



A BRIEF HISTORY

of the

UNITED STATES

Shih Chan

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translated by

the Chinese Translation Group

TRANSLATORS' FOREWORD

Shih Chan's *Brief History of the United States* is one pamphlet in a series of "Readings for Historical Understanding," read by workers and peasants in China. Other titles in the series include more specific periods in U.S. history, as well as important developments in the international communist movement and Third World history.

For quotes in the text, we have cited references to English-language texts rather than to the Chinese-language texts cited in the original. We have also added references for other quotes for which the original gave no reference. Explanatory footnotes are from the original unless otherwise noted. The illustrations were chosen by us, and did not appear in the original Chinese pamphlet.

Our first priority has been to be as faithful as possible to the original text, and our second to render the translation into readable English. However, there are still shortcomings in the translation, and we encourage readers to point these out as well as to give us comments and suggestions.

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I. THE COLONIAL ERA

The Indians were the original masters of the North American continent, working and living there for generation upon generation. In 1492 the navigator Columbus (1451-1506) discovered the American continent, which "opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie."¹ The mystical power of gold urged Europe's greedy colonialists of Spain, Holland, France and England across the Atlantic, crowding in one after the other.

The various colonial countries launched fierce struggles to grab North American colonies. By 1733, England had already occupied a narrow strip from the Atlantic Ocean west to the Appalachian Mountains. The Seven Years' War² of the mid-18th century ended more than a hundred years of war between France and England, both contending for hegemony on the North American continent. Canada and the broad expanse of territory west of the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River fell into English hands. Nevertheless, the most important part of the English colonies in North America were the 13 colonies along the Atlantic coast.

These 13 colonies were: Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Connecticut and Rhode Island. England established a provincial assembly in each colony and raised a colonial army. Due to natural conditions, and for social, economic and other reasons, the economic development of the colonies gradually moved in different directions: the northern seacoast became the center of a fishing and shipbuilding industry; the central part fostered a small agricultural economy; and the south developed a relatively advanced plantation economy. The capitalist economic system in England's North American colonies, and especially its rapid growth in the northeastern colonies, inevitably led to the North American colonies' final desire to proceed toward political independence.

Britain's North American colonial society was like a pyramid: at the pinnacle were foreign merchants and a landlord class; at the bottom were the exiles from Europe's

wars, the poor, those people of various strata who suffered religious persecution, black slaves transported from Africa, and the Indians. From the moment the European colonists set foot on the North American continent, they forcibly occupied Indian land and carried out brutal treatment and genocide against them. The colonists also fostered a barbaric slave system. Many poor immigrants sold themselves into slavery. The system of black slavery, beginning when the first black Africans were brought to Virginia in 1619, was especially widespread. By the beginning of the 18th century, there were altogether 60,000 black slaves in the 13 colonies; by 1775, they had increased to 500,000 and comprised 20 percent of the total population. The slave owners treated these black slaves as beasts of burden and could sell or kill them at will. The major sources of primitive capital accumulation³ in the colonies were pillaging and slaughtering oppressed Indians, selling blacks and forcing black and white slaves to perform hard labor. The North American social pyramid was nothing more than the heaped up bones of the people of the colonies.

Wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. In 1676, a peasant uprising led by Nathaniel Bacon broke out in Virginia. In 1689, a people's uprising led by Leisler in New York held political power for two years. Although the numerous people's uprisings and peasant struggles of these years suffered defeat, they nevertheless dealt a profound blow to British colonial rule and shook Britain's hegemonic position in North America, pushing forward the wheel of history.

II. THE NORTH AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Britain's cruel exploitation and oppression of the North American colonies was intended to make the colonies completely dependent on the metropolitan country and to make the colonial economic system entirely serve its interest. Economically, the British colonialists controlled the commerce, suppressed the industry and restricted the territory of the North American colonies. This kind of repressive colonial policy not only dealt blows against the working people of the colonies, but also harmed the interests of the commercial and landlord classes, pushing them to join in common opposition to British rule. The national contradiction between the people of all strata of the colonies and the British rulers grew sharper. The whole society was like a tinderbox which needed only a spark to set the fire roaring.

After the Seven Years' War, the British treasury was nearly empty, and the British government attempted to pass its national debt onto the backs of the people of the colonies by squeezing them even more oppressively. The British government announced restrictions on the colonists' movement west of the Appalachian Mountains, levied heavy revenue stamp taxes and passed a series of other statutes to oppress the people of the colonies. This aroused even greater anger and hatred. They strongly demanded the breaking of the chains that the British mother country had imposed on them, and resolved to fight for national liberation and independence. The waves of the movement quickly engulfed the thirteen colonies.

In March, 1770, the British colonialists perpetrated the Boston Massacre, opening fire on a totally unarmed mass demonstration, and relations between the colonies and the British mother country became even worse.

In 1774, the British rulers announced five new decrees in an attempt to intensify the suppression of the people of the colonies. The new high-pressure policy mobilized colonists of the various classes. The internal contradictions within the

colonies tended to slacken, gradually approaching unity toward the outside, and an anti-British front gradually formed.

In September, 1774, representatives of the North American colonies convened the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. At the Congress, Patrick Henry, a delegate from Virginia said that Britain's tyrannical rule had obliterated the borders between the colonies. "Henceforth we are no longer Virginians, but Americans," he said. With popular support, the progressive delegates defeated the conservatives. The people of Boston had already organized armed groups, and this gave even greater support to the progressives' arguments. The anti-British front was consolidating.

On the night of April 18, 1775, the armed people of Lexington and Concord fired the first shot in the War of Independence, raising the curtain on the anti-British revolution. The sound of guns in Boston aroused patriotic enthusiasm; the people of various areas fought shoulder to shoulder, took up weapons in droves, organized people's militias, and hastened to the battlefield. Within a few days more than 200,000 people's militia had gathered on the outskirts of Boston. In May, the Second Continental Congress was held in Philadelphia. The bourgeois democrats Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) were both delegates. Urged by the masses of the people, this Continental Congress decided to raise a volunteer army, issue paper money and purchase munitions from abroad as well as reorganize the people's militia into a "Continental Army" commanded by the wealthy Virginia plantation owner George Washington (1732-1799). He made contributions by his leadership of the revolutionary war for North American independence.

In the course of the people's struggle, it was extremely necessary to create revolutionary public opinion to unite the people, smash the enemy, clear away ideological obstacles and achieve a revolutionary victory. Thomas Paine (1737-1809), a cultural fighter and the son of an indentured servant⁴ in exile from Europe, published a small pamphlet called "Common Sense" in January, 1776. He said provoca-



The Green Mountain Boys of Vermont were one of many guerrilla bands who fought in the War of Independence.

tively that the time for discussions was already over and the issue could now be settled only with weapons. His declaration was directed against contemporary conservative elements, and it powerfully promoted the fighting will of the people to strive for independence and freedom.

The revolution progressed toward high tide. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress passed the Declaration of Independence, which was drafted by Jefferson and his group. The Declaration held that all people are born equal, with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that the power of rulers comes from the consent of the ruled; that the overthrow of an old government and establishment of a new one is a legal process for which arms must be used when necessary. This was the first call by the bourgeoisie for national independence and democratic freedom, and Marx called it "the first Declaration of the Rights of Man."⁵ By formally announcing to the whole world that America would leave Britain and become independent, the Declaration of Independence marked a new stage in the North American War of Independence. The original 13 colonies in North

America became at that time the first 13 states of the United States of America, and July 4th became the national day of the United States.

After the Declaration of Independence the United States was "independent" only on paper. The North American colonists went through five years of bitter and bloody warfare before they forced Cornwallis, the commander of the British colonial army, to surrender at Yorktown on October 19, 1781. The formal establishment of the United States of America came only when England recognized the independence of the 13 North American colonies in a treaty signed between the two countries in Paris in 1783.

The North American War of Independence was a war in which a weak country defeated a strong one, a small country defeated a big one. At that time England occupied the superior position as the world's first great industrial nation, with a population of 30 million; the armies they sent to America were 90,000 men strong, all equipped with fine weapons. The North American colonies were in a completely inferior position, with a population of only three million and a backward economy. With only a few muskets, a few guerrilla bands and a few militia units, at first they lost many battles and much territory. But because it was a just war, the broad masses of the people mobilized and expanded the guerrilla war. Not fearing the British ruthlessness, and holding fast to the end, the colonists finally defeated the British Empire and created the first independent bourgeois republic in America.

The victory of the North American War of Independence cannot be separated from the sympathy and support of people throughout the world. Many progressive Europeans spontaneously organized armies of volunteers to help, and the colonists sent Benjamin Franklin to Europe as a special envoy to carry out diplomatic activities. Carefully using the contradictions between other nations and England, he elicited expressions of sympathy for the colonists' revolutionary struggle from France and other countries, which created international conditions favorable for the victory of the war for independence. As Lenin pointed out:

In their arduous war for freedom, the American people also entered into 'agreements' with some oppressors against others for the purpose of weakening the oppressors and strengthening those who were fighting in a revolutionary manner against oppression, for the purpose of serving the interests of the oppressed *people*. The American people took advantage of the strife between the French, the Spanish and the British; sometimes they even fought side by side with the forces of the French and Spanish oppressors against the British oppressors . . .⁶

This passage strongly affirms the revolutionary historical experience of the American people.

The North American War of Independence was a great historical event. It overthrew Britain's colonial control over North America and established the American bourgeois republic, liberating the forces of production in the United States and clearing the road for the development of capitalism. Lenin pointed out, "the history of modern, civilized America opened with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars . . ."⁷ Internationally it stimulated the bourgeois revolution in France, promoted democratic reforms in England and influenced the bourgeois revolutions in all the countries of Europe, leading Marx to write in *Capital*, "in the 18th century, the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle-class."⁸ The War of Independence also provided great inspiration to national independence movements throughout the Americas.

Laboring people, including workers (mainly workers in handicraft industry), farmers and the urban petty bourgeoisie were the fundamental force which brought victory in this war. U.S. independence was achieved by the selfless sacrifices and bitter struggles of the masses of the people; and while they also participated, the bourgeoisie and the landlords vacillated. The democratic faction of the bourgeoisie, represented by such men as Jefferson, Franklin, Paine and Washington, led the war; but the fruit of the revolution was seized by the bourgeoisie and the slave owners. With the land problem and the slave problem left unsolved, working people encountered brutal oppression and exploitation. As class contradictions became steadily sharper, their lives grew more

bitter and they even gradually lost the democratic rights they had won in the war. In 1786, under the leadership of Daniel Shays (1748-1825), a hero in the War of Independence, the farmers of Massachusetts staged an armed rebellion which won sympathy from the common people of the cities. They organized an enormous army of farmers, surrounded the state legislature and attacked the armory, posing a serious threat to the state government. Even in the face of brutal repression organized by the merchants and landowners, Shays held out for several months of fighting. This farmers' uprising struck at the reactionary faction of the landlord capitalist class and stimulated the struggle of the broad people and the democratic faction of the bourgeoisie for democratic freedom.

After the War of Independence, and particularly after Shays' rebellion, the bourgeoisie felt more and more strongly the need to further consolidate their position and protect the fruit of the victory. For this purpose they launched a constitutional movement, calling a constitutional convention in Philadelphia in May 1787, where they ratified a federal constitution. The constitution made the separation of powers⁹ the basic organizational principle for the state. The president controls all executive powers and has authority over the military, becoming commander-in-chief in wartime; he also has veto power over the legislature. The Congress is the legislative organ and is composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Supreme Court is the highest judiciary organ. Adapted to the needs of the bourgeoisie for conditions favorable to their control, the constitution naturally could not reflect the needs and demands of the broad working people. Jefferson and others from the bourgeoisie's democratic faction opposed this constitution. Under popular pressure and influenced by the French revolution, ten amendments concerning human rights were added to the constitution in September, 1789, guaranteeing such rights as freedom of speech, press and assembly. The amended U.S. constitution was more progressive than before, but this could not change its fundamental nature as the legal tool of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

In 1789 Washington took office as the first president of the United States.

From 1801 to 1808, the third president, Thomas Jefferson, was in power. He developed bourgeois democracy and stimulated the expansion of U.S. capitalism. Because he carried out an independent foreign policy, relations between the U.S. and England worsened steadily, until war finally broke out between the two countries in June, 1812. This was the United States' second war for independence from Britain, and final victory was won in 1815. Through this war, the U.S. threw off all economic dependence on England, transforming its economy from a semi-colonial one into an independent and autonomous one. From this point on, the U.S. entered the period of developing capitalism.



Mary Ludwig Hays ("Molly Pitcher") took her husband's place as a cannoneer in the Battle of Monmouth, N.J. (1778)

III. THE CIVIL WAR

U.S. capitalism developed continuously after the War of Independence.

In 1807 the U.S. began its industrial revolution, taking advantage of new technical achievements from the advanced European capitalist countries and introducing newly developed means of production. This caused the cotton textile industry to develop first, followed by the coal industry and by some development in the machine, vehicle building and leather industries. In 1860, the year before the Civil War, the value of U.S. industrial production reached \$1,885 million, nearly ten times more than in 1810 and ranking fourth in the world after England, France and Germany.

To cope with the requirements of rapid capitalist development, the U.S. began early in the 19th century to carry out territorial expansion to the west. Driving out and slaughtering the native Indian peoples, the U.S. used force and guile to acquire huge territories from the hands of others. In 1803, the U.S. took advantage of Napoleon's¹⁰ setbacks in his aggressive wars and "bought" the Louisiana territory from France for \$15 million, acquiring an area of approximately 2.15 million square kilometers. In 1810 the U.S. sent armed settlers to occupy the Spanish colony in western Florida and in 1818 sent troops to take eastern Florida. In the next year Spain was forced to accept \$5 million "compensation," and "cede" this territory to the U.S.

The Monroe administration (1817-1825) made much headway in capitalist development and territorial expansion. In 1823, President Monroe proclaimed the "Monroe Doctrine," which opposed intervention by members of the European "Holy Alliance"¹¹ in Latin America's internal politics. It introduced the slogan "America for the Americans." At the same time this revealed the expansionist designs of rising U.S. capitalism. In 1846, the threat of war was used to force England to give up the Oregon Territory south of the

49th parallel. In order to gobble up Mexican territory, the U.S. provoked war with Mexico (1846-1848). Through this war, the U.S. took a large piece of Mexican territory, including the areas of Texas, New Mexico and California. In 1853, the U.S. "bought" the Gila River basin area on the southern edge of Arizona for \$10 million. In this manner, its territory increased from an area of approximately 2.3 million square kilometers in 1785 to over 7.7 million square kilometers. Territorial expansion brought the U.S. bourgeoisie larger markets and sources of raw materials and food, stimulated advances in industry, communications and transportation, and in general provided favorable conditions for the uninterrupted development of capitalism.

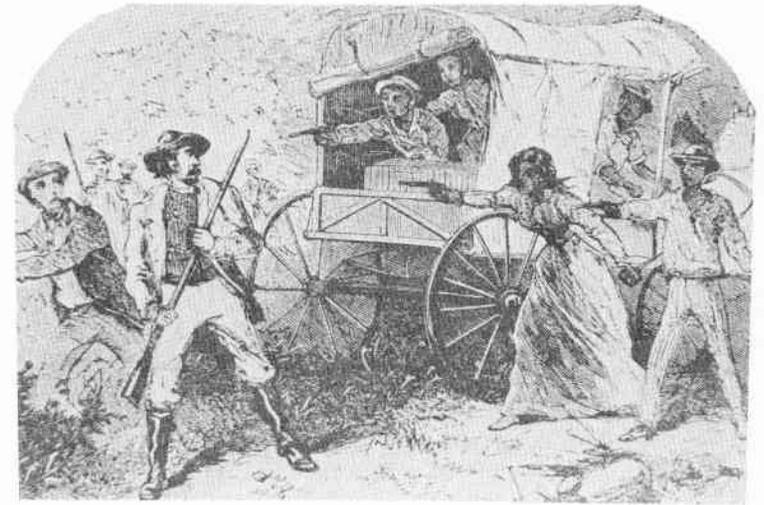
Within a few decades, the U.S. economy underwent a truly astonishing transformation. Yet the development of the economies of the North and South ran progressively counter to each other. In the north a capitalist system based on wage labor took shape; in the south, however, there was a slave system based on slave labor. As capitalism developed, the conflict between the two kinds of social systems intensified. The slave system was an obstacle to developing capitalism, and the growing contradiction between the two kinds of economic systems led to political conflict and finally to the outbreak of the civil war. Marx pointed out:

The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, between the system of slavery and the system of free labor. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other.¹²

It is significant that as capitalism developed, a labor movement gradually arose. From its beginning, the U.S. proletariat suffered a miserable life under bourgeois exploitation. At first the young proletariat was under the influence of the utopian socialists. In 1825, Robert Owen¹³ personally set up the village of New Harmony in Indiana. In the 1840's followers of Charles Fourier¹⁴ set up about 40 "phalanxes," the most famous of which was Brooks Farm near Boston. The German utopian egalitarian communist Weitling, the

“true socialist” Herman Kriege and others also carried out propaganda and experiments. Although these utopian schemes went bankrupt in the midst of capitalism, the U.S. proletariat never ceased its struggle against the bourgeoisie. After Weydemeyer, a close comrade-in-arms of Marx and Engels, brought Marxism to the U.S., the proletariat became steadily more conscious. Weydemeyer arrived in 1851 and in June 1852 set up the Proletarian League in New York, the first Marxist organization in the United States. In October of 1858 he established the Communist Club, which later entered the First International. As the U.S. proletariat gradually became an independent political force and entered the political arena, the struggle against the bourgeoisie expanded further.

Before the war, blacks in the South numbered 4.2 million, and the question of whether to abolish or preserve black slavery was a burning issue in the political struggles of that time. U.S. working people, farmers and progressive intellectuals were resolutely opposed to the evil slave system. Beginning in the 1830’s, they launched a widespread abolitionist movement and organized an “underground railway” (a secret transport network) to help slaves escape. In 1851 and 1852, two famous novels were published exposing the slave system. One was *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Even though the novel shows feelings of bourgeois humanism and is colored by religion, it nevertheless describes to a certain extent the inhuman life of the black slave. The book expresses true sympathy with black people and fierce opposition to slave owners, and had a profound influence in arousing public opinion. The other novel was *White Slave* by Richard Hildreth, which definitively exposed and castigated the system of racial prejudice and warned the ruling class: “Day by day, and hour by hour, as the chain becomes weaker, so the disposition and the power to snap it become stronger.”¹⁵ During this period there were repeated uprisings against the slave system, of which the best known was the 1859 uprising of black and white people led by John Brown (1800-1859). But the badly outnumbered band was defeated, and Brown was wounded and captured. Before his execution he wrote: “I, John Brown, am quite certain that the crimes



Escaped blacks defended their freedom during passage on the Underground Railroad. (From an actual event in Virginia, December 1855.)

of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.”¹⁶

The Republican Party was established in 1854 on the foundation provided by the growing abolitionist movement. It represented the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie and heads of agricultural enterprises in opposition to the Democratic Party (established in 1828), which at that time served the interests of the slavemasters. Its founding stimulated contemporary struggles against the slave system. The Republican Party’s most famous activist, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), had already declared his opposition to slavery in a public speech. In 1860, as a candidate of the Republican Party, he was elected the 16th president. Viewing Lincoln’s presidency as against their interests, the southern slave owners caused a split and launched an insurrection. At the end of 1860, South Carolina left the union, and soon, one after the other, 11 southern states announced their secession,

organized a confederation and set up a new government. They elected a large slave owner, Jefferson Davis, as President of the Confederacy and set the capital at Richmond, Virginia. At that time there were two presidents in the United States, two congresses and two armies. Soon a large-scale civil war broke out.

In May, 1862, the Lincoln government promulgated the Homestead Act, which allowed farmers who had plowed unowned western lands continuously for five years to receive 160 acres of land free. In September the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, which provided that from January 1, 1862, all slaves within the states who had left the Union would be considered free and could join the Union army. Within a short period over 186,000 Black people had joined the Northern combat troops. They fought bravely and sacrificed greatly: on the average one out of every three black soldiers sacrificed his life for liberation. The United States proletariat played an outstanding and positive role in this war. According to incomplete statistics, between 500,000 and 750,000 Northern working people were enlisted in the army, half of the total number of working people. The famous labor leader Weydemeyer personally participated in the war as a leader.¹⁷ The great revolutionary leaders of the proletariat Marx and Engels paid close attention to this war. Due to the wide support of the broad working people and the encouragement of the international proletariat, the Northern army achieved final victory in the summer of 1865.

The Civil War of 1861-1865 was the second bourgeois revolution in United States history.

The authors of the Marxist classics gave a very high assessment of the United States Civil War. Marx said: "As in the 18th century, the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle-class, so in the 19th century, the American Civil War sounded it for the European working-class."¹⁸ The Civil War crushed the power of the slaveholder, put the industrial bourgeoisie in a dominant position and opened up a vast road for the development of U.S. capitalism. The Civil War not only created the conditions for national unity but also swelled the

tide of the labor movement and raised the level of organization and consciousness in the working class. Trade union organizations were rapidly established during the Civil War period, raising such slogans as the "eight-hour day" and "equal pay for equal work." Internationally, the war caused the European working class to recognize the necessity for establishing an international organization to carry on political as well as economic struggles. The working class of all countries upheld the slogan, "Workers of the world unite!" by which they declared: struggles for freedom and for work are the same throughout the world. The First International pinned its hopes on the Civil War, believing that only the destruction of the slave system would lead to the expansion of bourgeois democracy in the United States and Europe. Only then could the whole world labor movement be furthered. Lenin pointed out that the Civil War had an "immense world-historic progressive and revolutionary significance."¹⁹ However, after fulfilling its democratic revolutionary role, the U.S. bourgeoisie soon discredited the people's revolutionary victory, betraying the revolutionary principles of the Civil War so that black people were prevented from being truly liberated. After the war, black people did not receive land, but were forced to work the fields for the slaveholder or to labor for factory owners. The plantation owners also implemented so-called "Jim Crow laws."²⁰ Severe racial prejudice and oppression still existed. Thus Lenin said:

... the American bourgeoisie ... having "freed" the Negroes, took good care, under "free," republican-democratic capitalism, to restore everything possible, and do everything possible and impossible for the most shameless and despicable oppression of the Negroes.²¹

IV. THE RISE OF UNITED STATES IMPERIALISM

After the Civil War, U.S. industrial production expanded rapidly, developing especially fast around the turn of the 19th century. At this time, the U.S. began to move from “free” capitalism toward the stage of imperialism.

After the end of the Civil War U.S. capitalism developed rapidly in agriculture and industry as follows: during the 40 years from 1860 to 1900 the total area under cultivation doubled; the number of capitalist farms also doubled. From 1860 to 1894, the total value of U.S. industrial production increased four times, moving in one jump from fourth to first place in the world, producing one-third of the world’s manufactured goods. Production and capital rapidly became concentrated; factory workers increased by 23 percent, yet the number of factories only increased by one percent. In the process of passing through the brutal capitalist competition and the economic crises of 1873, 1883, and 1893, middle and small enterprises continually went bankrupt, and wealth and capital ended up in the hands of a tiny number of financial groups. Thus the railroad king Vanderbilt, the oil king Rockefeller, the steel king Morgan, and the automobile king Ford monopolized over 80 percent of the production in these four key industries, some even reaching 95 percent. The Rockefeller group’s Standard Oil Company, founded in 1870 and reorganized in 1879 as a trust, controlled almost all of the American oil companies. It also possessed railroad, steamship, coal mining and coke making firms. Such huge trusts made up only one percent of the nation’s business enterprises in 1909, but they actually controlled one-half of the gross national product. Lenin therefore considered the United States the prototype of trust imperialism.

Not only industry but banking as well developed toward concentration and monopoly. Banking and industrial capital combined to form finance capital, producing a financial oligarchy. At the beginning of the twentieth century eight large financial groups had already appeared: the Morgan group, the Rockefeller group, the Kuhn-Loeb group, the



Mellon group, the DuPont group, the Chicago group, the Cleveland group, and the Boston group. There were 60 families.²³ Together they literally manipulated the economic life of the whole country, controlling the government and determining both its external and internal policies.

The two-party system arose during this period. The Republican Party, capitalizing on their leadership in the Civil War victory, remained in power for 24 years, until Grover Cleveland of the Democratic Party became president in 1885. All later U.S. governments were formed from these two parties in alternation. Engels had already pointed out:

... we find here two great groups of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the State machine, and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends—and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants but in reality exploit and plunder it.²⁴

The two-party system is only a method of protecting the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Both parties in political power ruled by violence, brutally exploiting and oppressing

workers, black people, and the broad laboring masses. This could only provoke the development of internal class struggles.

Monopoly capitalism is plunder. By the mid-nineteenth century, the U.S. had largely reached the end of its territorial expansion on the mainland, so it turned the spearhead of aggression overseas. The U.S. was a latecomer as an imperialist country; so, when it began to intensify its efforts to expand and to seize colonies and spheres of influence, it found the rich banquet table of capitalism already crowded with all sorts of jackals and vultures. American imperialism bided its time, waiting for the moment to move and begin the war to redivide the world. In 1867, the United States took advantage of Russia's weakness as a result of the Crimean War²⁵ and the tension between Russian and England to "buy" Alaska and the Aleutian Islands from the czar for \$7,200,000. It also occupied Midway Island. In 1898, the U.S. chose to fight Spain, the weakest among the old colonial empires, beginning the first imperialist war, the Spanish-American War. After Spain was defeated, the U.S. seized the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam, and also annexed Hawaii in the same year. Spain recognized the independence of Cuba, but in reality Cuba became a protectorate of the United States. The Spanish-American War expedited the completion of the monopolization of U.S. capitalism, and was the beginning of large-scale U.S. imperialist aggression abroad.

In Latin America, the Monroe Doctrine became the signpost for U.S. monopoly capitalism's colonial expansion. In 1890, the U.S. imperialists organized the Pan-American Union, hastening the transformation of Latin America into the "back yard" of the United States. Theodore Roosevelt (president from 1901-1908) brandished his "big stick" to obtain sole rights to develop the Panama Canal; then, in 1908, he instigated a coup, resulting in Panama's secession from Colombia, and the U.S. occupation of the Panama Canal. In 1911 Taft (1909-1912), using dollar diplomacy, signed a loan agreement with Nicaragua and Honduras, seizing the rights to customs duties, railway and steamship transportation.



The combined armies of the Sioux and Cheyenne defeated Custer at the Little Big Horn, Montana on June 25, 1876.

By conquest and purchase—paying only about \$87 million in "compensation"—the U.S. acquired 7.07 million square kilometers of land in one century, more than three times its territory at the time of the Revolutionary War. By 1912 there were already 48 states, and the addition of Alaska in 1958 and Hawaii in 1959 brought the number to the present total of 50.

But let us return to the past. In the Far East, the spearhead of American aggression was aimed at China. In 1844 the U.S. forced the Ch'ing government to sign the Wanghsia treaty—the first unequal treaty between the two countries—by which it seized many special rights as an invader. In 1899 the U.S. imperialists proposed the infamous "Open Door Policy" to the other major powers, demanding that they open their spheres of influence in China to the U.S., and in 1898 U.S. troops were part of the eight-nation army which suppressed the Boxer Rebellion. Around the time of the Russo-Japanese war, the U.S. plotted to seize the rich resources in the northeastern part of our country, shifting from support of Japan against czarist Russia to competition with Japan after

the war. The 1908 agreement between the two countries dealt with the question of aggression toward China by leaving both free to plunder.

The rise of U.S. imperialism brought serious hardships to the working class and other working people.²⁶ Each day marked the further impoverishment of daily life and erosion of political rights. As capitalism advanced to the monopoly stage, the ranks of the proletariat grew rapidly in size and concentration, and a broad and vigorous labor movement began. Marx's comrades-in-arms Sorge and Meyer organized the American branch of the First International in 1867, stimulating the working class movement as they spread Marxism, struggled against every kind of opportunism, fought for the eight-hour day and expanded the strike movement. In 1869 workers organized the Knights of Labor, considered by Engels to be the first nationwide organization established by the U.S. working class. The great Pennsylvania railroad strike erupted in 1877 as the first large-scale strike movement in U.S. history. On May 1, 1886, several hundred thousand workers struck and demonstrated in Chicago, Washington, New York and many other large cities, achieving a great victory in the struggle for the eight-hour day. Meeting in Paris in 1889, the second congress of the International resolved that, beginning in 1890, workers around the world would demonstrate and commemorate May 1st as International Workers' Day. Hearing of the strike wave in the U.S., Engels grew very excited, believing that the outbreak of class struggle in the U.S. had shaken the main pillars of the entire world bourgeoisie. He wrote:

... our—and your—bourgeois thought that America stood *above* class antagonisms and struggles. That delusion has now broken down, the last Bourgeois Paradise on earth is fast changing into a Purgatorio, and can only be prevented from becoming, like Europe, an Inferno by the go-ahead pace at which the development of the newly fledged proletariat of America will take place.²⁷

The U.S. labor movement developed day by day during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1905 the well-known labor leaders Eugene Debs, Daniel DeLeon and



In 1909, garment workers in New York City rose up and demanded better wages and working conditions.

Bill Haywood organized the Industrial Workers of the World, and in 1909 working class leader William Z. Foster engaged in revolutionary activities while in prison, giving direction to the workers' movement. Fighting for equality and freedom, Chicago working women staged a magnificent strike and protest march on March 8, 1909, achieving a response from women all over the country. In the following year the second International Congress of Socialist Women designated March 8 as International Women's Day. In 1912 Foster led the organization of the Trade Union Educational League to promote the growing workers' movement.

Near the turn of the century, many progressive writers appeared in the U.S., with Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Jack London (1876-1916) as outstanding examples. Mark Twain was typical of the American critical realists, using his pen as a weapon to criticize the U.S. political system sharply, attack racial prejudice toward and oppression of black people and analyze the aggressive character of U.S. imperialism. Characterized by humor and ridicule, his art combined an excellent style with astute political analysis. His famous short stories

include "The Celebrated Frog of Calaveras County," "Journalism in Tennessee," "Running for Governor," "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again," "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" and others, and his best known novels are *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Born to a poor farm family and having to support himself from an early age, Jack London continued in the excellent realistic tradition of Mark Twain. He was an active participant in the revolutionary workers' movement in the U.S., and his short stories and political writings relentlessly exposed the American bourgeoisie's parasitic life, lambasting them for poverty of spirit and insatiable greed. His famous works include *Call of the Wild*, *A Daughter of the Snows*, *The Iron Heel* and *Martin Eden*.

V. THE U.S. FROM WORLD WAR I TO WORLD WAR II

World War I broke out in July 1914 between two imperialist blocs—the Allied Powers (England, France and Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Italy and Austria)—all scheming to redivide the world. Although it first declared its "neutrality," the Wilson government (1913-1921) in the U.S. was actually "sitting on the mountaintop watching the tigers fight," letting the two sides slaughter and exploit each other so that it could get the spoils. When the belligerents had fought to the point of exhaustion and the war was drawing to a close, the U.S. saw its opportunity, tore off its mask of "neutrality," and in April 1917 declared war on Germany, thus becoming a victor in the war at very little cost. It took advantage of the deadlock between the two imperialist power blocs in Europe to drive British and German influence out of Latin America and secure its own "back yard." Twice, in 1914 and in 1916, the U.S. sent troops to intervene in the Mexican revolution, and in 1915, 1916 and 1917 the U.S. invaded Haiti, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and the Virgin Islands in succession. During the war, the U.S. used its "neutrality" as an excuse to do a lot of business in arms with both sides, reaping a huge windfall profit of \$38 billion. The U.S. changed rapidly from a debtor to a creditor nation; by the end of the war the nations of Europe owed it more than \$10 billion.

After World War I, the U.S. position in the capitalist world rose to unprecedented heights; not only did its share of world industrial production increase, but in export of goods and capital it jumped to first place. Stalin pointed out,

The center of financial power in the capitalist world, the center of the financial exploitation of the whole world, has shifted from Europe to America. Formerly, France, Germany and Britain usually formed the center of the financial exploitation of the world. That cannot be said now without special reservations. Now, the center of the financial exploitation of the world is mainly the United States of America.²⁸

Taking advantage of its expanding economic power, the U.S. monopoly capitalist class began openly trying to establish world hegemony for itself.

In January 1918, toward the end of the war, President Wilson put forward his "Fourteen Points" to lay the "cornerstone of world peace." The "peace" he advocated naturally could be only an imperialist peace, and, as Lenin said,

an imperialist peace ... will bring the peoples the greatest deception in the form of pious phrases, semi-reforms, semi-concessions, etc.²⁹

And it was true. Wilson's "Fourteen Points" were a scheme to smash Soviet state power under Lenin's leadership, transforming it into a bourgeois parliamentary government. Thus in April 1918 he viciously sent troops and arms to intervene in Soviet Russia. At the same time, he wanted to use the U.S. economic domination established during the war to usurp political dominance of the world as well. The establishment of the League of Nations was a means to this goal.³⁰

However, Wilson's wishful calculations fell through. From the beginning, control of the League of Nations fell into the hands of England and France, and as a result, the U.S. Senate rejected membership in it.

At U.S. initiative a conference was convened in Washington in 1921-1922 at which a 4-nation treaty, a 5-nation treaty and a 9-nation treaty were signed.

The 4-nation treaty (U.S., Britain, France, and Japan) provided that the signatories would secure each other's rights and interests in the Pacific and declared that its ratification would nullify the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

The 5-nation treaty (U.S., Britain, France, Japan and Italy) provided that tonnage ratios for battleships and cruisers among the five nations would be: U.S. and Britain 5, Japan 3, France and Italy .75. From this it is clear that U.S. naval power had already equalled that of Britain.

The 9-nation agreement (U.S., Britain, Belgium, China, France, Italy, Japan, Holland and Portugal) nominally "respected China's territorial integrity" but in reality was an

imperialist agreement to partition China. Using the aggressive principles of the "Open Door," consistently pushed by the U.S., and of "equal opportunity" for all nations' industry and commerce in China, the U.S. broke the temporary position of dominance over China which Japan had gained in World War I. Our great leader Chairman Mao said,

In 1922 at the Washington Nine-Power Conference called by the United States, a treaty was signed which once again placed China under the joint domination of several imperialist powers.³¹

After the Northern Expeditionary Army occupied Nanking, the U.S. imperialists along with British, Japanese, French and Italian naval forces shelled the city on March 24, 1927. On April 12, they instigated Chiang Kai-shek to launch a counter-revolutionary coup and supported the Chiang clique, a dictatorship close to the U.S.

In Europe, the U.S. actively nurtured German imperialism. In 1924 it announced the Dawes plan, which provided \$200 million in credit from U.S. capitalists to stabilize the German monetary system. This allowed U.S. capital to penetrate Europe and built up Germany as an outpost against the Soviet Union.

U.S. imperialism everywhere extended its grasp, carrying out aggression and putting down national liberation movements while intensifying its arms buildup and preparations for war. But U.S. Secretary of State Kellogg proposed a "disarmament pact" in 1928, hypocritically declaring "renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy." This was nothing but U.S. imperialism up to its old tricks—using talk of peace to conceal its war preparations and its crimes of foreign expansion.

In the period 1929-1933, economic crisis broke out in the U.S. Spreading quickly to the nations of the capitalist world, it grew to a world economic crisis of unprecedented severity.

Under the onslaught of the crisis, the U.S. economy lapsed into a state of paralysis. Industrial production declined by about half, and exports fell from \$5.2 billion to \$1.6 billion; 130,000 industrial and commercial corporations went bankrupt, 10,000 banks closed their doors, and huge quantities of

unsold goods were destroyed. By the fall of 1933, 17 million workers were unemployed, and 11 million suffered cold and hunger.

Facing this situation, the U.S. monopoly capitalists desperately needed a change from the Republican Party, already in power over 10 years, to make it easier to devise a new strategy and get through the crisis. This ruling class need meant that "President Hunger"—Republican President Hoover (in office from 1929 to 1932) could only lose the election, and in 1933 a Democrat, Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1945), became the 32nd president.

Within three short months of entering the White House, Roosevelt had submitted more than 70 bills to Congress to deal with the disaster. Among these were the Banking Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the "Good Neighbor" foreign policy. He also established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. This was the so-called Roosevelt "New Deal."

The main financial measures of the New Deal were to expand the jurisdiction and functions of the Federal Reserve, supply the necessary federal legal and administrative powers to support large banks, squeeze out middle and smaller banks and strengthen the base of monopoly capital. At the same time Roosevelt temporarily suspended foreign exchange, went off the gold standard and devalued the U.S. dollar to make U.S. goods more competitive on the world market. In addition, he implemented a policy of inflation, raising domestic prices to stimulate production and increased investment.

Among the main industrial measures of the New Deal were government support of monopoly capital in swallowing up small and medium-sized firms and the use of large federal loans to help big companies get through the crisis. Furthermore, under the banner of "reconciliation" between labor and capital, the New Deal established the National Labor Relations Board, destroying the unity of the workers' movement and subduing the strike movement. Social welfare regulations drafting the unemployed into low-paid work on federal engineering projects were passed to reduce the pressure of the huge ranks of the unemployed.

The New Deal's main agricultural program was to legislate a way of reducing farm production and destroying agricultural commodities, thus raising prices and overcoming the crisis of surplus production. This provided that all who substantially reduced the area they had under cultivation and cut back livestock herds would be eligible for a government subsidy or bonus. As a result, at a time when millions of workers were cold and hungry, large amounts of wheat were burned, milk was poured into the sea and potatoes were sprinkled with poison to make them inedible. In 1933 alone, 23 million head of livestock, 6 million hogs, 10 million acres of cotton and 7.5 million acres of wheat were destroyed. The reduction in cultivated acreage hurt most small and middle-sized family farms. Big farm owners, on the other hand, obtained large subsidies and bonuses and used new machines, fertilizer and other methods to compensate for cuts in acreage, seeking windfall profits from the rise in agricultural commodity prices.

In foreign policy, the New Deal's main action was to adopt the "Good Neighbor" policy toward Latin America. The U.S. concluded trade agreements and reciprocal tariff agreements with various Latin American nations, exporting capital and dumping commercial goods there. U.S. investment in Latin America increased rapidly, reaching \$1.54 billion and making up 35 percent of total U.S. foreign investment in 1936. While it was intensifying its economic aggression, the Roosevelt government never let up its armed intervention in Latin America. Shortly after his inauguration in 1933, Roosevelt sent 30 warships to Cuba to stage a military threat; in 1937 he slaughtered Puerto Ricans who demonstrated against U.S. authorities; in 1938 he interfered militarily in Mexican government affairs; and he supported fascist dictators in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua. This fully exposed the true imperialist nature of the "Good Neighbor" policy.

Another manifestation of New Deal foreign policy was the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in November 1933. This was the result of a long period of struggle by the Soviet people under the leadership of Stalin

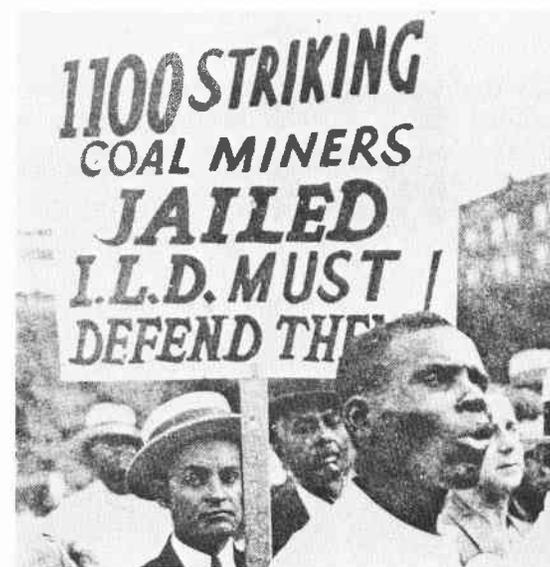
and marked the complete bankruptcy of U.S. imperialism's 16-year policy of isolation and embargo of the Soviet Union. For Roosevelt it was also a means of handling the fight for supremacy among the imperialist powers, which was growing sharper than ever.

As the world economic crisis broke out, Japan invaded and occupied China's Northeast (Manchuria) in the "September 18th Incident" of 1931, initiating a war to redivide Asia; Hitler took power in Germany in January 1933, and the country withdrew from the League of Nations in October. Armed to the teeth, Germany and Japan entered the world arena to join the struggle for Europe and Asia and for world hegemony. In the battle for domination between the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Italy, the Roosevelt government attempted to take advantage of contradictions, sacrifice the interest of other nations and keep its diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, thus strengthening the U.S. position in the contest for Europe and Asia.

To encourage a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union in the north, New Deal policy toward China tolerated the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. At the same time, it placed some limitations on Japan's advances in the south, where U.S. imperialism had its privileges and a sphere of influence to protect.

Roosevelt's New Deal was definitely effective in easing the U.S. crisis and reviving capitalist production, but it was unable to eliminate the roots of the crisis. The years 1934-36 were marked by stagnation, and in 1937-38 a new economic crisis broke out. Only the outbreak of the second World War and conversion to a wartime economy made it possible to shake off the crisis that had been going on since 1929.

Between the wars U.S. monopoly capital had become more arrogant in its ruthless oppression of the working class and other working people in order to reap vast profits and shift the burden of the economic crisis. The U.S. had already become a nation where the gap between rich and poor was very great.



Black and white workers in Harlem, New York, demonstrated in support of a 1931 strike in Kentucky.

At the same time, America has become one of the foremost countries in regard to the depth of the abyss which lies between the handful of arrogant multimillionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism.³²

[... what do we find?] The brazen rule of a handful, not even of millionaires, but multimillionaires, while the people are in slavery and servitude.³³

The sharpening of class contradictions within the U.S. stirred a rising workers' movement. In 1919 a total of 3,577 strikes occurred, involving 4 million workers. The Great Steel Strike from September 1919 to January 1920, involving 365,000 workers in 10 states and 50 cities under the leadership of William Z. Foster, was one of the greatest and most heroic of U.S. working class struggles in the post-World War I period. At the high tide of the workers' movement, and under the influence of the October Revolution, in September 1919 the vanguard of the U.S. working class—the U.S. Communist Party—was born in triumph. In 1921 Foster joined the Party

and worked tirelessly to make it Marxist-Leninist. In 1929 the Communist Party expelled the opportunist leader Jay Lovestone and others, and Foster became head of the Secretariat of the Central Committee.

In the following years the CPUSA and the revolutionary movement developed greatly. In March 1930 the Party led a historically significant nationwide march of the unemployed to demand unemployment relief and unemployment insurance. It also stressed the demands of black people as well as opposition to wage cuts and to fascist war. Those taking part in the protest numbered 1,250,000. A great coal miners' strike began in May 1931 and continued for four months, involving 42,000 workers. From 1929 to 1933, more than 3.5 million people took part in strikes, and during 1934-36, workers opposed the New Deal,³⁴ soaring prices and declining wages. The tide of the strike movement rose higher, with the number of strikers reaching 3,390,000 and the strike movement breaking into steel, smelting, shipbuilding, shipping and other "trustified" areas of industry. During the economic crisis of 1937-38 and until the eve of the second World War, great numbers of U.S. workers and the broad masses of laboring people opposed monopoly capital, reactionary influences and wars of aggression. In September 1937 alone there were 3,000 strikes involving 1.5 million people. The people's spirit of struggle was rising high.

VI. CLIMB TO THE PEAK

Roosevelt was elected President three times in succession, in 1936, 1940, and 1944, occupying the White House before and during World War II and carrying out domestic and foreign policies that met the wishes of the U.S. monopoly capitalists. Up through the early days of the war, the Roosevelt administration pushed a policy of appeasement in the name of "neutrality," trying to repeat President Wilson's trick at the beginning of World War I: to sacrifice the interests of other countries, tolerate fascist aggression, and incite war against the Soviet socialist state in order to expand the influence of U.S. imperialism and gain world hegemony.

When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and Germany and Italy intervened militarily in Spain in 1936, Roosevelt issued the "Proclamation of Neutrality" declaring that the U.S. would not supply arms to either side. But in reality the U.S. provided large quantities of war materiel to Germany and Italy through other European nations. And when Japan launched its full-scale war of aggression in 1937, Roosevelt supported Chiang Kai-shek's one-sided resistance, hoping to tie down and weaken Japan's military forces and avoid undue danger to U.S. interests in China. On the other hand, however, the U.S. provided Japan with a large quantity of strategic materials, such as ammunition, oil and steel, trying to incite the Japanese to invade the Soviet Union and encouraging them to suppress the Chinese revolution to clear the way for its own further aggression against China.

In 1938 Germany invaded Austria and prepared to occupy Czechoslovakia; Roosevelt supported the signing by Britain and France of the Munich Agreement with Germany and Italy, sacrificing the interest of small and weak countries in order to satisfy the designs of fascist aggression. He hoped to mend the rift in the reactionary imperialist camp and to encourage Germany and Italy to make war on the Soviet Union.

The German fascist army invaded Poland in September 1939. Seeing a serious threat to their interests in Europe and

to their own security, Britain and France were forced to declare war on Germany. This was the beginning of World War II.

With full-scale war in Europe, the Roosevelt administration continued its so-called "neutrality" policy, actually a policy of appeasement, in the hope that the two warring imperialist groups (the "Allies" Britain and France, and the Fascist countries of Germany, Italy and Japan) would weaken each other. At the same time the U.S. would reap huge profits by selling arms to both sides. In the meanwhile, in the name of "neutrality," the U.S. sent envoys to various parts of Europe to carry out activities aimed at gaining the leadership of the capitalist world in accordance with its plan to form a front against the Soviet Union.

In Asia, Roosevelt and the British came to terms with the Japanese, further selling out Chinese interests by using Japan to suppress the Chinese revolution and to make war on the Soviet Union. This was known as the "Munich of the Far East."³⁵

But the international situation developed contrary to the subjective desires of the U.S. The law of uneven capitalist development meant that conflict of interest between the imperialist powers was basically unavoidable. The imperialist alliance against the Soviet Union and an anti-Soviet war—which the U.S. imperialists badly wanted and worked hard to realize—never materialized. Instead, fighting among the imperialist powers grew more and more intense. By May 1941, the iron heel of Hitler's fascist aggression had trampled most of western and southeastern Europe, and Germany was making threatening noises toward the U.S. In the Far East and Southwest Pacific, Japan tried with all its might to grab U.S. possessions. Surrounding the U.S. on two sides, the German, Japanese and Italian fascists became U.S. imperialism's most direct, real and dangerous rival for world hegemony.

In June 1941 Hitler's Germany launched a sudden attack on the socialist Soviet Union, led by Stalin, provoking war between the two countries. The world war entered a new stage, as the people of the world fought against fascist

aggression. In this situation, Roosevelt had no choice but to declare U.S. support for the Soviet Union's war against fascism. On December 7, 1941, Japan suddenly attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. The damage to the U.S. was disastrous; almost half its Pacific fleet was blown up. Only then was the U.S. forced to join the fight against fascism.

During the war, the Roosevelt administration used various channels for continuous and urgent attempts to open separate and secret peace negotiations with the German, Japanese and Italian fascists, still hoping that the anti-fascist war could one day be turned into an anti-Soviet war.

Collaborating with Britain, the U.S. adopted a policy of delay and reconsideration toward the opening of a second front in Europe.³⁶ In fact, they still could not abandon their desire to weaken the Soviet Union, but because of the valiant struggle of the people of the Soviet Union, China and the world, the anti-fascist war quickly developed and spread. Led by Stalin, the Soviet Red Army counterattacked on a large scale and entered the Eastern European nations of Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The Japanese aggressors also suffered severe blows from the people of China and Asia. Only when victory in the war against fascism was in sight did the U.S. and Britain finally proclaim their agreement to open the second front, and landed in France in June 1944. On the eve of the Japanese surrender, the U.S. imperialists dropped atom bombs on densely populated Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and August 9, 1945, killing over 200,000 peaceful civilians. The U.S. imperialists hoped to use the atomic bomb as an asset to blackmail the people of the world in the postwar struggle for world hegemony.

During the whole of World War II not a single bomb was dropped on the American continent or on its cities. Hiding under the signboard of "the arsenal of democracy," the U.S. did a great deal of arms trade and got rich from the war, making more than \$110 billion in profits. Total U.S. production almost doubled between 1939 and 1944, with great increases in steel, coal and crude oil production.

Monopoly capitalism became more powerful, and state monopoly capitalism also developed further, with tremendous expansion in the influence of the Rockefeller, Mellon, DuPont, Cleveland and other financial groups closely connected to the weapons industry. The power of the Kuhn-Loeb and Boston financial groups, whose main strength lay in railways and light industry, declined, while the California financial group, developing aircraft, space, electronics and other military supply industries, and the First National City Bank financial group, controlling guided missiles and related military industries, rose in influence.

After World War II, U.S. imperialism replaced German, Japanese and Italian fascism. The U.S. used its influence as the victor and took advantage of a defeated Germany, Japan and Italy and a wounded Britain and France to carry out feverish economic expansion and military aggression through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. During the early postwar period, U.S. imperialism concentrated in its hands more than half the capitalist world's industrial production, one-third of its export trade and two thirds of its gold reserves. U.S. imperialism had finally reached a position of dominance in the capitalist world.

Brandishing H-bombs in one hand and clutching dollars in the other, U.S. imperialism extended its aggression everywhere. Not only did it plunder and enslave the nations and peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, but, as Chairman Mao pointed out,

Even towards its own allies in Western Europe, North America and Oceania U.S. imperialism follows the policy of the law of the jungle, trying to trample them underfoot.³⁷

Planning to establish a global empire such as had never been seen before, the U.S. supported reactionaries everywhere, patched together various aggressive alliances, built military bases in every corner, sent thousands of troops abroad and pushed its policies of aggression and war throughout the world. Thus it had become the main bastion of modern colonialism and the center of world reactionary power. The U.S. imperialists used the dollar as the instrument of power

politics and hegemonism, taking advantage of others' difficulties to rob and blackmail other countries under the pretense of "aid," and becoming the world's biggest exploiters. For a time the U.S. ruling class was so elated that it was even bragged that the twentieth century was the "American century." The pinnacle of conceit!

During World War II the U.S. Communist Party led the vast majority of the people in support of the anti-fascist war. As early as 1936-39, three thousand of the finest sons and daughters of the people of the United States went to Spain and joined the anti-fascist international brigade to fight the German fascists' armed intervention in the Republic of Spain. Staunch and courageous in battle, 1500 of them gave their lives in the cause of liberation for the Spanish people. After the outbreak of war in the Pacific, the American people threw themselves into the anti-fascist war, and the American proletariat endured such hardships as inflation, a wage freeze and a declining standard of living. But they persisted in working to support the anti-fascist war effort. Great numbers of young people went to the front lines, fighting to wipe out the German, Italian and Japanese fascist gangsters. The people of the U.S. contributed their share in the world war against fascism.

In 1943, the renegade Browder pushed his line of surrender in the U.S. Communist Party, selling "peaceful transition" and other revisionist contraband. In 1944 he actually dissolved the Party. Browder's revisionism nearly brought the revolutionary endeavor of the American proletariat to the brink of disaster, as well as spreading the poison of liquidationism to proletarian political parties in other countries. As Chairman Mao pointed out,

Browder's whole revisionist-capitulationist line (which is fully expressed in his book *Teheran*) in essence reflects the influence of reactionary U.S. capitalist groups on the U.S. workers' movement.³⁸

Headed by Foster, many American Communists opposed Browder's revisionist line, and many fraternal parties also resisted and criticized it. In 1945 the U.S. Communist Party was re-established with Foster as its general secretary.

Chairman Mao expressed warm congratulations and strong support for this victory.

Headed by Foster, the Party led the American people to continued new victories against U.S. imperialism. The period immediately after the war witnessed an unbroken struggle by workers to improve working and living conditions, despite the anti-labor Taft-Hartley law,³⁹ McCarthyism, and sabotage of the workers' movement by yellow-dog labor leaders in the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. (merged in 1955). In 1946 the number of strikers reached 4.6 million, with eight strikes involving more than 100,000 strikers and representing the peaks of the union movement. Moreover, during the U.S. imperialist war of aggression against Korea, the American people started a "hands off Korea" movement. Unfortunately, Foster fell ill and died in 1960, and the opportunists within the U.S. Communist Party usurped its leadership, so that the Party degenerated into one of the modern revisionist parties. Although the path is uneven, not smooth but winding and tortuous, this cannot stop the mass movement of the American people from rolling onward.

Beginning before World War I and working until the conclusion of World War II, the well-known Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945), a critical realist writer, put his pen to work in the struggle. Born in a poor family, he had only a high school education and worked as a newspaper reporter. He took part in the American workers' strike movement and, just before he died, joined the U.S. Communist Party. His many works, including novels, short stories, poetry, plays, essays, political commentary and autobiography, contributed to the development of progressive literature in the U.S.

Dreiser's major achievements were his long novels. Raising many social problems in his writing, he protested strongly against capitalist exploitation and against the evils of capitalist society and exposed the ugliness and pettiness of bourgeois morals. His *Trilogy of Desire* (including three novels, *The Financier*, *The Titan* and *The Stoic*) is a vast epic depicting the U.S. capitalists' plunder of the people's possessions and their decadent private life during the last half of the 19th century and the beginning of the twentieth. His most famous work was his long novel *An American Tragedy*.

The novel, one of his later writings, deeply reflected the reality of American society, revealing its whole "dog-eat-dog" landscape in the twentieth century. It exposed the ugliness of American marriage, lawsuits and elections, and it described the comedies of religion. Dreiser raised the proposition that American bourgeois politics were an out-and-out fraud leading the country to collapse and making it into "a tragic America."⁴⁰

VII. THE DECLINE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

As early as 1947 Chairman Mao had already clearly indicated:

The economic power of U.S. imperialism, which grew during World War II, is confronted with unstable and daily shrinking domestic and foreign markets. The further shrinking of these markets will cause economic crisis to break out. The war boom in the U.S. was only temporary. The strength of the U.S. is only superficial and transient. Irreconcilable domestic and international contradictions, like a volcano, menace U.S. imperialism every day. U.S. imperialism is sitting on this volcano.⁴¹

The development of history has proved the correctness of Chairman Mao's insightful words. Climbing to a position of hegemony in the capitalist world after World War II, U.S. imperialism soon fell from its peak. Even U.S. President Nixon did not deny this fact. He once commented that not long after World War II the U.S. no longer held a "wholly prominent and completely commanding position" and was no longer "the world's number one country from an economic point of view."

U.S. imperialism has declined, but there is hope for the American people. Lenin remarked,

The American people have a revolutionary tradition . . . that tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the 18th century and the Civil War in the 19th century.⁴²

The U.S. was the original home of May Day, International Workers Day, and March 8, International Women's Day, and the people of the U.S. can certainly achieve their own full liberation and play a new and active role in the progress of world history.

FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Communist Manifesto*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972, p. 31.

2. Between 1756 and 1763, England, Prussia, and others fought a war with France, Russia, Austria and others in America, Europe and India to divide colonies and seek hegemony in Europe. Once the war between England and France ended with France's defeat, the "Treaty of Paris" was signed in 1763, and England took France's North American colonies and India, thereby gaining mastery of the seas.

3. Before the capitalist mode of production had been established, it went through the seizure by force of peasant land, plundering of colonies, the sale of slaves and a great number of despicable activities, grabbed a large amount of means of production and money and gathered them in the hands of the capitalists, while simultaneously creating a vast employed labor force. The process of using this kind of naked force to separate the small producer from his means of production and the process of accumulating money capital is called primitive capital accumulation.

4. Indentured servants were America's earliest white slaves. The origin of white slavery was: colonists who ran into debt and couldn't repay; people who hoped to go to America, didn't have the fare for passage and sold themselves into slavery; kidnapped beggars and children; and British criminals. According to the indenture contract, they became slaves for from five to seven years.

5. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, vol. 2, p. 23.

6. V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to American Workers," in *Complete Works*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965, vol. 28, p. 68.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

8. Marx, *Capital*. New York: International Publishers, 1967, vol. 1, p. 9.

9. The bourgeoisie proclaimed a theory and system of dividing state powers into legislative, executive and judiciary. This theory advocated the division of the powers of legislation, administration and adjudication among the legislature, government and courts, which are expected to check and balance each other. In fact, the state powers in a capitalist country are all in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and the so-called division of powers is merely a formal disguise for the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

10. Napoleon I (1769-1821), or Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799 he carried out the Thermidor coup d'état, and in 1804 proclaimed himself emperor. In 1803, the U.S. took advantage of war between England and France and the utter defeat of his army by oppressed blacks in Haiti to buy Louisiana.

11. In 1815, after the empire of Napoleon I collapsed, the monarchs of Russia, Prussia and Austria came together in Paris and formed a reactionary alliance with the great majority of European monarchies. Its purpose was to maintain the "order" of feudal control, suppressing revolutionary and national independence movements.

12. Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*. New York: International Publishers, 1961, p. 81.

13. Robert Owen (1771-1858), an English utopian socialist. He sharply criticized the capitalist system and advocated the establishment of a kind of communist "new farm." He mistakenly thought that on the basis of abolishing private ownership of land and the means of production and forming a group on the principle of universal friendship and harmony, capitalism could peacefully change into an ideal socialist system. In 1825 he experimented with a communist new village known as New Harmony. He placed his hopes on the benevolence of rulers and did not advocate workers taking up political struggle. As a result, all his experiments collapsed.

14. Charles Fourier (1772-1837), a French utopian socialist. He exposed and attacked capitalism and pointed out that the capitalist system would inevitably be replaced with another kind of new ideal system. He had the illusion that he could establish a kind of socialist society with "phalanxes" as the primary unit. He repudiated class struggle and advocated that capitalists and workers establish phalanxes together. Phalanxes were bodies which combined agriculture and industry, were self-reliant and shared labor and social income in common.

15. Richard Hildreth, *Archy Moore, the White Slave*. Reprinted 1969 by Negro Universities Press, a division of Greenwood Publishing Corp., New York, p. 405.

16. W. E. B. DuBois, *John Brown*. New York: International Publishers, 1962, p. 365.

17. Entering the army as a captain, Weydemeyer was promoted to colonel for his work in recruiting an entire regiment of German-American workers. He also became commander of the Military District of St. Louis. [Translators' note]

18. *Capital*, v. 1, p. 9. (Note that a portion of this same quote was used on p. 7.)

19. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers," in *Collected Works*, v. 28, p. 69.

20. "Jim Crow Laws" were racist and terrorist laws used in the U.S. to oppress black people. Enacted in the southern states by farm owners at the end of the Civil War, they deprived black people of all political and civil rights.

21. Lenin, "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture. Part One. Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States of America," in *Collected Works*, v. 22, pp. 24-25.

22. Trusts are a high form of monopoly organization under capitalism, made up of many enterprises which produce similar commodities or enterprises which produce closely related commodities. The aim is to monopolize the market, seize sources of raw materials and areas for capital investment, and strengthen competitive power in order to gain high monopoly profits. Once in a trust, firms lose their independence in production and sales, as well as their legal independence.

23. See Ferdinand Lundberg, *America's Sixty Families*. New York: Vanguard Press, c. 1938. (Translators' note)

24. Engels, Introduction to Marx's *The Civil War in France*, in *Engels: Selected Writings*. Baltimore, 1967, p. 309.

25. The war (1855-1856) for expansion of power and division of the Ottoman Empire which erupted between Russia and Turkey, England, France and others, resulting in Russia's defeat and the signing of the Peace of Paris.

26. The Chinese make this distinction because of the large number of peasants whose economic and social roles are different from those of the working class. In America at this time there were large numbers of sharecroppers and tenant farmers who were later gradually forced off the land. [Translators' note]

27. Engels to Mrs. Florence Kelley, 6/3/1886 in Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans, 1848-1895: a Selection*. New York: International Publishers, 1969, p. 157.

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

29. "A Turn in World Politics," in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), vol. 23, p. 262.

30. The League was founded at the Versailles Conference in 1919-20 and disbanded in 1946. The U.S. was the nation that originally proposed its establishment, but after losing to France and England in the struggle for its leadership the U.S. did not participate. It was in reality a tool for the policies of aggression and war of England, France and other imperialist countries.

31. "On Tactics against Japanese Imperialism," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), vol. 1, p. 153.

32. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers," in *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), vol. 28, p. 63.

33. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting at the Former Michelson Works," in *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), vol. 28, p. 90.

34. The heart of the original New Deal was the National Recovery Act, which guaranteed minimum wages and the right of collective bargaining, but allowed company unions, individual bargaining and the open shop. Workers at first supported the NRA and joined unions by the thousands. However, later interpretations of the NRA by the Supreme Court and by its last, anti-labor administrator, S. Clay

Williams, caused workers to rally against it. It became known as the "National Run-Around," and labor threatened to withdraw support for Roosevelt in the 1936 election. [Translators' note.]

35. This refers to the period up to summer 1940, during which the U.S. appeased Japan, continuing to sell strategic war materials while hoping to find a compromise with Japanese imperialism. Supported by the U.S., the heads of the French and British governments negotiated with Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, Germany, hoping to get a fascist invasion of the Soviet Union in exchange for the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. The agreement forced Czechoslovakia to cede to Germany the Sudetenland and a southern region bordering Austria. Britain, France, Germany and Italy guaranteed that the rest of the country would not be invaded. In November German troops occupied the Sudetenland, and in March 1939 they invaded and occupied all of Czechoslovakia. In September Germany invaded Poland.

36. This referred to the opening of a West European front against fascist Germany during the latter part of World War II. When fascist Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, their battleground became the scene of the main struggle against German fascism. In May and June 1942 the Soviet Union negotiated with the U.S. and Britain for the opening of a second front that year, but they repeatedly reneged on their commitment, hoping that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany would weaken each other. Not until the victory of the Soviet army over the German army became apparent in June 1944 did the U.S. and Britain send troops to land in France's Normandy region.

37. "Statement Supporting the Panamanian People's Just Patriotic Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism," in Mao Tse-tung, *People of the World, Unite and Defeat the U.S. Aggressors and All Their Lackeys* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), p. 9.

38. "Telegram to Comrade William Z. Foster," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), vol. 3, p. 287.

39. Sponsored by Senator Taft and Representative Hartley, the Taft-Hartley law passed the U.S. Congress in 1947. It forbids political strikes, etc. This reactionary labor law has been used by the U.S. ruling class to suppress labor movements and to prosecute revolutionary groups and progressive unions.

40. The "tragedy" referred to in the title of Dreiser's book actually refers to the personal tragedy of Clyde Griffiths, the book's central character, who was electrocuted by the state of New York for murdering a young woman. [Translators' note.]

41. "The Present Situation and Our Tasks," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1969), vol. 4, p. 172.

42. "Letter to American Workers," in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), vol. 28, p. 69.

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