREE ALL PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS!
STOP THE SUPERPORT!
GUINE-BISSAU

Guine-Bissau is a small country of 800,000 people on the West coast of Africa. It was from her shores that Portugal initiated the notorious West African slave trade over four hundred years ago. Since 1963, a fierce people's war has been waged by the forces of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC). They have been fighting and defeating over 35,000 Portuguese troops who have been armed, supplied and trained by the US and other NATO powers.

On September 24, 1973, Aristides Pereira, Secretary-General of PAIGC, declared Guine-Bissau independent from Portuguese rule. He announced that the new Republic of Guine-Bissau would continue to battle the Portuguese soldiers on its territory and would also press for the liberation of the Cape Verde Islands. Soon after, the U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to extend recognition to the new nation. The US, along with South Africa, Portugal and Israel, opposed the resolution. Eighty-two nations have now formally recognized the new government.

Revolution has profoundly changed Guinean life. PAIGC has liberated almost three-fourths of the countryside. Many people now attend schools in places where no schools existed before. Health care has become a priority in a country where only one hospital was built by Portugal in over one hundred years. Women have assumed a central role in the revolutionary process, breaking from the limits and oppression of the colonial past. Liberation continues to flower in the midst of battle —this is what PAIGC calls "building the revolution as we fight."

Amilcar Cabral was the leader of PAIGC until his assassination by Portuguese agents in January 1973. Cabral was a powerful, unifying spokesperson for all the African liberation movements. He was one of the truly great, original revolutionary theorists of this era, a dedicated fighter in the cause of liberation. His murder was a cruel blow to Africa and to the world revolution.

Guine-Bissau is the first Portuguese colony to declare independence. Its liberation struggle has had an effect in Africa similar to the worldwide effects of the Vietnamese struggle. It has been a catalyst for the movements in the other Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, and has spurred the rise of revolution throughout Southern Africa. At the same time, the liberation movements have won more open support from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which represents a broad range of African states.

In Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has liberated one third of the land —territory inhabited by one million Angolans. In Mozambique, the guerrillas of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) have launched a powerful new offensive against the centers of Portuguese power. FRELIMO forces have crossed the Zambezi River, the supposedly impenetrable natural defense line of Portugal in Mozambique. They have challenged Portugal’s planned operation of the huge Caborra Bassa Dam on the Zambezi River. Combined with attacks on the strategic railway between landlocked Rhodesia and the Mozambican port of Beira, these FRELIMO operations have shaken Portugal’s hold on the country.