

Issue #3:  
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# RED STAR



A Publication of  
The Revolutionary  
United Front



PHILIPPINES



YEMEN



ALGERIA



SUDAN

**ANTI-IMPERIALIST REBELLION  
SHAKES THE WORLD**



HAITI



PALESTINE



## About the Cover

All around the world the people are rising in revolt against corrupt government officials and their corporate imperialist sponsors. These struggles are a mix of spontaneous rebellion and conscious efforts; more spontaneous in some places and more conscious and organized in others. As the people of the colonies and neocolonies of the world rise in revolt, the foundations of capitalist-imperialism begin to crumble. This in turn provides greater opening for revolutionary struggle around the world.

*Red Star* is a revolutionary magazine published by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The magazine covers history and theory from political struggles past and present. *Red Star* also provides revolutionary analysis of current events around the world. It is part of an effort to spread revolutionary theory among the masses of this country and cut through the lies spread by the capitalist ruling class and their media. The people of this country and of the world have the power to make history, to move mountains, to topple corrupt governments, and to change the world. We hope that *Red Star* can contribute to the peoples' struggles here in the United States by providing some much needed revolutionary theory and analysis.

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## The Wretched of the Earth are Rising

By John

Now the wretched of the earth are rising,  
Calling for us to join.  
Now our brothers and sisters are fighting,  
Fighting against the rich.

Those who keep us in chains.  
Those who kill us for their own gain.  
Those few, those wealthy,  
Those common enemies of humanity.  
Those who, having plundered the world and  
Slaughtered so many,  
Look upon the fruits of *our* labor,  
The wealth produced by *our* blood, sweat, and tears  
And see only *their own* profit.

Those who see our lives as a disposable  
Means to an end.  
For them,  
For the few,  
For the rich.

Those who enslaved Africans,  
And sent them to work to death on foreign shores.  
Those who sent millions to the gas chambers,  
And those who dropped the bombs,  
On Hiroshima and Nagasaki.  
And, let's not forget,  
Those who launch the drone strikes,  
And bomb the school buses.

And those who,  
Far from the killing,  
Count their profits,  
Stolen from our labor,  
Secured by bombs, invasions, famines,  
And genocides.

Those executives, politicians, generals,  
and war profiteers  
The wretched of the earth are rising,  
Against them.  
Our brothers and sisters are fighting,  
And the time has come to join them,  
In the struggle for our common liberation.

**Long live the Revolution!**

## U.S. Imperialism at the Border



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## U.S. and Chinese Imperialists Struggle for Supremacy



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# The Mueller Report: A Two-Year Capitalist Con Job

by Altan D.



*For over two years, the investigation into Trump-Russia collusion has dominated the 24-hour news cycle, and transfixed millions of Americans. The Democrats have been eager to focus on this investigation as a way to distract from their own political bankruptcy and total subordination to corporate interests. Now, the investigation has concluded without finding any evidence of collusion.*

★ RED STAR

For the past two years, the Democratic Party has engaged in a major political spectacle as it aggressively pushed the narrative that the Russian government interfered in the U.S. “democracy” by secretly colluding with Donald Trump to influence the outcome of the 2016 election. The corporate media has helped the Democratic Party promote this narrative, and many liberals have eagerly accepted it as fact. During this time, anti-Russia paranoia flared as President Vladimir Putin has been framed by U.S. liberals as a scapegoat for all the problems in the country, including the outcome of the 2016 Presidential Election. **Meanwhile elements of the U.S. state apparatus, including the reactionary FBI, Special Counsel and former FBI director Robert Mueller, and others have been hailed as heroic “defenders of democracy,”** the only ones capable of getting Trump impeached and removed from office to satisfy liberals’ desire to return to a pre-Trump status-quo.

However in March of this year the long and drawn out process of the two year investigation finally concluded when Mueller presented his findings to Attorney General William Barr. According to the report presented, the investigation, which employed “19 lawyers who were assisted by a team of

approximately 40 FBI agents, intelligence analysts, forensic accountants, and other professional staff” found no actual evidence that the Russian state colluded with the Trump Campaign to undermine American so-called democracy and install Donald Trump into the office of the U.S. presidency.

However, the report claimed that “The Special Counsel’s investigation determined that there were two main Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election” involving supposed “disinformation” tactics designed to promote “political propaganda” and “computer hacking operations designed to gather and disseminate information to influence the election.” The evidence supporting these claims is shaky at best, and the media coverage of them has amounted to little more than scaremongering designed to maintain and expand anti-Russia paranoia and push for a future war between these rival imperialist powers. **The drive towards war reflects the competition between the corrupt billionaires, oligarchs, and enemies of the people that comprise the ruling classes of both Russia and the U.S.** These wealthy elites are our true enemies, not the Russian people, and in a war between the U.S. and Russia, the people of both countries will inevitably lose even if one country does beat the other.

In the wake of the publication of the report Trump himself was all too eager to trumpet his “innocence” of having colluded with the Russian state; however, during the investigation, actual wrongdoing on the part of select ruling elites was indeed exposed. The report presented to Barr and released shortly thereafter still accused the U.S. president of “obstruction of justice” for moving to slow down the investigation that threatened the Trump government’s legitimacy, with the report itself stating that it “while this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him.” Furthermore, at least 37 people were indicted, including Trump’s campaign chairman Paul Manafort and lawyer Michael Cohen for financial fraud—**charges that are not related to Russian collusion but are emblematic of the corruption inherent in the ruling class.** Indeed, at the time of writing several further investigations of various Trump cronies are ongoing.

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Much of this drama initially began when in 2016, several emails stolen by at least one anonymous hacker from the Democratic National Committee were published by WikiLeaks. The emails described the Democratic Party’s internal efforts to sabotage the Bernie Sanders campaign and advance Hillary Clinton as the Democratic Nominee in a power grab. **The ruling elite of this country saw the relatively minor social democratic reforms that Sanders promoted as a major threat to their bottom line, and colluded to stop him from winning the nomination.** When these emails were leaked, Clinton herself and many other Democratic Party members were quick to claim that some of the emails published were false and that the hackers were Russian military operatives seeking to aid Donald Trump’s presidential campaign.



*With coverage of the Mueller investigation taking the form of a reality-tv show, Trump seems to imagine himself as the hero of a fantasy epic.*

This was an obvious and successful effort to distract liberal voters from the content of the emails themselves and get them to focus their attention onto a supposed attack on American “democracy,” which paved the way for more potential anti-Russian hysteria.

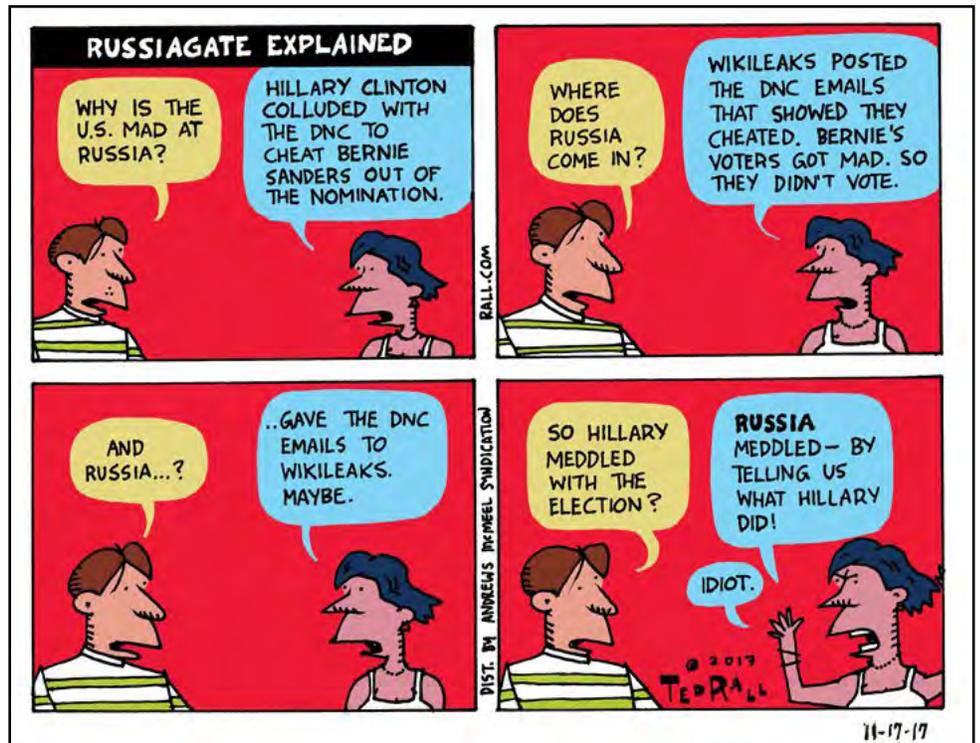
Meanwhile, counterintelligence work by the U.S. state was well underway even before the 2016 U.S. presidential election had ended. The investigation into Trump-Russia collusion began as one such operation and the United States Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein appointed a special counsel to take it over. That investigation determined that a Trump campaign adviser, George Papadopoulos, had claimed in a meeting with Australian diplomat Alexander Downer that “Russian officials” had possessed “damaging information” pertaining to then candidate Hillary Clinton.

Papadopoulos would later allege that he was setup by the FBI and Clinton supporters. While this claim is somewhat suspect, it does seem that the man who initially told him about the “Russian dirt on Clinton,” was Maltese professor Joseph Mifsud, who is a member of the Clinton Foundation.<sup>1</sup> The FBI did also have a spy working on the Trump campaign, Stefan Halper.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of whether or not Papadopoulos was set up, it is clear that the Democrats wanted to promote the idea of Russian interference in the election to distract from the dirty-tricks they pulled to ensure that Hillary won the Primaries.

- 1) <https://bit.ly/2V4aUu9> and <https://bit.ly/2UPRXq2>
- 2) <https://wapo.st/2vuGgLb>



Other Democratic lawmakers made accusations of Russian interference and cyberwarfare directed by the Russian State as the election drew nearer. Chief among them were Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein and Representative Adam B. Schiff who made declarations “based on briefings [they] received” from U.S. intelligence agencies. These agencies repeated similar claims themselves days later. This created increased paranoia about “election security” and assured liberals that if Trump were to be elected it would not be from failings in the political framework of U.S. democracy, but through nefarious foreign influence by a hostile power. This is a stark irony considering how often the U.S. has influenced politics in other countries through election “consultants” and much more direct interference through military coups to oust democratically elected leaders and install brutal puppet dictators to advance American imperialist agendas all across the globe.<sup>3</sup>



inauguration, faced widespread opposition and mobilization from liberals and leftists alike. The Democratic and Republican ruling elite no doubt noticed these mass mobilizations. Then-U.S. senator Jeff Sessions, who had been appointed by Trump to the position of Attorney General, was pressured to recuse himself from the still ongoing investigation shortly after his ascension to his position.

*The U.S. has influenced politics in other countries through election “consultants” and much more direct interference through military coups to oust democratically elected leaders and install brutal puppet dictators to advance American imperialist agendas all across the globe.*

After a campaign in which he appealed to white supremacy, blatant sexism, and jingoism Donald Trump was indeed elected to the presidency. Many of his initially attempted policies such as a racist travel ban on Muslims from certain countries, as well as his entire

3) For example, since WW2 the U.S. has sponsored over 50 military interventions and coups in the Caribbean and Latin America alone. <https://bit.ly/2IPGNQs>

On May 9th of 2017, then FBI director James Comey was dismissed by Trump. The many reasons given for Comey’s firing were contradictory and confusing. The mouthpieces of the administration tried to tell one story—such as the president being given recommendations to fire Comey—only for Trump himself to come out

and state that he made the decision of his own accord. Contradictions such as this between the president and his various spokespeople served to confuse the populace and throw the government into chaos and confusion. Regardless, the ostensible intent was very clear; to relieve the pressure on the government from the investigation into Trump’s supposed “Russian collusion” and secure this administration’s legitimacy into the eyes of the masses.

# ***I STAND WITH THE FBI AGAINST TRUMP, THE GOP AND FASCISM!***

*Over the past two years, liberals have rushed to defend the FBI against Trump, under the delusional belief that the security agency is a friend of the people, and not a brutal tool of the ruling elite.*

The exact opposite happened; on May 17th Robert Mueller was appointed as special counsel on the counterintelligence investigation after further pressure, particularly from Democrat lawmakers, who were concerned with what Comey's dismissal meant for their own "Anti-Trump" electoral agendas. As part of this, Mueller called a Grand Jury on August 3rd of 2017. This Grand Jury got to work subpoenaing documents and compelling witnesses for the next two years as they gathered more information for the Mueller investigation. What's more, there were multiple legal teams of attorneys assembled under Mueller's supervision. All this no doubt serves to expand the reach of the FBI and its ability to conduct surveillance in the future. The media frenzy around the investigation also helped to "rebrand" the FBI as part of "The Resistance" to Trump, while ignoring that this intelligence agency has a long and brutal history of surveilling, framing, and even murdering union organizers, civil rights activists, and revolutionaries.

What followed was a long two year investigation, with news media following each step of the investigation in a way that helped to channel the early mobilization against the Trump government into what was essentially a drawn out, televised political spectacle. Meanwhile, with liberals' eyes glued to the reality tv-esque drama of the

Mueller investigation, Trump was able to push harder for his racist border wall, and greatly expanded ICE's ability and capacity to detain those who are suspected of being undocumented, including hundreds of children who were ripped from their families. **The protests against these draconian policies were tiny compared to initial protests and mobilizations against his inauguration and Muslim ban.**

A major component of the mass hysteria surrounding the alleged Russian subversion of the U.S. state was the role

that various social media sites and tech companies played in "allowing" alleged Russian agents to conduct operations such as buying political advertisements and operating fake accounts to exploit existing divisions within American society and to polarize the political climate with active disinformation. As part of the general finger pointing, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter were quickly implicated.

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*Through COINTELPRO, the FBI played a key role in the downfall of the Black Panther Party.*





*Russiagate has provided a justification for massive censorship of the internet and social media by tech companies and the government.*

Liberal politicians and news outlets alleged that a Russian firm called the Internet Research Agency bought thousands of advertisements on social media and insinuated that had sites like Facebook and Reddit been more vigilant in policing their content, Hillary Clinton might have won the election.

While social media sites and the companies that operate them are not our friends—many of the owners of these sites have allowed reactionary and even outright fascist content to thrive on their platforms—the liberal fantasy that Hillary would have won if these sites had stricter censorship policies, ignores many basic political realities. It ignores many of the pre-existing divisions, such as the long legacy of white supremacy in the United States, and inherent contradictions of the state that the American right wing—not Russia—exploited and pushed to secure their hold on power. To blame Russian interference in social networks also ignores the inherent flaws and faults of neoliberal policies and empty faux-progressive politics pushed by the Democratic Party and Hillary Clinton.

**The Democratic Party used Russiagate and the role of tech companies to distract from these basic facts.** Unsurprisingly, many middle-class liberals who enthusiastically supported Hillary Clinton were quick to take the bait. To do otherwise would have meant coming to grips with the way in which the Democratic Party serves the U.S. elite in their corporate plunder of this country

and the world. Under the guise of protecting the country and “democracy” from Russian interference, the elite of this country worked with tech companies to roll out a massive censorship campaign. These companies gleefully complied with the demands of Democratic politicians to clamp down on accounts and pages—many of them which belong to leftists, radicals, Black activists, and also revolutionaries—who were dismissed as “Russian propaganda bots” because they were critical of the U.S. **Google likewise has begun censoring search results to**

**hide information critical of the United State government and the corporate elite which it serves.** To justify this campaign of massive censorship, Google published an internal document titled “The Good Censor.” This is yet another example of the close collaboration between private corporations and the state in their efforts to silence criticism and suppress dissent.

*To blame Russian interference in social networks also ignores the inherent flaws and faults of neoliberal policies and empty faux-progressive politics pushed by the Democratic Party and Hillary Clinton.*

Much of the political theater of the Mueller investigation has been a back and forth between the Democratic and Republican parties as they transparently wrestle for political control of the U.S. imperialist machine, while also jockeying for power and influence within their own parties. **This convoluted political intrigue has been conducted under the guise of “protecting democracy” and “#TheResistance” against Trump while the ruling elite of this country, from both parties, continue to deprive the working poor of the country and ignore their needs.**



*The elite of both Russia and the U.S. are enemies of the people of their countries, and the people of the world.*

Liberals have been quick to praise the intelligence apparatus of the U.S. state as a beacon of resistance to Trump. They hope that these agencies will remove him from office and “restore” America to the Obama era status-quo. **However, throughout their history these intelligence agencies have always been reactionary tools for the ruling elite, and today they eagerly surveil revolutionaries and activists, profile Muslims, and work to destroy Black communities.** Even now, many U.S. liberals in the Democratic Party are in a state of denial regarding the outcome of the Mueller investigation, much as they are in denial about Hillary Clinton’s loss in the 2016 presidential campaign and the fact that their supposedly progressive candidates are actually bought and sold by corporate interests.

*It should be perfectly clear by now that the Democratic Party is not trustworthy or in any way progressive.*

The political theater is ongoing, with Democrats now scrambling to find some new narrative to explain why the content of the Mueller Report contradicts their conspiracy theories about Trump-Russia collusion. Meanwhile, the Trump Administration has been able to pass more laws and enact policies to harm

millions of people, cutting social services, slashing the already meager environmental regulations, gutting education budgets, encouraging open racist violence in the streets, and locking migrant children up at the border while the middle-class liberals, fixated on the reality television courtroom drama of the Mueller Investigation, are unwilling and unable to join in serious and effective resistance to these reactionary policies.

**Instead they place their hopes in the intelligence agencies and the 2020 election.** While

the investigation has indeed exposed some of the actual excesses and outrageous corruption inherent in the ruling elite of both the United States and Russia, it should be perfectly clear by now that the Democratic Party is not trustworthy or in any way progressive.

Liberal politicians have once again proven themselves unwilling and unable to affect any meaningful, lasting social change. **The Democratic Party has not mounted any semblance of meaningful “Resistance” to the Trump Regime beyond empty talk—in fact they have used Trump’s election as a pretext to silence many voices that are actually pushing for progress.**

True resistance and lasting social change can only come from the mass struggle. **It can only occur when the people finally decide to band together and engage in serious and sustained open revolt against the ruling elite, both Democrat and Republican, and stand with and for the oppressed working peoples both within the United States and all across the world.** With the varying apparatuses and political factions of the U.S. turning on each other in a Machiavellian bid for power, the division within the American ruling class is growing and the U.S. state is mired in contradictions, providing revolutionary organizers with significant opportunities to build momentum and smash imperialism—U.S. and Russian—once and for all.

# U.S. Imperialism at the Border

by Khalil



*There has been mass outrage and protest against the Trump administration's increasingly fascist border and immigration policies. However, these policies are by-and-large a continuation of and expansion of those of the Obama administration. What's more, while Democratic politicians now oppose a bigger border wall, they are still increasing the drone presence at the border. Given this it is important to examine the history of U.S. imperialism in Central America and how it relates to the present situation at the border.*

Since taking office, President Trump has pursued a “zero tolerance” policy on “illegal” immigration. The implementation of this policy has led to massive outrage, especially over the detainment and caging of thousands of migrant children who were forcibly separated from their families. At the same time, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Border Patrol have become more openly and explicitly white supremacist—no doubt emboldened in part by Trump’s embrace of white nationalism—and have acted in an increasingly brutal and fascist manner. As a result, the abuse and oppression of migrants at the hands of the U.S. state has grown significantly in recent years.

With the arrival of a large group of migrants to the border in late November of last year, the Trump government doubled down on midterm election promises and sent 5,200 US soldiers (in addition to the over 2,000 members of the National Guard already there). This is on top of the tens of thousands of Border Patrol, ICE, and local law enforcement already working on the detention, deportation,

and oppression of migrants at the border and across the country. After a group of migrants attempted to cross the border and threw stones at U.S. forces, the Border Patrol fired tear gas into the crowds in Mexico to quell their resistance. **The gassing of asylum seekers and migrants drew international condemnation, but this gassing is only one example of the brutality migrants face at the hands of the U.S. state.**

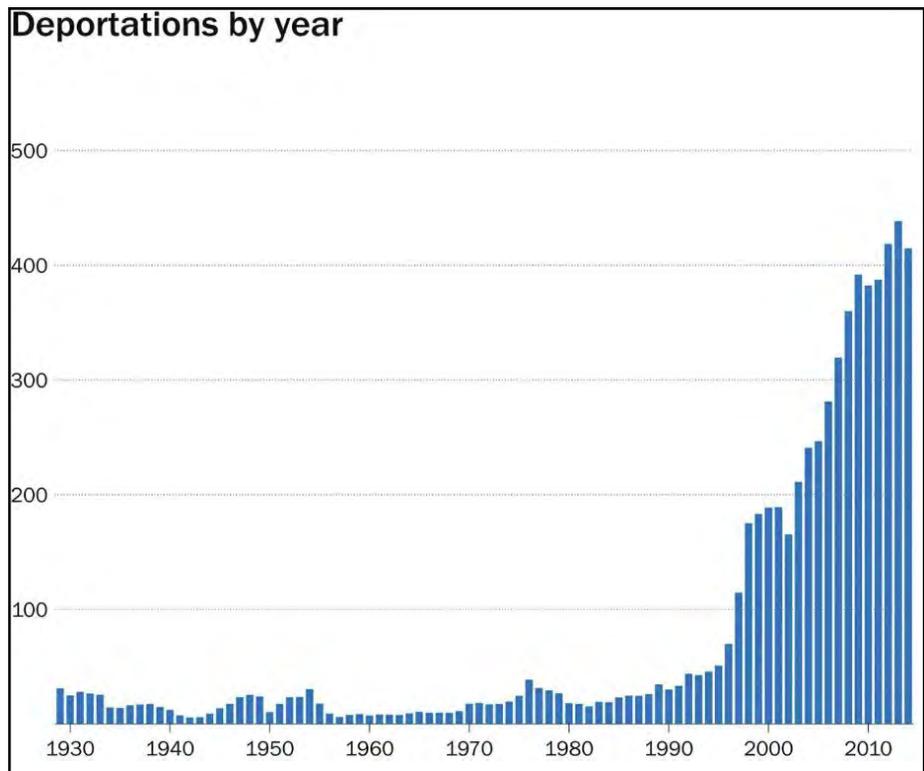
Since December 2018, at least four people have died while in Border Patrol custody, including two children from Guatemala, aged 7 and 8. Even more disturbing, a January 2019 report found that at least 22 people had died while imprisoned in ICE detention centers in the first two years of Trump’s presidency alone. **These deaths are explained away by ICE and CBP as “extremely rare” but are in fact a direct result of both the poor conditions and neglect in detention centers, as well as the psychological, sexual, and physical abuse which are business-as-usual for U.S. law enforcement.**

But these abuses are not unique to the Trump presidency. In fact, while Trump has introduced more explicitly racist rhetoric to immigration policy, pushed for a border wall along the entire southern border, and even declared a national emergency over the issue, **the vast majority of his administration's "zero tolerance" policy is a continuation and expansion of policies set under Obama.** What's more, the Democrats have put forward many false solutions to the current "crisis" in order to distract from the the root issue that causes hundreds of thousands of people to flee from their homes in poor countries in the first place—that is, capitalist imperialism.

This includes U.S.-sponsored wars, coups, and dictatorial regimes which terrorize the people; competition between the U.S. and other imperialist countries like Russia and China over the land, labor, markets, and resources of oppressed nations; and neoliberal and austerity policies dictated by the imperialist power (and their institutions like the International Monetary Fund), which drive millions of people into poverty, force peasants off their lands, and only enrich the ruling classes of the imperialist powers and the comprador puppets in the neocolonies.

*In order to effectively fight back against racist attacks and deportations of immigrants, we have to avoid the tunnel-vision promoted by much of corporate media which places all the blame for these problems on Trump.*

In order to effectively fight back against racist attacks and deportations of immigrants, we have to avoid the tunnel-vision promoted by much of corporate media which places all the blame for these problems on Trump. **Instead, we must look at the legacy of immigration policy and U.S. imperialism in Latin America.**



*Deportations had been increasing exponentially long before Trump took office.*

### **The Creation and Development of Mass Deportations**

The foundation of Trump's immigration policy was already in place. While there is a long history of deportation and oppression of immigrants in the U.S., the government first began to shift to its current path of militarization of the border under Bill Clinton. **Clinton greatly increased the number of crimes which could lead to deportation, opening the floodgates to**

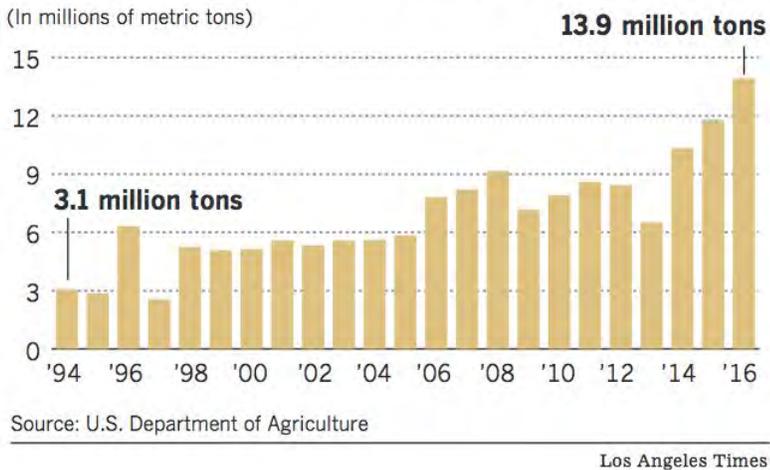
**a hyper-militarized border policy—more deportations, more officers equipped with military gear, more detention center prisons, etc.** This was a requirement of the monopoly capitalist class that Clinton served. For a period after the Cold War, U.S. imperialism was the only superpower in the world, and used its new position to rapidly expand its power. This period is

sometimes referred to as "globalization"—in which American multi-national corporations greatly expanded their influence all over the world. Without a major strategic rival they were able to open up a variety of new markets for U.S. exploitation which had previously been part of the Soviet Union's imperial sphere of influence.



## Corn exports to Mexico

Since NAFTA was implemented in 1994, Mexico has steadily increased the amount of corn it buys from the U.S.



*Since the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), U.S. corn exports to Mexico have surged, displacing corn grown by Mexican peasants, and forcing them into bankruptcy.*

Through Free Trade Agreements like NAFTA, the U.S. corporate elite was able to more effectively outsource production to Mexico (and elsewhere) where wages were significantly lower than in the U.S. **This helped to lower wages in the U.S. while also driving many poor Mexicans off their land as multinational corporations rushed to setup factories in Mexico and U.S. agricultural conglomerates were able to undercut Mexican peasant farmers' ability to sell their crops.** This U.S. corporate plunder increased the number of poor and unemployed here in the U.S., and also compelled many people, especially from Mexico, to come to the U.S. for work. Corporations were eager to take advantage of the cheap labor of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. and used the threat of deportation to impose long hours and dangerous working conditions.

The ruling elite of this country also promoted white supremacist propaganda which aimed to distract the white working class and middle class from the fact that capitalist plunder was the source of their increasingly dire economic circumstances. Instead, they were

encouraged to blame immigrants for their woes. This propaganda also helped to justify the expansion of the border security forces which were needed in increasingly large numbers to control undocumented laborers.

These deportation policies continued to expand under Bush. His administration used the 9/11 attacks to justify massive increases in domestic surveillance, militarization, and wars abroad, all in the name of "security." Bush also began a policy called "Secure Communities" which facilitated cooperation between local police/sheriff departments and immigration agencies by sharing fingerprint data. **This led many undocumented immigrants to be turned over to ICE for deportation (a then newly created agency) who had only committed minor traffic violations or other similar offenses.** But it was Obama's administration which turned this militarized border security system into a well-oiled deportation machine. This expansion of deportation machinery was in large part a response to both the growing unemployment and poverty after the 2008 capitalist crisis, as well as the growing politicization of many immigrants.

In Obama's first four years in office, it was estimated his administration spent over \$18 billion on immigration enforcement—a massive increase from the Bush years. This trend didn't reverse either, in 2016 alone, a whopping \$19

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billion was budgeted for CBP and ICE. Obama's "crowning achievement" however, was deporting record numbers of people. **Around 2.5 million people were deported during his administration, more than any other president before him.** While ICE claimed the majority of people were criminals and "threats to national security," the majority either had no criminal record or only had minor violations on file.

Under Obama, even basic legal proceedings were routinely discarded for immigrant children, and between 2013 and 2016, around 7,700 children were deported without ever appearing before immigration court. These courts are often merely there to rubber-stamp the deportation process, but the growing tendency to deport people without even a pretense of a democratic process reflects the increasingly fascist way the U.S. treats undocumented immigrants.

On top of this, Obama massively militarized the border, with devastating consequences. His administration oversaw construction of steel walls, a surge in the number of agents in both CBP and ICE, and huge increases in funding for these agencies. **He also made border crossing exceedingly dangerous. This was done through bills like a \$600 million “border security” bill in 2010, which added 1,500 new agents, expanded the number of Border Patrol checkpoints, and even added a fleet of aerial surveillance drones to the Border Patrol’s arsenal.**

*The U.S. state relies on the fact that many migrants will die in making the border crossing through the desert to help check the flow of immigrants into this country.*

With more agents, checkpoints, and surveillance, many migrants were compelled to travel in more dangerous conditions and through more dangerous terrain to avoid the violence of various agents and goons. The U.S. state relies on the fact that many migrants will die in making the border crossing through the desert to help check the flow of immigrants into this country. Border Patrol agents routinely pour out water that activists leave at the desert crossings.

Violence and corruption by immigration agencies is rampant. The CBP is one of the



*Trump’s response of tear-gassing migrants after some resisted the border militarization by throwing stones is similar to the harsh Israeli responses to Palestinian protestors. This is but one example of how Israeli tactics and technology tested against the Palestinian people are being adopted for use at the border with Mexico.*

deadliest and most corrupt law enforcement agencies in America. Recent investigations have shown that in the 15 years from 2003-2018, 97 people—both migrants and citizens—were killed in encounters with the Border Patrol, and most of the agents who murdered people were never reprimanded. **Between 2005 and 2012, nearly one Border Patrol officer was arrested every single day for misconduct.** Only the most egregious cases of misconduct lead to the arrests of border patrol agents, so it is fair to conclude that actual misconduct is even more ubiquitous than this disturbing statistic indicates. Sexual assault against migrant women is also rampant in both agencies, with thousands of complaints filed against ICE and many thousands more left unreported out of humiliation and fear of deportation and retaliation.

On top of all this, ICE and CBP have routinely discarded basic Constitutional protections against unlawful search and seizure in the so-called “100-mile border zone”—an area in which 65.3% of the U.S. population (and ~75% of the U.S. Latino population) lives. As a result, these agencies have been able to effectively operate outside the bounds of the U.S. legal system, and daily terrorize poor migrants or anyone who looks like they might be a poor migrant.





*Border Patrol agents regularly destroy aid packages and water left in the Sonoran Desert for migrants by local activists.*

Because of the increased difficulty and brutality of the journey, migrants are forced to travel deeper and deeper into the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, where many are found dead of dehydration, heat exhaustion, or infection. By the CBP's own accounts, the number of people who died crossing the border was over 7,000 between 1998 and 2017 alone, and this is likely a gross underestimate.

Trump has certainly intensified state repression against migrants and undocumented people, and stoked racist fervor to blame migrants for poverty here in the U.S. **However, the Democrats do not and have never supported the true interests of the masses of immigrants, migrants, and refugees.** Clinton and Obama's policies are testament to this fact.

*When peasants and workers in these countries try to unionize and demand better conditions, these companies routinely send out hired goons to attack and murder activists.*

Today Democrats like Clinton and Obama shed crocodile tears over the plight of migrants to create political hay and gain votes in various elections. But they are also worried that Trump's more openly fascist and racist policies will damage America's image internationally and foster greater protest and

more rebellion domestically. **However, because Democrats and Republicans both fundamentally represent the interests of a small ruling class—the CEOs, executives, bankers, politicians, generals, and other financial oligarchs who run this country—they aren't interested in getting to the root of these issues.** In fact, the U.S. ruling class constantly creates refugee crises as it sponsors war and violence around the world.

## **U.S. Imperialism in Latin America**

Latin America in particular has been victim to U.S. intervention and corporate plunder for well over a century. For example, the first North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was signed in 1994, allowed the U.S. to flood the Mexican market with corn—a staple crop in Mexico—produced by giant, subsidized corporate farms in the U.S. These U.S. corporate agricultural monopolies were able to out-compete Mexican peasant farmers. This effectively destroyed the peasants' ability to sell their corn and other crops at a rate that allowed them to live. **Since they could no longer sell their own crops, at least 2 million peasants in Mexico were forced off their land and lost their means of livelihood.** This is one of thousands of examples of how NAFTA facilitated corporate plunder in Mexico.

U.S. companies have also long maintained control over the natural resources of Latin American countries. For example, big monopoly capitalists and landowners such as Dole and United Fruit Company (now Chiquita) own much of the land in Central America and the Caribbean, and have invested in railways and communication industry—not for the benefit of the people in these countries, but to facilitate exploitation and plunder. When peasants and workers in these countries try to unionize and demand better conditions, these companies routinely send out hired goons to attack and murder activists. Unions in Colombia have repeatedly criticized Coca-Cola for hiring local right-wing paramilitaries who, between 1990-2003, murdered at least nine union activists at local bottling plants.

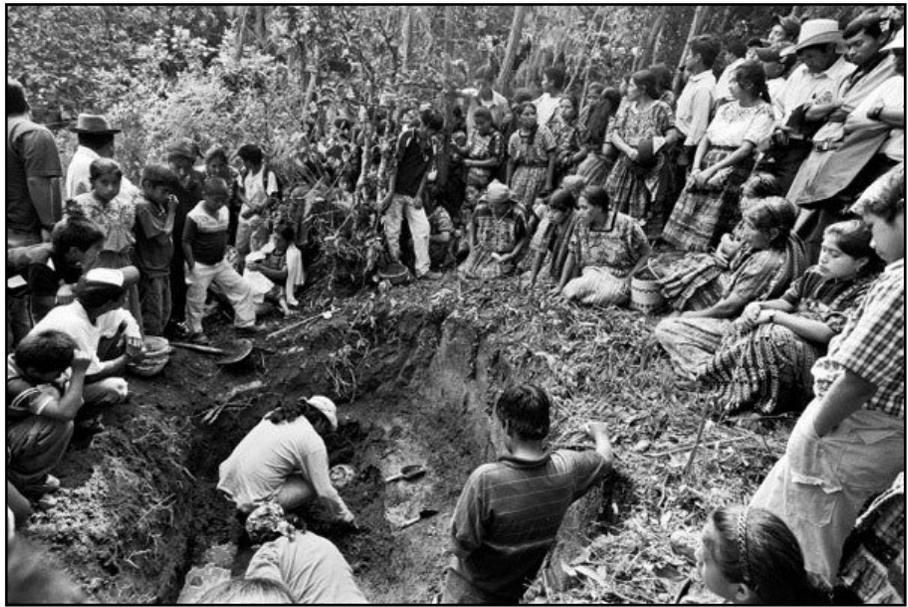
There is also a long history of companies such as these collaborating with the U.S. government, and the CIA in particular, to orchestrate pro-U.S. coups and wars to crush people's rebellion.

One of the most gruesome and well-known examples of this is U.S. intervention in the Central American country of Guatemala. Beginning in the early 20th century when U.S. imperialism was expanding its regional and global power, the United Fruit Company (UFCO) was the biggest landlord and employer in Guatemala. The workers at UFCO plantations were brutally exploited, barely able to feed themselves or their families as they picked crops to be sold in the United States.

This was not unique to UFCO, but is typical of how all big American monopolies worked to bring in profits and increase America's portion of the world's resources, markets, and labor. To help with this, the U.S. and other imperialists cultivated and bought off the local landowning elite so that they would operate as a local ruling elite sympathetic to and dependent on capitalist-imperialism. **This is neo-colonialism, where a country is independent in name, but in reality it is dominated economically, politically, and culturally by imperialist powers.**

*The U.S. and other imperialists cultivated and bought off the local landowning elite so that they would operate as a local ruling elite sympathetic to and dependent on capitalist-imperialism.*

The power of companies like UFCO also rely on extreme racism. About half of Guatemala's population at the time was from one of the many diverse indigenous Mayan communities. Most of them were poor, landless peasants or wage-workers, and faced extreme oppression by the Guatemalan state and the hired thugs of the UFCO and other corporations.



*One of many mass graves in Guatemala.*

Due to the brutal conditions the peasantry faced both from the UFCO and the domestic landowning elite, the country was rocked by protests, strikes, and rebellions of the people, led by both revolutionary and liberal/reformist groups. **The fascist regime of Jorge Ubico, which granted huge benefits to UFCO and local landlords, was overthrown in a democratic revolution in 1944.** In 1951, the reformist candidate Jacobo Arbenz was elected as president, promising to redistribute some of the cropland held by foreign companies and big landlords to the poor peasantry. This proposal had wide spread support, but directly threatened the profits of UFCO.

UFCO had particularly strong ties with the Eisenhower administration which ruled the U.S. at the time—both Secretary of State John Dulles and director of the CIA Allen Dulles were on the Board of United Fruit. The U.S. capitalist class—and especially the capitalists of United Fruit—saw the land redistribution in Guatemala not only as a threat to their immediate profits, but as something which could inspire revolutionary movements in Latin America to break free of U.S. domination and plunder. In 1954, the CIA engineered a coup in Guatemala. **General Carlos Castillo Armas led a section of the Guatemalan military to overthrow Arbenz and establish himself as a military dictator. Immediately, he banned labor unions, left-wing political parties, and returned land to UFCO and the domestic Guatemalan elite.**



A series of military dictatorships propped up by U.S. aid and weapons followed, and so too did the armed resistance of the Guatemalan people. From the 1960s up until 1996, various revolutionaries, left-wing political groups, and people's militias bravely fought back against the fascist onslaught of various right-wing military regimes and juntas. The struggle intensified, and the people began to form revolutionary organizations to lead their struggle.

In 1980, one such organization, the Committee of Peasant Unity, led a group of peasants in a march to Guatemala City to protest the kidnapping and murder of peasants by the Guatemalan military. Once there, a group of peasants, students, and activists occupied the Spanish Embassy to garner international attention and support for their struggle. **The Guatemalan military responded by launching white phosphorus and Molotov cocktails into the Embassy, starting a fire which killed 36 people, including bystanders.** The outrage sparked by this massacre led to a surge in guerrilla activity in the countryside.

*With the full support of U.S. imperialism, the Montt regime pursued a genocidal "kill all, loot all, burn all" strategy against the mostly indigenous Mayan population of the Guatemalan countryside.*

This struggle reached its height under the dictatorship of Efraín Ríos Montt, who seized power in a coup in 1982.

Following the coup, President Reagan dramatically increased the amount of weaponry and military equipment to the Guatemalan government. The U.S. military trained Guatemalan army officers and soldiers in counter-insurgency, including at the infamous School of the Americas, where many Latin American generals and anti-communist paramilitaries received training.



*The banner reads "No to Imperialism, Guatemala is Not For Sale. Alliance for Life and Peace"*

With the full support of U.S. imperialism, the Montt regime pursued a genocidal "kill all, loot all, burn all" strategy against the mostly indigenous Mayan population of the Guatemalan countryside—where people's resistance was strongest. **Mayan villages were torched, and fleeing villagers were raped, tortured, and murdered by the Guatemalan military and by pro-government death squads made up of local thugs and criminals.**

**This genocidal war, which only ended in 1996, resulted in the deaths of at least 200,000 people. Anywhere from 40,000-50,000 were "disappeared"—kidnapped by the police or military and never seen again. It is estimated at least 1 million people were internally displaced, and at least 100,000 fled to Mexico or the United States. Guatemala was only one of many regimes propped up by the United States to crush popular movements. Military regimes in El Salvador, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Peru all waged massive wars against the people, often employing similar "scorched earth" tactics as the Guatemalan military.**

**This catastrophic war in Guatemala was not just an incident of Cold War proxy conflict, as many pro-imperialist academics and "historians" now claim, but is the operating logic of U.S. imperialism, and capitalist imperialism more broadly. This is clear when examining U.S. support for the coup in Honduras in 2009—nearly 20 years after the Cold War ended.**



*Protesters clash with Honduran soldiers in the capital city of Tegucigalpa in 2009.*

In July 2009, the Honduran military overthrew president Manuel Zelaya, sparking protests which the military met with disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and extrajudicial killings. Zelaya was a member of the Honduran landowning elite—the dozen or so families which collaborated with the U.S. and multi-national corporations to plunder the country. **In 2009, he began enacting policies similar to Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia—all countries which are dominated by Chinese imperialism.** He came into increasing conflict with other elites, and joined the regional, Venezuelan-led alliances Petrocaribe and ALBA (which function mainly to facilitate Chinese and Russian capitalist-imperialist exploitation of Latin America).

***Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton initially denied any role in the coup, Wikileaks later revealed that the ousting of Zelaya was supported by the U.S. State Department.***

While the country was still primarily under the thumb of U.S. imperialism, the CIA and U.S. State Department were concerned that they were losing control of their puppet. So, Zelaya was kidnapped by the military and flown out of the country so a new regime could be consolidated. While Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton initially denied any role

in the coup, Wikileaks later revealed that the ousting of Zelaya was supported by the U.S. State Department. Clinton worked to stall and prevent action by neighboring countries to restore Zelaya to power, and controlled the flow of aid to the country to gear up for elections which could be used to “fairly” establish a Honduran government more amenable to U.S. interests. **This whole incident is a typical**

**example of how inter-imperialist competition plays out in neocolonies.**

Since then, the Honduran state has become more bloated, corrupt, and violent than ever. Power has been further consolidated in the hands of the presidency, and the military police are granted a carte blanche to commit violence against the people, often openly collaborating with local gangs and cartels. **The murder rate in the country skyrocketed by 50% from 2008-2011.** Peasant and union organizers, opposition political candidates, and activists fighting for environmental, indigenous, and LGBTQ rights are regularly targeted for assassination (by either local thugs or U.S.-trained soldiers).

Capitalist “development policies” and inter-imperialist competition create the conditions that compel people to leave their countries and seek asylum in places like the United States. The coups, civil wars, and poverty caused by neo-colonial rule allow gangs and death squads to run rampant and act as low-level thugs for imperialist interests and the ruling classes of these countries. There is very open collaboration between gangs, Latin American governments, and multinational corporations such as Chiquita and Coca-Cola, and these gangs are often used against labor unions, peasant organizations, indigenous communities, student movements, and other people’s movements which the neo-colonial regimes see as threats to their rule. **On top of all this, the United States takes advantage of the vulnerability of many refugees and immigrants to exploit and oppress them once they make it across the border.**





*Tyson Chicken factories are notorious for long hours and dangerous working conditions.*

### **The U.S. Ruling Class Relies on Undocumented Labor**

The monopoly-capitalist class of this country needs easily exploitable immigrant labor. **Because the mere existence of immigrants and refugees is criminalized, undocumented workers fleeing countries like Guatemala and Honduras can be employed well below the minimum wage, and are denied even the few meager labor rights that exist in this country.** What's more, the U.S. state prevents them from accessing the few public welfare benefits that still exist in this country (despite the fact that undocumented immigrants still pay the government billions of dollars in taxes). Because they are constantly threatened with deportation, undocumented workers face some significant risks when fighting back against this oppression and exploitation.

The big monopoly capitalists use these circumstances to their advantage all the time. **For example, in 2001 it was revealed that Tyson—the largest meat processor and manufacturer in the U.S.—actively smuggled workers across the border to work at their plants in this country.** Workers were often told they would be given a path to citizenship only to wind up becoming wage-slaves in meat-packing plants. Injuries in Tyson plants are common—the production lines move so fast most workers develop repetitive stress injuries or get injured using the machinery. In addition, Tyson—as well as other poultry companies like Sanderson Farms, Perdue Farms, and Pilgrim's Pride—were found guilty of denying bathroom breaks to workers in 2016, forcing many to wear adult diapers to work or relieve themselves on the floor to avoid punishment from supervisors. For

undocumented workers, an injury on the job or a reprimand by a supervisor often leads not just to being laid off, but to deportation as the company no longer has any use for them.

But the U.S. ruling class cannot use fear as a weapon forever. Inevitably, workers see the direct contradiction between their interests and the interests of the CEOs, executives, etc. They inevitably start to demand better wages, better working conditions, and more. Because of this, the U.S. state has created a whole system for deportation—not to uphold “the rule of law,” but to act as a strikebreaking force against workers who raise the slightest protest to their working conditions. **That is, to uphold the rule of capital over labor.**

*Inevitably, workers see the direct contradiction between their interests and the interests of the CEOs, executives, etc.*

It should come as no surprise that the first two large-scale deportation operations in the U.S. were against Mexican migrant workers who were no longer able to be profitably employed—first, during the Great Depression, to open up more jobs for white workers in the New Deal and crush unionizing efforts in Mexican and Chicano-majority workplaces; **second, in the 1950s during “Operation Wetback”—in which over 1.1 million people were deported in 1954 alone—as the ruling class stoked racist hatred blaming undocumented migrant workers for the depression of wages among other workers.**



*The U.S. government has ICE keep immigrants in brutal immigration prisons while they are awaiting deportation.*



*There have been a number of large scale protests against the government's family separation policy. However many of these have been limited to calls to "abolish ICE" and "end family separation." While important, these demands are narrow in scope, led by bourgeois reformers, and do not address the underlying issue of U.S. imperialism.*

**Still, deportations are principally a tool to control the pool of undocumented labor and stoke racist divisions among the people.** The threat of deportation is ever-present for immigrant workers, and the slightest sign of resistance to oppression often results in a call to ICE. In Boston—a so-called “sanctuary city”—in 2017 an undocumented construction worker had ICE called on him by his employer after he was injured on the job and tried to claim workers comp!

*This [white supremacist] logic is reflective of how capital views labor, as useful only insofar as it can be profitably employed.*

**Workers in Tyson plants or in California fields who raise their voices in protest of the brutal conditions often face the same response from their bosses—justified with the white supremacist logic that migrants and refugees are expendable.** This logic is reflective of how capital views labor, as useful only insofar as it can be profitably employed.

**Once this is impossible, due to injury, economic crises, or political resistance of the workers demanding better conditions and wages, then the labor and lives of the working class are seen by the capitalists as useless and disposable.** The officers in Border Patrol and ICE also take up this same logic to justify their actual role in society.

This white supremacist and fascist trend has grown stronger within these groups (and U.S. society more broadly) in recent years as well. **Calls to deport all undocumented people, to crack down on so-called “anchor babies” or get rid of birthright citizenship, and to “build the wall” are related to fascist calls to make the U.S. a “white nation.”** While the U.S. is already a white supremacist country, a growing section of law enforcement—especially immigration enforcement—is taking up politics that advocate for one form or another of ethnic cleansing in the U.S. However, many among the ruling elite still need a large number of undocumented workers to exploit.





Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez   
@AOC

Follow

**#AbolishICE** means not having an agency that incarcerates children and sexually assaults women with impunity.

It does not mean abolish deportation.

Also, I have no problem saying white supremacy has no place in this country.

It's the GOP that struggles to say that.

Katie Pavlich  @KatiePavlich

@Ocasio2018 wants to abolish ICE. Today ICE deported an actual Nazi from her congressional district in Queens. [twitter.com/ABC7NY/status/...](https://twitter.com/ABC7NY/status/...)

8:31 AM - 21 Aug 2018

*Politicians like AOC often use slogans and social media spectacles to cultivate a progressive image. However, they ultimately serve the interests of the ruling elite.*

Trump's increasingly militarized and openly racist immigration policy is reflective of these white supremacist and fascist trends within the U.S. state as a whole. But despite this growing threat to oppressed people, the official opposition to Trump's immigration policy has been especially uninspiring. The "progressive" Democrats such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have raised radical-sounding slogans to "Abolish ICE." **However, this slogan has been gutted of any meaning, and now only represents a reformist measure to shift the task of deportations from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) back to the Department of Labor** (where Immigration and Naturalization Services was before it was transformed into ICE under Bush). AOC herself, in typical fashion, has back-peddled her position on this as well, clarifying in a tweet that abolish ICE "does not mean abolish deportation."

In addition, all Democrats in the House—including all the new "progressives"—voted to allocate special funding to DHS during the most recent government shutdown. This granted funding to ICE and CBP to continue their "business-as-usual" in oppressing migrants while the representatives of the ruling class bickered

over how militarized they wanted to make the border. In effect, this contradiction reflects the fact that many among the ruling elite rely on undocumented workers for cheap labor, and as a result they would take a big hit to their profits if every undocumented person was deported.

**On the other hand, the ruling elite is in agreement that they need a large militarized force to monitor, control, and deport undocumented people by the millions.** If people in this country want to join the struggles of undocumented people, we must understand that the ruling elite have not, cannot, and will not fix these issues.

As revolutionaries, our solidarity with refugees must come not from a place of pity—which is the dominant way liberals view immigrants—but from the recognition that we have a common oppressor: the U.S. monopoly-capitalist ruling class

and the state it controls. The same state which launches ICE raids on poor immigrant workers and intervenes in countries all over the world, unleashes police attacks on working-class Black and Latino communities. **The same ruling class which feeds immigrants false promises of citizenship, feeds poor white workers a lie of "superiority," and confines the entire working class of this country in the chains of wage-slavery.** Solidarity with refugees ultimately means uniting in struggle against our common enemy, and ultimately overthrowing this imperialist system, and creating a truly pro-people, socialist, and anti-imperialist society in its place.

*As revolutionaries, our solidarity with refugees must come not from a place of pity[...]but from the recognition that we have a common oppressor: the U.S. monopoly-capitalist ruling class and the state it controls.*



# U.S. and Chinese Imperialists Struggle for Supremacy

by Art



Recent trade disputes and standoffs in the South China Sea have put the spotlight on U.S.-China relations. As tensions continue to mount between these rival empires, people are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of a possible third world war. Both of these countries are drastically expanding military spending, as are other imperialist powers around the world. A new nuclear arms race has also begun, as the so-called great powers rush to be the first to develop new weapons capable of vaporizing cities and destroying all human life. The people of this country face many questions today, including what sort of struggle must be waged against World War III by activists and revolutionaries in the U.S.

In the United States much of the political discourse is trapped in a debate between those supporting Trump and those opposed to him, but both the Democratic and Republican parties show remarkable consensus on foreign policy issues. At the same time, voices opposed to a future world war—and ongoing proxy wars—remain weak and dispersed. **This situation must change to prevent a catastrophic and apocalyptic global war.** Understanding rising global tensions, in particular between the U.S. and China—a rising global and imperial power—is essential to plotting a path out of this madness.

The risk of World War III should be understood as a major threat to the interests of working people. **In the end, the capitalist class of leading powers like the U.S. find it hard to squeeze enough wealth out of workers, whether by machinery or management tactics, to feed their never-ending greed.** Shareholders in corporations—dominantly represented by the super-rich, and not by small-time investors in the market—demand an ever

increasing return on their investments, returns they need in order to remain dominant in their struggle to outmaneuver competitors.

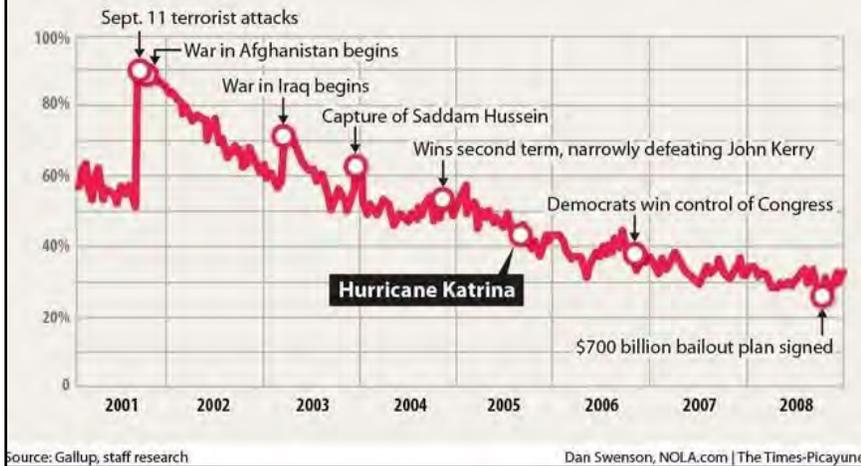
At the same time, managerial and technical innovations in business are quickly copied, leaving it hard for today's magnates to retain their current power and advantage over their rivals. Correspondingly, competition by foreign powers for world markets is growing increasingly intense. Increased hardships for the masses at home follows from this, as social services are cut and employment opportunities and wages do not keep up with rising costs of living.

As these problems at home add up, pressure increases for a showdown abroad between imperialist powers. The capitalists don't want a war as long as their power relative to their rivals is increasing. **But faced with a choice between power and loss of power, they always quickly settle for using the blood of the masses in attempts to secure new markets and global dominance.** These are the laws of history under our present system.



## GEORGE W. BUSH JOB APPROVAL RATINGS

A look at how the former president's job approval ratings gradually fell from a spike following the terrorists attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. By the time Hurricane Katrina hit, Bush's ratings were in the 40 percent field, before dropping to around 35 percent at the end of his presidency.



Historically, we in the U.S. have repeatedly been duped when “our” ruling class has attempted to sell us on the merit of a new war. The conservative “think-tank” the Brookings Institute gloated in 2003 that “*The Iraq war validated a basic rule of American politics: the American public closes ranks in times of national crisis. In the prolonged march to war, the public was divided and ambivalent about the wisdom of invading Iraq rather than relying on continued United Nations weapons inspections [the charge that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction was later revealed to have been fabricated in the rush to war—Red Star]. Most of those doubts evaporated once the bombs began falling. And the surge of patriotism not only boosted public support for President Bush, but extended beyond the White House to raise optimism about the country’s institutions and American society as a whole.*”<sup>1</sup> Once the military operations against Iraq began on March 19, 2003, support for the war surged from 58 to 72 percent. Support for President George W. Bush surged at the same time to 71 percent. Similarly in 1991, support for a war with Iraq jumped from 55% to 80% immediately after troops were deployed.

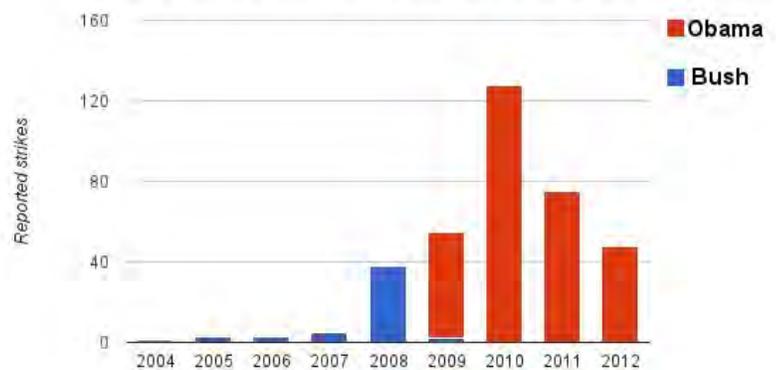
As outrage about the lies perpetuated to justify the war piled

up—in particular outrage over the fact that the evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was fabricated—opposition to the war began to mount. However, large protests against the war effort generally fizzled out following the election of President Obama. Many in the anti-war movement were duped by his empty promises that he was opposed to the Iraq War and would end it once elected. Instead he expanded war, military spending, and drone strikes.

The U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are still ongoing. And yet, these disasters—and the significant horror inflicted upon the peoples in these countries as a result—may look minor compared to the war currently being planned by the ruling classes of the world’s leading powers. **Those in charge of the establishment in the U.S. are already thinking about how to get us to support a new world war.**

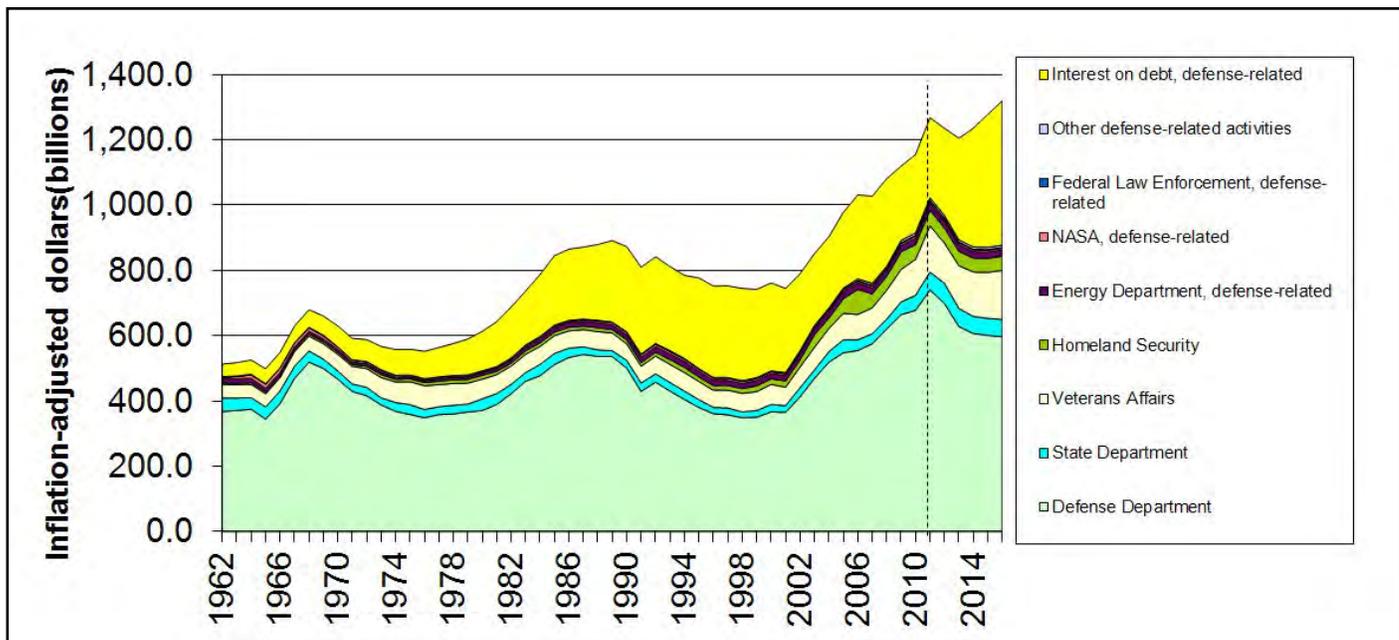
*Large protests against the war effort generally fizzled out following the election of President Obama. Many in the anti-war movement were duped by [Obama's] empty promises that he was opposed to the Iraq War and would end it once elected.*

## Reported Drone Strikes



Covert Drone War - www.tbij.com

1) <https://brook.gs/2ON8zgak>



*Military spending has ballooned and the ruling elite of this country only plan to increase it further as they prepare for World War III.*

Their current plan to prepare for World War III involves massive increases to military spending—to be paid for by taxing the poor and borrowing from the future—and the elite of this country need to drum up support for the war preparations and the corresponding spending increases. As the U.S. military corporation RAND stated in a recent report: “[The Department of Defense] may not be able to secure the necessary resources or be given the leeway to change how it does business or to redirect its investments without broader public acceptance that the chance of warfare with Russia and China is likely enough to merit additional preparation.”<sup>2</sup> Current U.S. military spending is about \$750 billion a year, though it is well above \$1 trillion a year when including debt payments for past military funding.

Frustration with almost two decades of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have dampened the U.S. public’s enthusiasm for the next war. **However, most Americans are currently being inundated with the idea that all attention must be devoted to the 2020 presidential elections.** These elections are framed as the most important decision that Americans will have to make. The people of this country remain generally unaware that all presidents, Democratic and Republican alike, have supported the ongoing war efforts and increased military spending. Despite claims that elections are a

chance for Americans to exercise their democratic freedoms, there is not a single candidate who supports reducing military spending and halting preparations for World War III.

In order to see through the lies that we are being sold, we must study the actual political and military situation, understand the underlying dynamics of the new arms race and war preparations, and find a way out of this mess for the people.

In Lenin’s 1916 text, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, he maps out the interrelation between economic and military competition between imperialist powers. **Economic competition between large global powers reflects an ultimately antagonistic struggle between rival imperialist powers to dominate peoples, resources, and markets, in an attempt to control the lion’s share of the world’s capital.** It is a struggle which cannot be resolved peacefully, because of the fundamental interest of the capitalists to control an ever greater share of productive activity, and correspondingly to extract a greater share of the wealth produced by the sweat and blood of the working peoples of the world.

Imperialist countries in the modern era dominate other states through economic, diplomatic, political, and military means. Ultimately this situation is very harmful for people in an imperialist country as well as for the masses of people who become victims of its wars, sanctions, and deceit abroad.

2) <https://bit.ly/2EW3MY3>

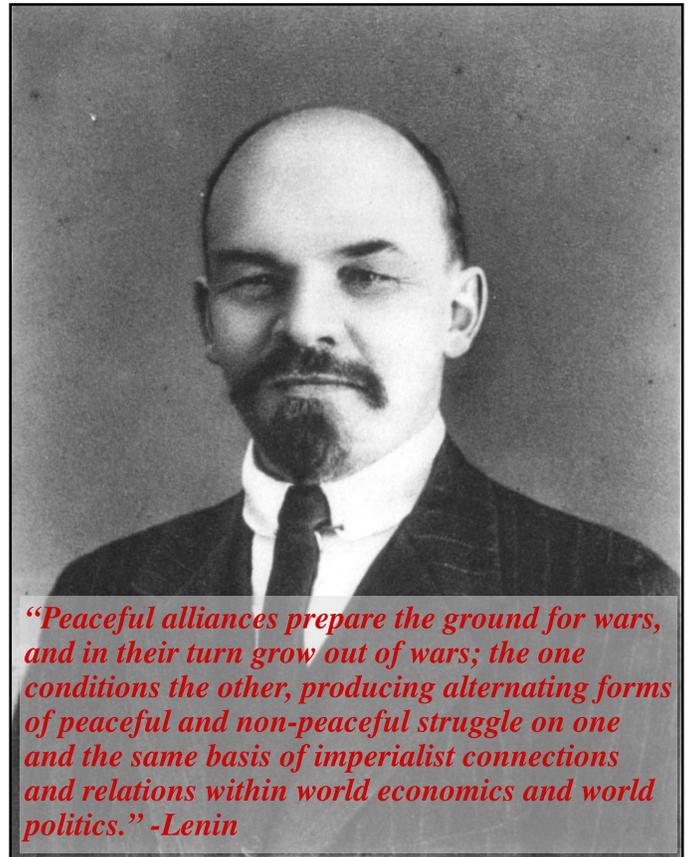


The masses in the United States and other similar imperialist countries like China are constantly told to blame their problems on countries and peoples abroad. **In fact the root cause of their hardships is the monopoly on power in their respective countries by the super-rich.** The masses must work for fractions of the wealth they create on the job. They are made to trade in their meager earnings to landlords who charge exorbitant rents. And their ability to receive decent services such as healthcare, education, or simply to breathe fresh air are constantly threatened by the interest of the rich to increase their profits. The working people in imperialist countries share an interest with the working people of the world to overthrow this system of capitalism and imperialism.

*The working people in imperialist countries share an interest with the working people of the world to overthrow this system of capitalism and imperialism.*

Revolutionary defeatism, a principle outlined by Vladimir Lenin, describes the interest of the masses to oppose the ruling class of their own country in a period of inter-imperialist war, and organize in favor of the defeat of their own country. This is because defeat can prove favorable to revolutionary advances of the people, advances that require the people to overthrow the ruling class of their country, and replace this rule with democracy for the masses. **This sort of democracy should be understood as a change from our present system which is only provides democracy for the capitalists and exercises a capitalist dictatorship over the masses.** In a revolutionary society, the tables will be turned, and there will be democracy for the masses and dictatorship over the capitalists, preventing them from waging a counter-revolution and reinstating their oppressive rule.

**Currently, the U.S. is a dominant imperialist power, and exercises enormous control over many of the world's markets and peoples.** The economies of many nations in the world are in debt to U.S.-controlled organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. These

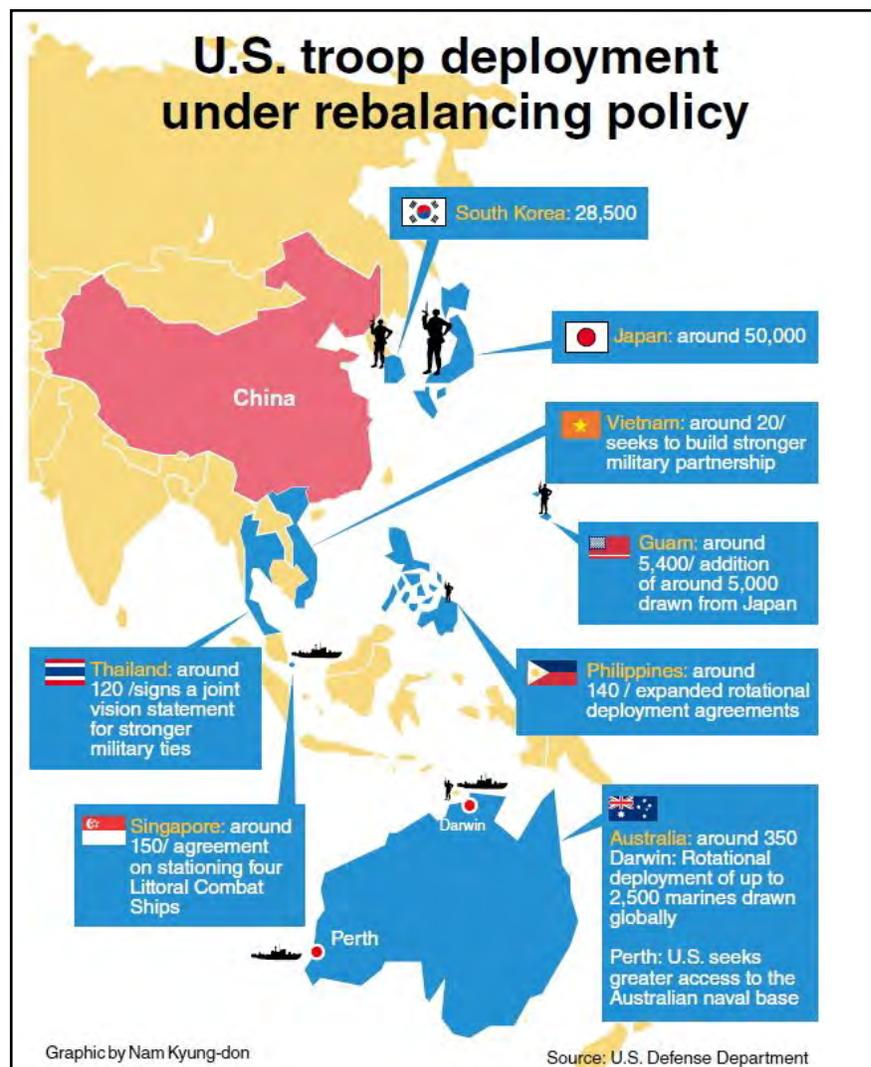


international institutions saddle countries with debt and force neoliberal development policies on them which cut social services and ensure that a larger section of the profits made in the countries will flow to U.S. corporations.

The U.S. supports dictatorships throughout the world, such as the Saudi monarchy. These relationships are favorable to the interests of U.S. multinational corporations and help to facilitate the corporate plunder of whole peoples. **The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and related departments are regularly used to intimidate, threaten, and assassinate leaders of foreign states when they step out from the under the thumb of U.S. domination.** The U.S. has supported scores of coups against foreign governments which are not in line with U.S. interests, included coups against democratically elected regimes, such as in Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Congo (1960), Brazil (1964), Indonesia (1965), and Chile (1973) to name just a few. At present, the U.S. has been working to support the overthrow of the Maduro regime in Venezuela, by appointing Juan Guaidó as “acting president” with an announcement by Donald Trump this past January 23.

U.S. imperialism evolved with the rise of capital interests in the United States, and in the wake of WWII the U.S. became the dominant imperialist power in the world. The relationship of the military to the economic rise of the U.S. is spelled out in many military texts. As the publication *Counterpunch* stated, “*The glossy brochure [for the U.S. military’s Space Command’s Vision for 2020] explains that, in the past, the Army evolved to protect U.S. settlers who stole land from Native Americans in the genocidal birth of the nation. Like the Vision for 2020, a report by the National Defense University acknowledges that by the 19th century, the Navy had evolved to protect the U.S.’s newly-formulated ‘grand strategy.’ In addition to supposedly protecting citizens and the constitution, ‘The overriding principle was, and remains, the protection of American territory...and our economic well-being.’ By the 20th century, the Air Force had been established, in the words of the Air Force Study Strategy Guide, to protect ‘vital interests,’ including: ‘commerce; secure energy supplies; [and] freedom of action.’*”<sup>3</sup>

Despite the U.S.’s leading global position, it is actually declining in power relative to other imperialist countries, in particular China. A few decades of failed military adventures in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya have taken their toll on the U.S.’s dominance. In addition, rampant U.S. media coverage of the growing threat of Chinese theft of U.S. “trade secrets” and Trump’s 2018 tariffs against Chinese manufacturers reflects the U.S. ruling elite’s deep concern that Chinese corporations are intruding on the turf of U.S. corporations. This concern extends far beyond the Trump regime. The idea of a “Pivot [from the Middle East] to the Pacific” was a guiding principle under the Obama administration’s foreign policy. Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spelled out the reasons for this shift in a 2011 article.<sup>4</sup>



*The Pivot to the Pacific has led to large-scale redeployment of U.S. troops to the Pacific from other areas around the world.*

The falling fortunes of the U.S. ruling class—relative to other global powers—can be seen in part as a result of the incompetence that comes from decades of global dominance. This incompetence is visible across the board, from failed U.S. infrastructure projects, to continued fracturing in both major political parties, to decadent spending on military policies that fail to secure U.S. interests abroad. Since 2000, the U.S. military has promoted a doctrine known as “full spectrum dominance” which is defined as “*The cumulative effect of dominance in the air, land, maritime, and space domains and information environment, which includes cyberspace, that permits the conduct of joint operations without effective opposition or prohibitive interference.*” **The idea is that the U.S. should enjoy an overwhelming advantage over its rivals on every front such that it is impossible for them to defeat the U.S. anywhere or at anytime.**

3) <https://bit.ly/2IZLY0a>

4) <https://bit.ly/25G3XhC>

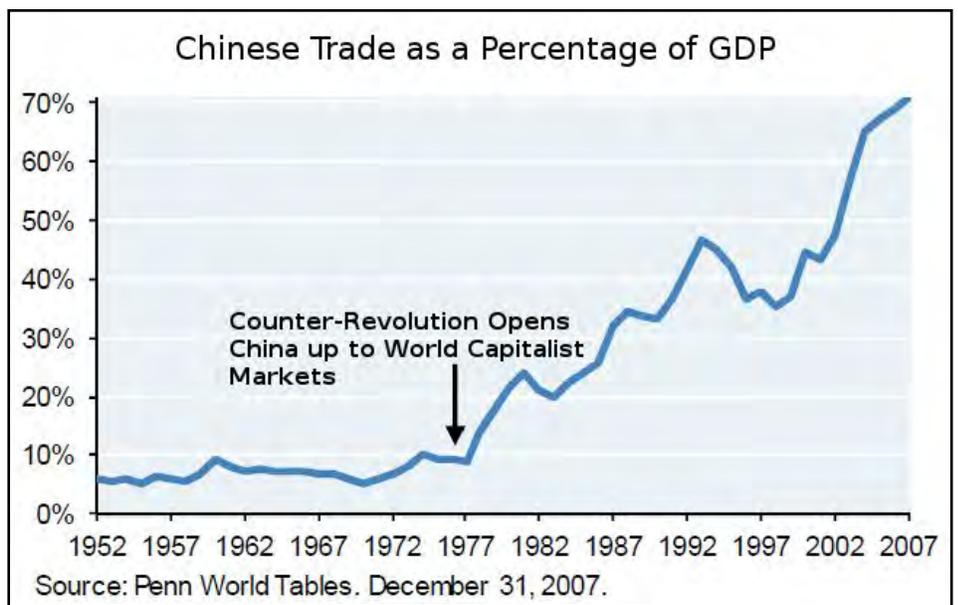


Recently this strategy has been rebranded as “OverMatch,” but the basic idea remains the same: be so far ahead of their rivals on every front that their rivals have no partial advantages which they can leverage in asymmetrical warfare. **The strategy is a reflection of arrogance and decadence of a bloated ruling class in a stage of decline.** It is an impractical strategy, as it leads to a tendency to treat secondary threats as primary ones, and hence to over-prepare in certain sectors at the expense of others. Instead of accepting the reality that their rivals will obtain superiority on some fronts, the U.S. ruling elite is spending money hand over fist—money which they extract from the poor people of this country via taxes—in a vain attempt to “OverMatch” their rivals on every front, an attempt which can only fail.

### The Rise of China as an Imperialist Power

China is a rising capitalist imperialist power, with global assets around the world, and a GDP of over \$12 trillion (in comparison the U.S. GDP is \$19 trillion). Back in 1949 the Communist Party of China led a revolution which overthrew the corrupt U.S.-backed government of Chiang Kai-Shek and created a revolutionary society. The newly founded People’s Republic struggled for almost 30 years against the system of global imperialism and capitalism. However, following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the revolutionary society was overthrown.<sup>5</sup> **After this coup, the new leaders of the country openly promoted capitalist development and pro-imperialist policies, despite continuing to call their country “socialist.”**

In the last few decades, China has aggressively increased capital investment abroad, and used military and diplomatic pressures to increase control over foreign markets. The implications of this shift are unmistakable. The country reversed the course



*After the coup in 1976, the counter-revolutionaries seized power and abandoned the socialist policy of self-sufficiency. They threw China into the capitalist markets and began to accumulate wealth and power globally*

it was on before 1976, of serving the interests of the masses of its people, to treading a path oriented towards securing wealth by hook or by crook for its wealthiest 1% through struggle for control of the world’s markets. In a world that has long been entirely divided up by the world’s capitalist classes—something Lenin remarked was the case by the turn of the 20th century, marking the advent of the era of capitalist-imperialism—this means the ruling elite in China committed itself to a future of capitalist competition with rival imperialist powers. **The Chinese elite have come into an increasingly sharp struggle for dominance with U.S. business interests (as well as those of other imperialist powers) as they work to secure control of resources, markets, and people.**

The military implications of this trends were spelled out in a 2006 white paper written by a Chinese military researcher, Chen Zhou who stated, “*With the changes of the times and the development of the nation, the security interests and the development interests have been interwoven, the interests of one’s own country have been closely linked with the interests of other nations, the gravity center of interests have shifted from survival to development, the form of realizing the national interests has extended from domestic to international, the scope of the national interests has extended from the traditional territorial land, seas, and air to the maritime, space, and electromagnetic domains.*”

5) For more on this history see: <https://bit.ly/2Jd0wcd>

This quote shows how the Chinese ruling elite have pursued an imperialist policy of investing abroad to secure control of markets, resources, and people. In conjunction with this, they have been working hard to expand all facets of their military and intelligence operations to crush people's movements and do battle with rival imperialist powers.

The Chinese military's global footprint is far less extensive than that of the United States. **China's first foreign military base was only opened in Djibouti in 2015, compared to the U.S. which maintains over 800 bases, many of which the military admits it does not need.**

Despite this, China and Russia are engaged in a fast-moving arms race with the United States. This arms race has also led to a series of proxy wars, stand-off, skirmishes, and run-ins between these rival imperialist blocs. For example, the Chinese are building a number of militarized islands in the South China Sea, and the U.S. has conducted a series of "Freedom of Navigation" operations that have led to tense face-offs between these rivals navies. Relatedly, in the Syrian War, the U.S. and their allies killed around 300 Russian mercenaries which they claimed had attacked them.

The U.S. imperialists enjoy a number of significant advantages that come with



*The Chinese military has conducted a large number of combat drills, including joint exercises with Russia, simulating and preparing for war with the U.S. in the South China Sea.*

having been the dominant global power for nearly half a century, but the Chinese state and military have been outmaneuvering the U.S. on a series of fronts. In comparison to the U.S., the Chinese state has been able to choose its battles more carefully, and to chip away at regions previously thought to be firmly in the U.S. camp. The Chinese military build-up in the South China Seas is one example of this. The Chinese military has flexed its muscle in gaining territorial possessions for military use, and in challenging the U.S. navy and U.S. allies. The U.S. has been unsuccessful in using international institutions and the threat of military force to deter the Chinese military buildup in the region. **Philip S. Davidson, the four-star admiral in charge of the Indo-Pacific Command recently stated that "China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the United States."**

According to a report by the RAND corporation, "*Although the military balance in the western Pacific still favors the U.S., this is shifting as China invests a major share of its growing military budget into 'anti-access/area-denial' capabilities, like anti-ship missiles, designed to strike U.S. forces in the region. Moreover, although the U.S. spends about three times what China does on military capabilities, China can concentrate on the western Pacific, whereas the U.S. faces threats elsewhere, such as Russia, Iran and the Islamic State militant group (ISIS).*"<sup>6</sup> In short, the conflict in the

South China Sea is a point at which the Chinese ruling elite can and have achieved a degree of local superiority over the United States, despite U.S. delusions of maintaining supremacy in every sector, as expressed in its strategy of "OverMatch."

6) <https://bit.ly/2Y55KuQ>

*In comparison to the U.S., the Chinese state has been able to choose its battles more carefully, and to chip away at regions previously thought to be firmly in the U.S. camp.*





## Understanding the Chinese-U.S. Conflict in the South China Sea

Naval disputes between China and the U.S. are just one element of the conflict between the two states; this conflict also has diplomatic and economic aspects. In addition, the conflicts of the two countries are best both understood in relationship to competition between other significant global powers—Russia in particular. However, the conflict between China and the United States, and in particular in the area of naval disputes, can help clarify the larger situation. **This includes clarifying China’s military and territorial aspirations, the seriousness with which the U.S. ruling class is now responding to threats to its influence in the region, and the likelihood that the current status-quo in the region will not last far into the future.**

China has built scores of island military installations in the South China Sea (including 20 installations in the Paracel islands and 7 in the Spratly Islands), often by reclaiming land on top of reefs where sand and cement have been used to reinforce land for construction. At least three of these sites include airfields.

The South China Sea is located between

Vietnam and the Philippines. **One third of global shipping passes through the area, most of it sailing through the Strait of Malacca.** China and the Philippines, along with Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have been disputing ownership of these strategic waters for decades. In addition to being an important area to control—as the power which controls the South China Sea could theoretically restrict their adversary’s merchant and military vessels in a time of conflict—the sea is also known to hold billions of dollars worth of gas reserves.

In the beginning of April, 2019, a showdown occurred on the Thitu Island, one of the Spratly Islands (called Kalayaan by the Philippines and Nansha by the Chinese), in which several hundred Chinese ships surrounded the island. This followed the February construction of a new “beaching ramp” by the Philippines to facilitate the distribution of construction equipment to the island, in particular to repair the island’s runway. The island is also host to several military garrisons used by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and has a population of about one hundred.



*Chinese ships at the Mischief Reef in the Spratly islands dredging sand to create a military installations on top of the reef.*

China has repeatedly used the strategy of surrounding islands in the south China seas with layers of naval, administrative, and fishing vessels to effectively siege the islands, preventing the distribution of water, food, and other supplies to military personnel. This multi-level strategy of encirclement was referred to as a “cabbage strategy” in 2013, when the Chinese military used it to encircle another island in the Spratly Chain, the Huangyan island. Afterward this showdown, the Huangyan Island was effectively occupied by China, but not without remaining a point of tension. On March 5, 2019 the U.S. military flew a B-52 bomber near the island. In January 2018, the U.S. Navy sailed a guided-missile destroyer to within 12 kilometers of the island. On September 30 2018, the USS Decatur had sailed within 12 nautical miles of Gaven and Johnson Reefs (also in the Spratly Islands) and was greeted by a Chinese destroyer that crossed within 45 yards of its bow, resulting in a near-collision. This sequence of tit-for-tats has been repeated many times in this and other regions.

Ever-increasing Chinese claims on territory previously used and occupied by the Philippines has led to anger in the Philippines. **Last year, on June 12, 2018 the news site Rappler reported that several militant groups**

**stormed the Chinese embassy in the Filipino city of Makati following reports that Filipino President Duterte favored plans for joint development with China over the contested islands.**

*Ever-increasing Chinese claims on territory previously used and occupied by the Philippines has led to anger in the Philippines.*

At that protest, Anakbayan (a revolutionary group in the Philippines) Secretary General Einstein Recedes stated “*Today is #Hindipendence day. [hindi means “no” in Tagalog, one of the main languages of the Philippines] Freedom remains an illusion under the helm of a cheap dictator-wannabe who shamelessly kowtows to foreign superpowers like China and U.S., and wields terror and violence against the Filipino people. We condemn Duterte’s inaction amidst Chinese incursion in the West Philippine Sea depriving Filipino fishermen of their livelihood. We condemn Duterte’s burdening Filipinos with high taxes and other conditionalities for onerous Chinese loans funding his corrupt infrastructure program.*”



However, following the Chinese encirclement of the Thitu Island this past April, Duterte seemingly changed his tune—at least for the moment—on the matter, stating “*Let us be friends, but do not touch Pagasa Island [the name used in the Philippines for Thitu] and the rest. If you make moves there, that's a different story. I will tell my soldiers, 'Prepare for suicide mission.'*” **The arrival of two Russian destroyers and a tanker in the Philippines capital of Manila on April 8th subsequently caused alarm in the West that military tension around the island was growing to global proportions.**



*Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte (4th L) shake hands with Russia's Rear Admiral Eduard Mikhailov (3rd L) onboard the Russian anti-submarine navy ship Admiral Tributs in Manila on January 6, 2017.*

*The typical response from the U.S. military can be seen in their decision to repeatedly fly nuclear-capable B-52 bombers over the islands which the Chinese military has wrapped tightly in its “cabbage” matrix.*

So what does all this amount to? Is it simply a ramp on a pile of sand, followed by rounds of chest-thumping, all signifying nothing? If only this was the case. While there is an unequal development of tensions in the South China Sea, and war is not likely to break out in the near future, we can see the situation as proof that the current balance of imperialist powers in the region and wider world is about as permanent as a sand castle facing a rising tide.

If Duterte follows through on his threat to go to war with China, the Philippines would not stand a chance on its own against the Chinese military. **All attention would be on the U.S.’s decision about whether or not to come to the defense of its ally, and if so, how and to what extent.** The interests of working people will depend on whether or not cool heads prevail to prevent escalation of a conflict. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, the typical response from the

U.S. military can be seen in their decision to repeatedly fly nuclear-capable B-52 bombers over the islands which the Chinese military has wrapped tightly in its “cabbage” matrix of fishing nets, administrative vessels, and naval ships. And if the U.S. reacts with more force than its usual flyover, China will be under pressure to prove that its “anti-access/area-denial” missiles and related infrastructure are not simply for show. There is a possibility that these tensions can be temporarily deescalated and powder keg temporarily defused. But can this very unstable status-quo continue for years to come?

The logic of imperialism would lead us to believe that we must choose between one side or the other in this stand-off. This typically leads to those living in one imperialist power supporting “their own” ruling class and believing “its side of the story,” while the people of the opposing power do the same. And this confusion is not limited to paid advisors of the state and ruling-class ideologues. In Europe during the lead up to World War I, much of the international revolutionary movement was thrown into confusion over this question. **In the end various nominally revolutionary groups and parties in the Second Communist International, chose to support “their own” ruling classes and militaries in the World War.** The one notable exception was the Russian Bolshevik Party who stayed true to their principles, and under Lenin’s leadership they were able to use the crisis of the world war to lead a revolution which freed the people from the yolk of the Tsar and his Russian capitalist allies.



*In the 1917 October Revolution the Bolsheviks led the Russian people in storming the Tsar's Winter Palace. After overthrowing the Tsar, they withdrew the country from WWI and began the hard work of transforming the country into a socialist society for the people.*

From the perspective of the people, it does not matter which imperialist power wins a world war, as any outcome means the masses lose. **In the competition between empires—which inevitably leads to war—the only solution is for the people to struggle to create a society free from dominance by competing imperialist thugs and their servile lackeys.** At present there are a number of revolutionary movements in the world, including large scale movements involving millions of people in the Philippines and India in particular.

***The logic of imperialism would lead us to believe that we must choose between one side or the other in this stand-off.***

But we in the United States have our work cut out for us. Both major parties in our country are entirely committed not only to the idea that U.S. imperialism is a good thing, but also to the idea that they must further the interests and global influence of the empire. **If we remain trapped in**

**the logic of “lesser-evilism” and channel our energies into the fantasy that the Democratic candidates for President are a real alternative for the people, then we will fall into the trap of largely forgetting about the wider world and the incredibly destructive role that U.S. imperialism plays in it.** This trap encourages us to leave such questions for a “more opportune time” while also bombarding us with the imperialist myth of American Exceptionalism.

Right now there is an urgent need to unite with the oppressed masses of the world to fight in the life and death struggle to eradicate imperialism from the face of the earth. Already the powers that be and their countless apologists in U.S. universities and media are beating the war drum, be it in response to Russian interference in “our democracy” (?!), or Chinese threats on American values (what more threat is there to our values than the corporate plunder and brutal exploitation perpetuated day after day by our own homegrown plutocrats?). We must unite with all people sincerely opposed to imperialist wars and struggle against the global death-spiral that the super-powers have set in motion.



# Venezuela, Chinese and Russian Imperialism, and the U.S. Coup

by Smith

*The conflict in Venezuela has dominated international headlines for months. The U.S. recently recognized Juan Guaidó as president, while China and Russia support the Maduro government. As Guaidó and his international supporters ratchet up the pressure for a coup, both China and Russia have sent troops and military hardware to Venezuela. The crisis in the country has become a potential flashpoint for larger regional and even global war. In this situation, what stand should revolutionaries and anti-imperialists take? How can we best support the people of Venezuela?*

## Where do countries stand on Venezuela?

■ Support Maduro ■ Recognise Guaidó as interim president  
■ Calling for new elections



\*The EU has called for new elections but some individual member countries have expressed their preferences.

Data as of 09:00 GMT 1 Feb 2019

BBC

On January 23, 2019 Juan Guaidó, the leader of the National Assembly of Venezuela, declared himself president of Venezuela. This declaration came thirteen days after incumbent President Nicolás Maduro was inaugurated as President for another term, and was based on the claim that Maduro was not democratically elected. Guaidó's announcement was possible because his sponsors in the White House support him politically, economically, and militarily. Since the declaration, the Trump administration has thrown their full weight behind Guaidó, and he has been supported by 53 other governments around the world, mostly close U.S. allies. Maduro's government, in contrast is supported—politically, economically, and militarily—by China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, and others. Given this, the conflict in Venezuela must be understood in the context of the larger inter-imperialist competition taking place around the world.

**While Maduro's government does not serve the people's interests, it is ridiculous to support Guaidó simply because he has declared himself president and because he has the backing of Washington and their allies.**

The U.S. has declared Maduro a dictator, and has been using the brutality and corruption of Maduro's government to win popular support for a U.S. intervention. While there is a long history of corruption and oppression in Venezuela by Maduro and Chavez,<sup>1</sup> the reality is that U.S. interventions have never made the situation better for the people. Even in cases like Iraq and Afghanistan where the governments the U.S. overthrew were brutally repressive, the U.S. invasions have only made things worse. Of course, there is an obvious absurdity to Juan Guaidó's self-proclaimed presidency, especially given that he claims Maduro was not democratically elected.

1) While some claim that Maduro and Chavez are socialists, this could not be further from the truth. They are more accurately described as the leaders of a petro-state who provided the people with some meager social welfare programs when oil prices were high. What's more, after Chavez was elected president in 1998, he and his allies never ended capitalist practices in the country. This is analyzed in greater detail below.





Even before the recognition of Guaidó, the U.S. was already intervening in Venezuela by various means, including sanctions. Because of it controls a large part of the world economy and monetary system, the U.S. can impose sanctions on countries and businesses around the world. This prevents other members of the U.S. led financial system from doing business with these countries and companies, and severely hampers their ability to access international markets. While the U.S. media often frames sanctions as a “humane” intervention, in reality they are a particularly brutal form of intervention aimed at crippling a country’s economy and starving out the people there. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was recently quite open about this in the case of U.S. sanctions on Iran. When asked about the impact of U.S. sanctions on the people of Iran, he stated that “*The [Iranian] leadership has to make a decision that they want their people to eat,*” meaning that Iran would have to choose between subordinating itself to U.S. foreign policy or letting its people starve.

The U.S. is well aware of the impact sanctions have on other countries. For example, under Bill Clinton’s Presidency the U.S. placed sanctions on Iraq which killed between 1-1.5 million Iraqis.<sup>2</sup> In a 1996 60 Minutes interview, then Secretary of State Madeline Albright was questioned about the 500,000 Iraqi children who had died as a result of U.S. sanctions. She responded by defending the sanctions and stated that “*we think the price is worth it.*”<sup>3</sup> **Her statement clarifies that for U.S. imperialists,**

**the death of half a million or more children are a small price to pay for the foreign policy goals of the empire.**

However, it is also important to note that countries like Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, and others can be threatened with and hurt by U.S. sanctions because their economy’s are caught up in and dependent on the capitalist-imperialist system. They require constant access to foreign capital and financing just to run their

countries, and as a result they are always under the thumbs of the imperialists. Only after a real revolution which expropriates the capitalists and establishes a socialist society and an economy built on self-sufficiency can the people avoid the threat of crippling genocidal sanctions by imperialist powers. **The experiences of the Russian and Chinese revolutions in the 20th Century show that even near-total blockades by the imperialist powers were not effective at crippling and destroying these socialist societies.** While these revolutions were eventually defeated from within, the imperialists were unable to topple them by means of sanctions, embargoes, or even invasions.

*While the U.S. media often frames sanctions as a “humane” intervention, in reality they are a particularly brutal form of intervention aimed at crippling a country’s economy and starving out the people there.*

That being said, there is a big difference between the U.S. interventions in Iraq and the ongoing conflict in Venezuela. Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq at the time of the U.S. invasion, was a U.S.-backed ruler who started to act too independently for his imperialist masters. They were particularly annoyed that he demanded a larger share of the profits from his country’s oil exports. The U.S. then used the 9/11 attacks as a pretext to stage a massive invasion, and they eventually hanged Saddam.

2) <https://bit.ly/2DMQILY>

3) <https://bit.ly/1ssxkjV>



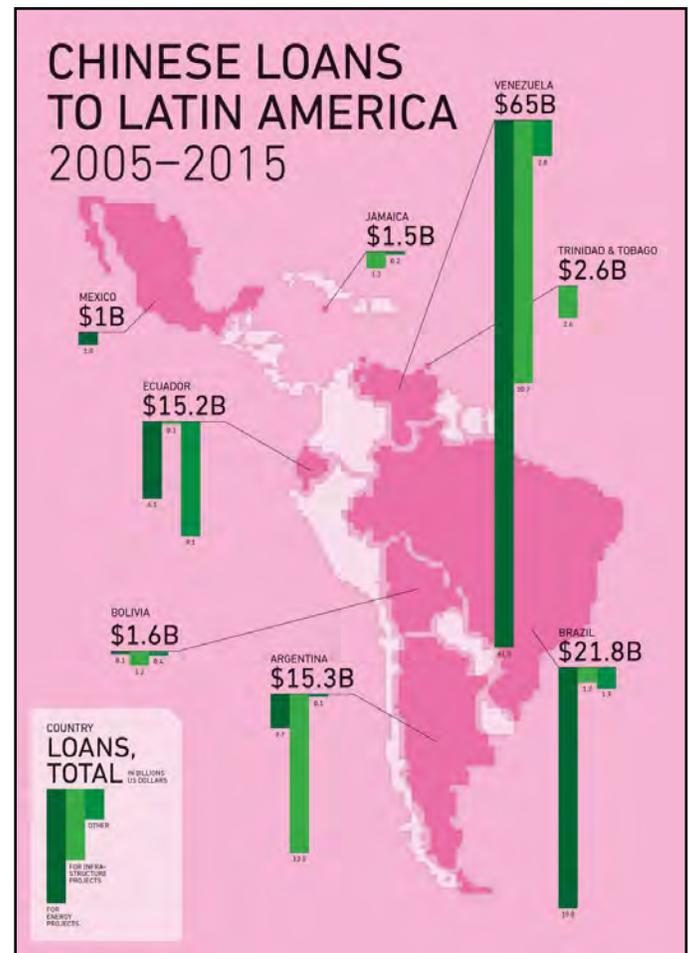
In Venezuela, by contrast, the U.S. is not just trying to overthrow a government unwilling to “play ball” and serve their interests. **Instead, the conflict in Venezuela is a struggle for influence between rival imperialist powers.** Unlike Saddam, Maduro is backed by China and Russia, rival imperialist powers whose growing influence in South and Central America is a threat to U.S. interests in the region. The inter-imperialist conflict underlying the situation in Venezuela is clear from the fact that on the same day that the U.S. recognized Guaidó they also sailed two military ships through the Strait of Taiwan in a warning to China. In this sense, U.S. intervention in Venezuela is particularly dangerous because it could spark a larger inter-imperialist war.

### Russian and Chinese Imperialist Influence in Venezuela

Since 2005, China has extended some \$67.2 billion in loans to Venezuela and has invested heavily in the oil industry there.<sup>4</sup> Since 2006, Russia has loaned at least \$17 billion to Venezuela.<sup>5</sup> Around ninety percent of the Venezuelan economy is based off of oil, and the country functions as a petro-state. Because of this it has faced serious funding and revenue shortfalls when oils prices declined. During these periods Chavez and later Maduro turned to China and Russia for loans.

*The Russian and Chinese monopoly capitalist classes do not offer the Venezuelan government these loans out of the kindness of their hearts. They do so to preserve and expand their influence and profits.*

The Russian and Chinese monopoly capitalist classes do not offer the Venezuelan government these loans out of the kindness of their hearts. They do so to preserve and expand their influence and profits. This may seem strange because much of the way investment is discussed in our society makes it seem like a good thing. However, what investment does is secure control and ownership of the profits produced in a given company, industry, or



country. **Investments are a means by which capitalist accumulate more capital through the labor of the working class.**

The U.S. has a long-standing practice of extending predatory loans to other countries through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which often come with various preconditions and stipulations that the countries in question open the door for U.S. corporate plunder. The loans and investments that China and Russia have extended to Venezuela function in a similar way. **They facilitate Chinese and Russian domination of the country and ensure that the profits made by the hard labor of the Venezuelan people will flow into the pockets of the billionaires in Russia and China.**

In the case of the Chinese loans in particular, many must be repaid to China in oil. This helps to secure an oil supply for China which imported around 8.5 million barrels of oil a day in 2017, and only produces around 3.8 millions of barrels a day. Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world, and the Chinese ruling elite aim to secure their long-term access to this oil as an essential aspect of their overall imperialist strategy.

4) <https://bit.ly/2qVpm6x>

5) <https://wapo.st/2IXFNdh>

## Cash for Caracas

China has been financing Venezuela in exchange for oil.

### China Development Bank's loans to Venezuela since 2008

Borrower	Year	Loan value
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund	2008	\$4 billion
Corporación Venezolana de Guayana	2009	1
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund	2009	4
Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.	2010	15
Bandes	2010	20
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund*	2011	4
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund†	2012	4
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund	2013	5
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund*	2014	4
Joint Chinese-Venezuelan Fund†	2015	5

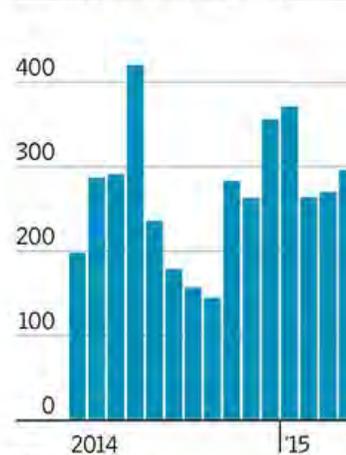
\*Renewals of 2008 loan †Renewals of 2009 loan. 2105 figure includes \$1 billion of new lending.

Sources: Venezuelan government's Gazette, Inter-American Dialogue, Eurasia Group, BofA Merrill Lynch (loans); China's General Administration of Customs (oil imports)

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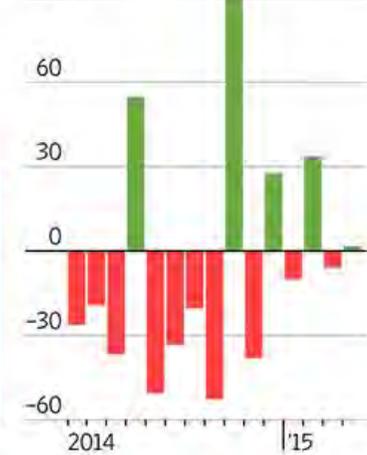
### China's monthly imports of crude oil from Venezuela

500 thousand barrels per day



### Monthly change in imports, year on year

90%



They need this oil to run their economy and fuel their growing military machine. These loans also help the Chinese imperialists to direct Venezuela's economic and foreign policy in line with their interests. For example, in 2016 and 2017 Venezuela exported around 400,000 barrels of oil a day to China. However, in September 2018 Venezuela faced a funding short-fall and was at risk of defaulting on its debts, in part due to U.S. sanctions. China agreed to provide another \$5 billion in loans to the country, but on the condition that the Chinese monopoly capitalists were given a greater say in the control of Venezuela. One aspect of this was that Venezuela agreed to increase its oil exports to China to 1 million barrels a day. More recently, Venezuela decided to cut off all oil exports to India, a U.S. ally and a major rival to China.<sup>6</sup>

*These loans also help the Chinese imperialists to direct Venezuela's economic and foreign policy in line with their interests.*

## How Things Got This Way in Venezuela

All of this raises a question of how Venezuela came to be subordinate to Chinese and Russian imperialism. After all the ruling party in Venezuela calls itself socialist and speaks of continuing the Bolivarian Revolution. **However, the reality is that this revolution was never really a revolution in the sense of one class overthrowing another. Instead, Chavez, a high ranking military officer, was elected president of the country in 1998.** An election, within an existing parliamentary political framework (which is a system of capitalist rule) is not the same a revolution. This was clear in the fact that Chavez and his allies did not overthrow the ruling class (many of his allies were from the elite), nor did they smash the existing state machinery. Instead, they took control of it and passed some minor reforms.

After being elected Chavez created some social programs and appointed many of his loyal military allies to important positions in the government. While some of these reforms did benefit the poor, and provide various forms of social welfare, they were dependent on revenue from oil sales and capitalists practices were never abolished in the country. **The big factories were never expropriated from the capitalist elite and the workers and peasants were never given control of how the country was run.**

6) <https://bit.ly/2VATWmD>





*Protesters in Venezuela have repeatedly confronted Maduro's police and military forces who have shot tear gas into crowds and fired rubber bullets at people. The government has often used Russian and Chinese weapons and vehicles for crowd control.*

James Petras describes in great detail how the so-called Bolivarian Revolution did not kick out the foreign capitalists or the local elite:

*“Venezuela, Bolivia and the entire spectrum of social movements, trade union confederations, parties and fractions of parties do not call for the abolition of capitalism, the repudiation of the debt, the complete expropriation of U.S. or EEC banks or multinational corporations, or any rupture in relations with the U.S. For example, in Venezuela, private national and foreign banks earned over 30% rate of return in 2005-2006, foreign-owned oil companies reaped record profits between 2004-2006 and less than 1% of the biggest landed estates were fully expropriated and titles turned over to landless peasants.*

*“Capital-labor relations still operate in a framework heavily weighted on behalf of business and labor contractors who rely on subcontractors who continue to dominate hiring and firing in more than one half of the large enterprises. The Venezuelan military and police continue to arrest suspected Colombian guerrillas and turn them over to the Colombian police. Venezuela and U.S.-client President Uribe of Colombia have signed several high-level security and economic co-operation agreements.”<sup>7</sup>*

7) “U.S.-Latin American Relations: Measuring the Rise or Fall of U.S. Power,” November 1, 2006.

The continuation of capitalist relations in Venezuela is also evident in the strike-breaking undertaken by the government. For example, in 2009 workers at a Mitsubishi plant in Venezuela went on strike. 860 union workers decided to occupy the factory to protest Mitsubishi’s use of temporary workers as a union-busting tactic. Chavez’ Labor Ministry worked with the capitalists at Mitsubishi and the local police to break this sit-in strike. The police opened fire on

the workers and killed two of them. **After the strike was broken, the Labor Ministry criticized the workers for going on strike, telling them that they were setting a “bad example” and that their strike was creating unfavorable conditions for foreign investment.**<sup>8</sup>

The continued existence of capitalist practices in Venezuela are related to the government’s willingness to do the bidding of foreign imperialist powers. What’s more, the dependence of Venezuela’s economy on oil exports increased under Chavez. Prior to his election, around 68% of the country’s export revenue came from the state-run *Petróleos de Venezuela*; by 2012 it had increased to 96%.<sup>9</sup> Much like in other petro-states such as Saudi Arabia, these revenues are used to finance various social programs when oil prices are high. However, when they fall, Venezuela has faced serious economic problems, and as a result they have historically cut important social programs during these periods. Petro-states rely heavily on imports to meet the basic needs of the people, such as food, medicine, clothing, etc. So when oil prices fall, and when petro-states face sanctions, the prices of these goods often rise drastically.

8) *Venezuela Speaks: Voices from the Grassroots*, by Martinez, Fox and Farrell (2010), p. 113-123.

9) *Economist*, September 29, 2012.

During the past decade when oil prices dropped, the government in Venezuela has looked to Chinese and Russian imperialists for loans.

These loans have covered Venezuela's immediate funding short-falls but at the expense of granting big concessions to Chinese and Russian multi-national corporations. Essentially, this has given many of these companies free reign to exploit the Venezuelan people. Additionally, these loans have also given the Chinese and Russian ruling elite a big say in how Venezuela is run. In short Venezuela, much like other neocolonies around the world, has had to subordinate its policies, people, and course of development to the interest of foreign powers.

### The Present Crisis and Our Internationalist Duty

As the capitalist crisis in Venezuela has intensified and inter-imperialist competition grown sharper, the Maduro government has been shaken by a number of protests against corruption, inflation, and shortages of basic goods. While some people support Guaidó and U.S. intervention in Venezuela to topple Maduro, the majority are protesting against the immense difficulties they live under, which are the result of the corruption of the Maduro government, imperialist plunder of the country, and inter-imperialist competition over Venezuela. **Maduro has responded to these protests with violent repression, which has led to the deaths of many protesters.**

All of this helps to clarify the situation in Venezuela. **The Maduro government is not a progressive force, but rather a local stooge for Chinese and Russian imperialist interests, and the U.S. hopes to topple his government and put their own stooge, Juan Guaidó, in power.** In short, the crisis in Venezuela is itself a manifestation of inter-imperialist conflict. Some have claimed that the U.S. wants to overthrow the Maduro government because it is a "leftist" government. The reality is that Maduro has sold the country to the highest bidder, and has facilitated the domination of the Venezuelan people by Chinese and Russian imperialism. So,



*It is important to see that the present conflict in Venezuela is about more than just these two competing stooges.*

while a U.S. invasion or coup would be a disaster for the people, the present status-quo of living under the domination Maduro's government and the Chinese and Russian monopoly capitalist classes who fund him is also a disaster.

Given this, anti-imperialist and anti-war activists in the U.S. face a question about what stand to take. It should be clear that we must actively oppose any U.S. intervention in Venezuela, including the ongoing brutal sanctions. However, is this alone sufficient?

*In short, the crisis in Venezuela is itself a manifestation of interimperialist conflict.*

One idea is that, for those of us living in the U.S., it is enough to oppose the machinations of the U.S. imperialists. The logic goes that this country is the most powerful empire in the world and that it is enough to stand against it, even if that means supporting a corrupt government or even rival imperialist powers like Russia and China. **It's true that revolutionaries and anti-imperialists here must stand against all of the schemes and crimes of the U.S. empire. However, this by itself is not sufficient.** For example, during the Iraq War, millions of American took to the street to opposed the U.S. invasion, but they did not support Saddam Hussein. In fact, many correctly highlighted his brutality and corruption, but noted that U.S. invasions had only made the situation worse.





*In revolutionary China, the Chinese communists understood the need to oppose imperialism in all of its forms. They stood against U.S. imperialism and the Soviet Union's imperialism. The text reads:*

*“Defeat American Imperialism,  
Defeat Soviet Revisionism”*

We must oppose imperialism in all of its forms, and we must stand with the oppressed people of the world in their struggles against imperialist domination, regardless of which empire is oppressing them. The situation in Venezuela is instructive in this regard. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets to oppose the corruption of the Maduro government and the oppression that they face daily.

**It's true that the Venezuelan people are facing dire conditions in part due to U.S. sanctions. However they are also facing deprivation because of the capitalist plunder of their country by Chinese and Russian imperialists as well as the corrupt and decadent Maduro government.** These circumstances have led to mass rebellions which the U.S. has tried to co-opt by installing their puppet Juan Guaidó. If they succeed in doing this, they will not only establish a puppet regime

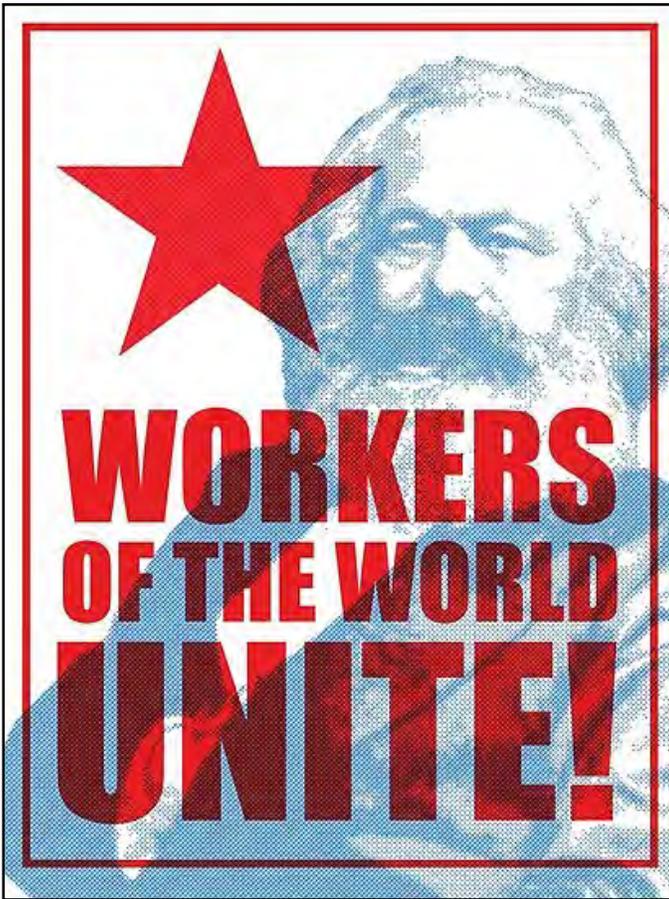
favorable to their interests, they will also be able to hand their rivals a big defeat and financial loss. But, if the status-quo continues in Venezuela, it will be a continuation of oppression and suffering for the Venezuela people at the hands of Maduro and his Chinese and Russian puppet masters.

Anti-imperialists and revolutionaries have an obligation to oppose imperialism in all of its forms. **This includes maneuvers by empires to seize new territories and markets, as well as already existing domination of people by imperialist powers.** To do otherwise is to lapse into the nihilistic belief that the best we can do is oppose new imperialist annexations and invasions, it is to accept the lie that a better world is not possible, and to mistakenly believe that the only choice is between one imperialist master and another. **However, another path does exist, that of a thorough-going political, economic, and social revolution which kicks out all imperialists and doesn't let them back in again.**

During the first world war the Tsarist government in Russia tried to drum up support for the brutal war by convincing the Russian people that they would reconquer Poland to “free it” from German oppression. Germany had previously seized Poland from Russia. Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were vehemently opposed to this imperialist scheme by the Tsarist government. **However, their anti-imperialism did not stop at the border of the Tsarist empire. They also advocated for and supported the revolutionary struggle of both the German and Polish people.**

*Anti-imperialists and revolutionaries have an obligation to oppose imperialism in all of its forms.*

Lenin spoke very clearly on this: *“But how can we help liberate Poland from Germany! Is it not our duty to help in this? Of course it is, but not by supporting the imperialist war of tsarist, or of bourgeois, or even of bourgeois republican Russia, but by supporting the revolutionary proletariat of Germany, by supporting those elements in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany who are fighting against the counter-revolutionary labour party [which at the time supported Germany's participation in WWI].”*



This is a key lesson for us here in the United States. There is no question that we must support the Venezuelan people in their struggle against the corrupt Maduro regime and its Chinese and Russian sponsors. **However, we cannot do so by supporting the U.S. stooge Juan Guaidó or other opposition figures who clamor for U.S. backing and support an invasion of Venezuela.**

It may seem unrealistic to make such an argument. Some doubtless believe that the rule of Maduro and his foreign sponsors is the only alternative to U.S. invasion. However, this belief is a reflection of the nihilistic logic of imperialism which perpetuates the lie that the only possible option is to choose between the “lesser of two evils.” The lessons of history and the great revolutions of the 20th Century have shown this logic to be a reactionary lie spread by the ruling elite of the world. During periods of capitalist crisis and acute conflict between rival empires, people have been able to overthrow corrupt governments and their imperialist sponsors while also charting a course for revolution. **Advocating this as a path forward for the Venezuelan people is it not unrealistic;** on the contrary, it is unrealistic and downright absurd to argue that the present status-quo and the logic of “lesser-evilism” is all they can hope for. It is realistic and

necessary to advocate for a revolutionary way forward that is in the interests of the people, and does not subordinate their interests to those of corrupt officials and their foreign sponsors.

Any U.S. military intervention in the country would certainly lead to greater destruction and devastation for the Venezuelan people. **Therefore it is our internationalist duty to support the workers and peasants of Venezuela in their struggle against both the Maduro government and Guaidó’s power-grab.** This situation is made more complicated by the fact that there is no significant revolutionary organization in Venezuela. Nonetheless, the basic point still stands. We must support the people of Venezuela, even if there is not yet a political organization capable of leading their struggle for liberation. Here in the U.S. this means we must principally oppose all efforts by the ruling elite of this country to interfere in Venezuela, while also exposing the crimes of the Maduro government and its imperialist sponsors.

*During periods of capitalist crisis and acute conflict between rival empires, people have been able to overthrow corrupt governments and their imperialist sponsors while also charting a course for revolution.*

For all the workers of the world there is a common enemy. Beyond the reactionaries in power in each country, beyond the particular imperialist oppressors who back up corrupt lackeys like Maduro, the common enemy of the working people is the entire system of capitalist-imperialism. **There can be no true liberation for all the people of the world as long as this reactionary system still exists, and the people of the world cannot find liberation by subordinating their interests to one reactionary power in their fight against another.** This is the true proletarian internationalist spirit: To stand for the destruction of imperialism altogether, to support all genuine attempts by oppressed peoples to free themselves from imperialist domination, and to oppose the reactionary plots and maneuvers of all imperialist powers without exception. Only by following this path can the working people of the world unite in the struggle for revolution and destroy their common enemies.



# Anti-imperialist Struggles in Haiti and Around the World

by Earl

*Over the past year, the people of Haiti have taken to the streets time and time again to protest corruption and imperialist domination of their country. They have deposed a prime minister and now are on the verge of ousting their corrupt president as well. This is in line with a long legacy of people's struggles in Haiti. This article investigates the current anti-imperialist revolt in Haiti as well as past struggles for liberation.*



*People hold a sign reading “Where is the PetroCaribe Money?” at a protest in Haiti. Demonstrations against corruption have rocked the country over the past year.*

Over the past year the Haitian people have been waging a fierce struggle against the imperialist domination and plunder of their country. This struggle intensified last summer, when the government announced a plan for massive increases in the price of gasoline and other basic necessities. Large protests and street demonstrations led to the resignation of the then-Prime Minister of Haiti and to a hasty cancellation of the planned price increases. More recently, people have demanded the resignation of the current President, Jovenel Moïse, for his role in a huge corruption scheme that plundered billions of dollars from Haiti. **In the past few months this has developed into a nation-wide protest movement which has rocked the country and paralyzed the economy for days at a time, sending the Haitian ruling elite into a frenzy.**

This movement is part of a very long struggle that the people of Haiti have waged against slavery, imperialist domination, poverty, and oppression. It is inspiring to see the Haitian people's resistance to the grinding poverty and systemic deprivation that prevail throughout the

country. Their struggle shows the power of the people to resist and fight for change even in very difficult conditions.

The corruption case that set off the current protests is staggering in its scope. The exact amount of money which has been stolen or misappropriated isn't completely clear, but it is clear that it is on the scale of billions of dollars. This is in a very poor country, where the vast majority of people have almost no personal wealth and live in serious poverty. **The sheer audacity of the Haitian ruling elites trying to pull off plunder on this scale shows that they are utterly shameless in their exploitation and oppression of the Haitian people.** As long as they can line their pockets they do not care how many poor people go hungry, die from preventable diseases, or are forced to work in brutal factories run by foreign imperialists. Many Haitian politicians, like the current president Jovenel Moïse, talk about the importance of “democracy” and “development,” but their true colors and ruthlessness are shown by their willingness to loot their own country while so many Haitians live in desperate poverty.



*Haitians burn an American flag in protest against the U.S. domination of their country and the corporate plunder of Haiti by American businesses.*

The corruption case centers on the misuse and theft of money obtained by the Haitian government from the government of Venezuela. The money came from both the Venezuelan oil company PetroCaribe, which offered Caribbean countries like Haiti the option of buying oil on credit, and aid from the Venezuelan government. In both cases the money was earmarked for usage in development projects and reconstruction efforts aimed at fixing the infrastructure and buildings destroyed by the 2010 earthquake. Large amounts of this money have disappeared in a variety of ways, some of them exposed by official reports by the Haitian government or by journalists, others still unknown.

Through signs and chants at protests Haitians have raised the slogans “*Kote kob la?*” (“Where is the money?”) and “*kote lajan petrokarayib la?*” (“Where is the PetroCaribe money?”). **Some of the money just disappeared, such as \$4 million which is reported to have disappeared alongside every oil shipment PetroCaribe sent to Haiti.** Some of the money was spent on projects which went absurdly over-budget, such as a water viaduct project by a Dominican Republic-based firm which ran \$6 million over-budget. Other money made its way into various people’s pockets through old-fashioned, straight-up corruption and looting.

Jovenel Moïse, the current President of Haiti, was personally involved in numerous ways.

His company, Agritrans, is a major recipient for money which was intended for various aid and reconstruction projects, including rebuilding the country’s infrastructure in the wake of the devastating earthquake that Haiti suffered in 2010. But in most cases the money was paid out even though the work was never done. In one case Agritrans was paid by the Haitian government to repair a road, but the road never got repaired, and when investigators tried to locate the contract for the work it had been “lost.” **This is all the more ridiculous because Agritrans is not a construction firm, a paving firm, or an engineering firm: it is a banana plantation.**

*Over a period of several years, and through a variety of different scams and hustles, the Haitian ruling elites involved in this corruption case have stolen or mismanaged a colossal amount of money.*

The banana plantation itself seems to have been something that Moïse helped himself to at the expense of the Haitian people. In one case, Agritrans received a \$6 million loan and more than 1,000 hectares of land—tax-free—from the government.

Many other members of the Haitian elite are implicated in the corruption scandal. The president before Moïse, Michel Martelly, appointed his son Olivier minister of “Sport and the Accompaniment of Haitian Youth,” a position which was created specifically for him. **He then went on to appropriate some \$70 million to construct a series of sports facilities across Haiti. In a “shocking” twist, the facilities were either not built or never completed, but Martelly has since become one of the wealthier people in Haiti.** This sort of corruption has become typical.





*Tens of thousands of people have repeatedly taken to the streets to protest corruption and imperialist domination of Haiti.*

Over a period of several years, and through a variety of different scams and hustles, the Haitian ruling elites involved in this corruption case have stolen or mismanaged a colossal amount of money. Although the complete picture of all the money involved in the case hasn't yet emerged, **many activists and journalists in Haiti believe that around \$3.8 billion has gone missing.** Outright plunder and corruption on a scale like this would be a huge scandal anywhere around the world, but it is especially glaring in a very poor country like Haiti, where the majority of the population survives on around \$2 each day. **The GDP of Haiti is around \$8 billion, so those currently accused of corruption have stolen the equivalent of roughly half of what the entire population of Haiti produces in a year.**

Haiti still has not fully recovered from the 2010 earthquake which devastated the country, and there are still roads, hospitals, and schools which were destroyed in the earthquake that have not been repaired. Many Haitians cannot afford adequate food every day, and many suffer from preventable diseases which the country's healthcare system is unable to deal with. Before the earthquake Haiti was already a desperately poor country, and Haiti's schools and hospitals were already inadequate.

The earthquake and subsequent lack of recovery further impoverished many struggling farmers, and pushed more Haitians to leave the country in search of work in the Dominican Republic, Chile, the U.S., and Canada.

While the earthquake was a disaster for the Haitian people, for the Haitian ruling class it represented a golden opportunity. All the aid money flooding into Haiti and the lack of oversight about how the money was being spent gave them ample opportunities to line their own pockets. As they did so hundreds of thousands of Haitians were dying needlessly, millions were living in grinding, unrelenting poverty, and thousands were forced to flee the country. But this was not a concern for the ruling elite; instead it was just a more open display of how they operate.

Haiti's poverty, after all, isn't an accident. It's the result of decades of domination of the country by the U.S. and other imperialist countries, made possible by the eager cooperation of loyal lackeys like Moïse. In order to dominate and control the country the foreign imperialists need local elites, who can keep rebellion and resistance in check and generally run the country in a way which is favorable for foreign capitalists, all at the expense of the Haitian people.



**President Jovenel Moïse with Louis-Jodel Chamblain (circled). Chamblain is a U.S.-backed thug and military figure who is considered a notorious war criminal.**

These elites are also needed to maintain the illusion that Haiti is an independent country, although it is becoming increasingly clear to many Haitians that this is not the case. It used to be that the ruling class of imperialist countries ruled over other countries and peoples by direct colonization, such as when the UK ruled the Indian subcontinent as “British India” or when various European powers like France directly controlled huge swaths of Africa. However, this system of direct colonization eventually became outdated and could not be maintained. During the 20th century there were a series of anti-colonial and national independence struggles which made it effectively impossible for imperialists to maintain this policy. The French were kicked out of Algeria and forced to grant independence to all of the other countries they controlled in Africa, and the British had to give up direct control of India. However, wherever they could do so the imperialist powers sponsored local elites who helped them maintain a firm grip on their colonies, even if these countries became formally independent.

**In certain cases the imperialists had no choice but to get out, such as when they were all decisively and firmly kicked out of China after the revolution in 1949.** However, in many countries the imperialists were able to work closely with hand-picked local elites to ensure that even after independence the imperialists would retain a firm grip on the markets, resources, and people in their former colonies.

The British were able to pull this off in India, where the Congress Party worked with the British to ensure that even as India became an independent country it remained under the thumb of British monopoly capitalists. This actually ended up being a more efficient way for British capitalists to exploit India—they were able to make investments in India and exploit India’s resources without having to worry as much about the day-to-day governance. This actually resulted in increased British investment in India following independence. India changed from a British colony to a neocolony, a country which is technically an independent country but in reality is thoroughly dominated and controlled by foreign imperialist powers.

**Neocolonialism is particularly advantageous for the imperialists because it obscures the ways in which the oppressed countries are dominated by foreign powers.** Instead of being occupied by a foreign country and directly controlled, as in old-style colonialism, under neocolonialism oppressed countries are “independent,” with their own names, flags, official languages, laws, and so on. In the case of Haiti, which has been independent for a long time, imperialist powers have never ceased their schemes for dominating and controlling Haiti to serve their imperialist interests.

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Haiti was founded in 1804 by former slaves, who revolted against the brutal system of French plantation slavery. They waged an incredibly brave and heroic struggle against France, which sent some of its best troops to crush the nascent rebellion and “restore order.” **The Haitian people fought for 12 long years against France, and after decisively defeating the French they finally declared independence and created the first Black republic in history, and the first independent country established as the result of a slave rebellion.**





*During the Haitian Revolution, the former slaves fought heroically to defeat the French colonialists. Often they fought against better armed enemies, but nevertheless, they overthrew their oppressors and won their freedom.*

The Haitian people's victory over their oppressors continues to be a major inspiration for oppressed and exploited people around the world. **It showed that the power of the people, united in struggle, is stronger than the force of the oppressors.** It also showed the world that the racist myths of white supremacy are vicious lies. French troops were defeated and outsmarted time after time by former Black slaves, the vast majority of whom could not read or write, who were fighting with whatever weapons they could make themselves or take from the French oppressors.

But for the elite of the powerful capitalist and slave-owning countries of the time, like the United States, Britain, and France, the victory of the Haitian people over slavery was not something to be celebrated. They were concerned that their own slaves might take inspiration from the Haitian example and start to rise up. **Like all oppressors throughout history, they hated nothing more than having the oppressed slip from their grasp.** So all of these countries started working in various ways to keep Haiti from being truly independent. For example in 1825 France threatened to attack Haiti unless Haiti agreed to pay an enormous sum of money, the equivalent of \$40 billion today, to compensate former French slaveowners for what

they viewed as their lost "property," namely the people who they used to own. Haiti had to take out massive loans to pay this indemnity, which kept it mired in debt and poverty over a century. **The debt wasn't fully paid off until 1947.**

Although early on France played the primary role in oppressing Haiti, as the United States developed into a more powerful country it became the primary imperialist oppressor of the Haitian people. For the U.S. ruling class there is a lot of money to be made by dominating and controlling Haiti, so they want to make sure that they will be able to count on the Haitian government acting in their interests. For this reason the U.S. ruling class has a long history of treating Haiti as its personal backyard, backing leaders who will cooperate with U.S. business interests and constantly interfering in Haiti's affairs if U.S. interests are threatened.

This has allowed the U.S. ruling elite to ensure for a long time that the government in Haiti is a subservient puppet government. **But the Haitian people also have a long history of struggling against the imperialist domination of their country, so the local U.S.-backed ruling elites have had to rule with an iron fist, brutally suppressing any popular democratic or revolutionary movements that threaten their rule.**



*Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier (center right) dressed in the uniform of the Leopards, a special branch of the Haitian military trained by the U.S. to suppress the insurgency against the Duvalier dictatorship.*

The U.S. government supported the brutal Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti, which lasted from 1957 to 1986, and during which tens of thousands of Haitians were slaughtered. François Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude, ruled Haiti with extreme brutality, suppressing any threat to their rule with extreme repression. They stayed in power by maintaining a reign of terror throughout the country, using a militia called the Tonton Macoutes (the name of a boogeyman-type monster in Haitian folklore). The U.S. Marines provided them with weapons training. The Tonton Macoutes killed and tortured thousands of Haitians who dared to resist or even just to criticize the Duvalier dictatorship. Thousands of Haitians were forced to flee the country to escape death or imprisonment. The U.S. has also repeatedly used former Tonton Macoutes to serve U.S. interests in Haiti, including those who carried out war crimes and massacres against Haitian workers, farmers, activists, and dissidents.

**In the last 30 years the U.S. and U.S.-backed right-wing militias have been involved in two coups d'état in Haiti, one in 1991 and another in 2004.** Both have involved right-wing militias, armed and trained by the U.S., which were composed of former members of the Tonton Macoutes. One of the most notorious groups is the absurdly named Revolutionary Armed Front for the Advancement of Haiti (FRAPH, Front Révolutionnaire Armé pour le Progrès d'Haiti), a group composed of ex-Tonton

Macoute goons. This group has carried out numerous brutal attacks on people in Haiti, including several large massacres.

The 1991 U.S.-backed coup was aimed at ousting the recently-elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide, a priest who played a leading role in the anti-Duvalier and pro-democracy movement for many years, was elected on a wave of popular enthusiasm and optimism that swept Haiti after the fall of the brutal Duvalier dictatorship in 1986. Aristide was himself not an anti-imperialist or a revolutionary. He advocated for increased spending on

social programs, and proposed regulations which would slightly reduce the degree to which foreign corporations plunder profits from the labor of the Haitian people. The funds from these changes were to be used for educational and public health programs.

*The Tonton Macoutes killed and tortured thousands of Haitians who dared to resist or even just to criticize the Duvalier dictatorship.*

**Aristide did not advocate for kicking the U.S. imperialists out of the country once and for all, and he was not opposed to continued foreign investment in Haiti.** Still, the changes he proposed, modest though they were, would have reduced the profits for foreign capitalists who are desperate to squeeze as much as possible from the blood and sweat of the Haitian people. To protect their profits and their bottom line the U.S. ruling class orchestrated the coup in Haiti.

After the 1991 coup, several U.S.-backed paramilitary groups, including the FRAPH, kept popular opposition to the coup in check through brutal repression. On April 22, 1994, the FRAPH carried out one of the most notorious massacres of the period in Raboteau, when they murdered around 50 people in a neighborhood which was a center of support for Aristide.



FRAPH goons also raped a large number of women. In both of the U.S.-backed coups many working people in Haiti were killed by these right-wing thugs, and the chaos unleashed by these coups devastated the country.

Aside from outright coups, the U.S. has also interfered in elections to ensure that only people friendly to their interests are elected. Haiti uses a runoff election system with two rounds, where many candidates compete in the first round. The two with the most votes then face off in the second round, with the winner becoming president. **In the 2010-2011 election the Organization of American States and the U.S. State Department worked together to certify the first round election results as “fraudulent,” after their favored candidate, Michel Martelly, didn’t make it into the second round.** The next candidate who did, Jude Célestin, was forced to drop out of the race, and Martelly went on to win the presidency.

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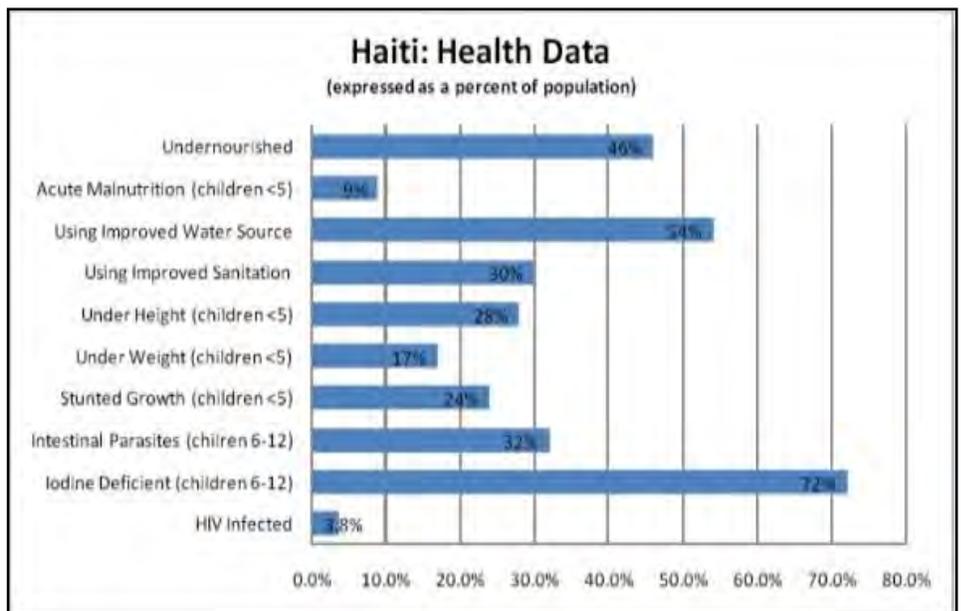
The U.S. and other imperialist countries really will do almost anything to maintain control of countries like Haiti, from sponsoring right-wing death squads that murder and rape with impunity to blatant election-rigging. For the U.S. and other imperialist countries, there is a lot of money to be made by controlling and dominating the economies of other countries, and they are perfectly fine with the disastrous results of this kind of meddling for the Haitian people.

For foreign capitalists it is advantageous to have Haiti be a poor country which is relatively undeveloped. This lets them pay lower wages to Haitian workers than they would have to pay in the U.S. In Haiti the current minimum wage is around three dollars a day, and many employers pay even less. Even though many basic necessities are much cheaper in Haiti than in the

U.S., this is a poverty wage which is almost impossible to survive on. **For the capitalists who set up these factories the poverty and deprivation in Haiti is not a human disaster, but a great business opportunity.**

In addition to producing huge profits for U.S. and French capitalists, the foreign-owned factories in Haiti keep the country mired in poverty. This is because the profits produced in these factories through the blood, sweat, and tears of Haitian workers are owned by foreign capitalists. This means that a large part of the wealth produced in Haiti leaves the country, and even the elites in Haiti are only given a relatively small share compared to the huge profits that foreign capitalists make. This parasitic relationship is immensely profitable for the U.S. and French capitalists who produce t-shirts, jeans, sweatshirts, and other goods in Haiti, but it keeps the Haitian people in a perpetual state of poverty.

Since so much of the wealth produced in Haiti leaves the country, there is not much left over to pay for basic social services like healthcare, housing, or education, or to invest in infrastructure beyond what is needed to serve the interests of foreign capitalists. **As long as Haiti continues to be dominated by imperialist powers the Haitian people will be unable to throw off the shackles of poverty and deprivation, since this constant parasitic withdrawal of wealth will continue to systematically impoverish the country.**



*As a result of imperialist plunder and the corruption of local elites, the people of Haiti face crushing poverty and dire health conditions.*



*After the 2010 earthquake, imperialists like Clinton and Bush rushed to Haiti, and used this disaster as an excuse to further deepen U.S. control of the country under the guise of humanitarian aid.*

This is a big part of the reason why, almost ten years after the disastrous earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010, the country still has not been able to fully rebuild. **For the imperialists the massive devastation caused by this continual impoverishment is actually helpful for maximizing their rate of profit.**

***The U.S. works to ensure that a puppet government is in power in Haiti, which they can count on to help them oppress and exploit the Haitian people.***

Although Haiti is oppressed by a number of imperialist powers, the U.S. plays the primary role. U.S. capitalists own the majority of foreign-owned factories and farms in Haiti, and the U.S. government constantly meddles in Haitian affairs to protect U.S. business interests. The U.S. works to ensure that a puppet government is in power in Haiti, which they can count on to help them oppress and exploit the Haitian people. These people, like Jovenel Moïse and Michel Martelly before him, care far more about lining their own pockets than about their own people, and they are willing to sell out the country to the highest bidder.

The situation for the Haitian people is

very dire. **The corrupt neocolonial government in Haiti cooperates eagerly with foreign capitalists to help them exploit and oppress the Haitian people.** Workers, peasants, and nearly everyone in Haiti is deeply impoverished, except for the corrupt layer of officials who get a kickback from the imperialists. Many Haitians are not able to get enough food to eat or access basic medical care. The situation is very bad, but in this difficult situation a large number of workers, peasants, activists, progressive intellectuals, and lawyers have taken to the streets. Last summer, when the government planned a massive increase in the price of fuel, huge street demonstrations and blockades forced them to cancel

these plans, and the protests eventually forced the then-prime minister from office.

**More recently, the protests against the massive corruption scandal engulfing Haiti's political and business elite have rocked the country and ground the whole economy to a halt for days at a time.** The strength of these protests shows how massive the power of the people really is. When hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets to demonstrate and call for change, the rulers are forced to take notice and make concessions, in ways that they normally do not. These developments are very inspiring to see, and they show that people are capable of tremendous acts of resistance, even when operating in very difficult conditions.

**This struggle in Haiti also an anti-imperialist struggle, because the Haitian ruling class is so tightly linked up with the domination of Haiti by foreign powers, principally the U.S.** The Haitian people's struggle against the corrupt puppet government which they live under is part of a growing wave of anti-imperialist struggles around the world. In recent years the people of numerous countries have grown increasingly fed up with corrupt pro-imperialist governments which impoverish and oppress them. In some countries these movements take the form of organized, long-term revolutionary movements, such as the revolutionary struggles being waged in India and the Philippines.





*A protest in Sudan against former president Omar al-Bashir. Mass demonstrations like this one forced him from office.*

In other countries there is not yet an organized revolutionary movement, but the struggles against repressive puppet governments are still anti-imperialist struggles, and progressive and democratic people worldwide should support them.

Aside from Haiti, big protest movements have emerged recently in Sudan, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, and elsewhere. In Sudan huge protests have forced Omar al-Bashir from office; he had ruled the country for thirty years. Bashir was supported by Chinese imperialists who propped up his government for years and controlled the country's oil resources. The military in Sudan has attempted to seize power and turn his ouster into a coup, so they can put a different member of his close inner circle in power, but protests continue, and it is not yet clear who will take power in the country. **Recently Saudi Arabia and the UAE have extended \$3 billion in aid to the Sudanese military to support their coup.** The people of Sudan are no doubt very familiar with the situation in neighboring Egypt, where Abdel Fattah el-Sisi came to power in 2013 as part of a military coup after massive protests. His rule has been incredibly harsh and repressive; his rise to power was also sponsored by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. If the people of Sudan keep up their struggle, they will be able to avoid military rule, but the road will be long and difficult.

In Algeria too, the long time president Abdelaziz Bouteflika has been ousted following years of economic problems and cutbacks in social services. Bouteflika, who became president of Algeria in 1999, was forced to resign from the presidency following massive protests that rocked the capital city of Algiers every Friday for weeks. **There, too, the existing powers have attempted to put another member of Bouteflika's ruling clique in power, but popular protests**

**have continued nonetheless, with people demanding power to determine the future of their country.**

In Jordan last summer there were very large protests against a proposed new tax code, which would have greatly increased the burden of taxation on working people. The tax "reform" was ordered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to which the government of Jordan owes billions of dollars. **The IMF is an imperialist organization which helps the U.S. and its allies dominate and control other countries through predatory loans.**



*Hundreds of thousands have taken to the street in Algeria to protest against the corrupt government and imperialist domination of their country.*



*Millions of Yemenis protest against the U.S.-Saudi-UAE war on their country. This demonstration took place on March 19, 2019, the four year anniversary of the start of the war.*

When the countries that it loans money to are unable to pay back what they borrow, the IMF and the U.S. government will use their leverage to impose humiliating conditions on the indebted country. Sometimes the IMF will demand that one of their loyal lackeys be appointed to control financial policy in the country, or they will demand that markets be opened to U.S. products and investment. **In the case of Jordan, which owes around \$40 billion, the IMF decreed that the Jordanian government should tax poor people in the country more in order to pay back the debt.** For poor and working Jordanians, who were already struggling to make ends meet, the imposition of further taxation was more than they could put up with, and so they took to the streets. Massive protests forced the scrapping of the law, and the prime minister was also forced to resign.

In Yemen, where the Saudi-led coalition has been waging a disastrous war with assistance and direction from the U.S., the people have demonstrated in massive numbers against the imperialist domination and destruction of their country. The current war in Yemen really started in 2011, when large protests broke out in Yemen as part of the Arab spring. Many Yemenis took part in these

popular democratic and anti-imperialist protests, which opposed the foreign domination of their country and the corruption and decadence of then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Saleh had ruled as President since the unification of Yemen in 1990. **During his years in power he personally stole around \$60 billion, massively enriching himself while the majority of Yemenis remained mired in poverty.** He also worked closely with corporations based in the U.S., the U.K., France, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) to exploit Yemen's petroleum resources and the blood and sweat of its people. Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East, with the vast majority of people earning just a few dollars a day.

In 2012 these popular protests forced Saleh to resign as President. His Vice-President, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, was appointed instead. Hadi's government was backed by the U.S. and by the Saudi and U.A.E dominated Gulf Cooperation Council. Hadi implemented a series of minor reforms that were intended to pacify the protests, but his government was ultimately unable to quell people's anger over their economic and political situation. These tensions came to a head in 2014, when the government announced it would cut fuel subsidies.





*Despite the dire conditions in Yemen, mass protests against the bombardment and destruction of their country are routine.*

These changes were ordered by the IMF as a condition for a loan. **Like in Jordan, this change, which would have hit ordinary working people very hard, met with very strong popular opposition.** The Houthis, a Shia political party and armed group which is supported by Iran, supported the protests and called for Hadi's ouster. The previously deposed president, Saleh, attempted to take advantage of this situation to return to power. He allied with the Houthis and together they overthrew the government in a coup, eventually forcing Hadi to resign in January 2015.

*This war, while in part an effort to counter the maneuvers of rival imperialist powers, has primarily been a war on the people of Yemen.*

Following Hadi's ouster, Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. launched a major military campaign in Yemen with support from the U.S. and other western imperialist powers. This campaign in support of Hadi's so-called "government in exile," which is based in Saudi Arabia, has spiraled into a massive and disastrous war in which numerous war crimes have been carried out by the Saudi and U.A.E.-led coalition. **They have bombed schools, hospitals, funerals, and people's homes, killing thousands of people. They have intentionally crippled Yemen's healthcare system at the same time that they destroyed water treatment plants throughout the country.** This has created a cholera epidemic which Yemen's

surviving healthcare system is unable to deal with. The coalition has also created a blockade, limiting the amount of food, medicine, and other essentials which can enter the country. **This blockade has created a man-made famine, with around 18 million people at risk of starving to death.**

This disaster for the Yemeni people, which has already claimed tens of thousands of lives, is part of the inter-imperialist

competition over control of their country. The Saudis, the U.A.E., and the U.S. have launched this disastrous and genocidal war to crush the people's resistance and also to prevent the growth of Iranian and Russian influence in Yemen. This war, while in part an effort to counter the maneuvers of rival imperialist powers, has primarily been a war on the people of Yemen.

Countless people have been slaughtered for daring to stand up against the imperialist domination of their country. **For imperialist powers like the U.S. and Saudi Arabia this is simply acceptable "collateral damage."** Tens of thousands of deaths and the utter destruction of an entire country are worth it, to them, to prevent the people of Yemen from determining the course of their own future. Imperialists are likewise generally willing to slaughter millions to prevent rival empires from taking control of their colonies and neocolonies.

Throughout all of these twists and turns the Yemeni people have, in varying ways, kept struggling against these imperialist efforts to dominate and control their country. On the fourth anniversary of the war in Yemen this past March, millions of Yemenis came out to anti-war protests in several cities, when huge marches and protests were held across Yemen. Yemenis denounced the brutal Saudi and U.A.E.-led war, and denounced U.S. imperialist interference in their country. This in the midst of what the U.N. has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. **This brave and courageous resistance of the Yemeni people is a major inspiration, and it shows that even in incredibly difficult circumstances people can find ways to struggle and resist their oppressors.**



All of these struggles against imperialist-dominated governments are part of a growing wave of anti-imperialist movements around the world. This new wave of struggles is directed against both the corrupt and oppressive lackeys in power and the imperialists with whom they closely cooperate to exploit and impoverish their own people. People in many countries are taking to the streets, demanding an end to brutal exploitation, poverty, and daily misery, and calling for the removal of the imperialist lackeys from power.

*All of these struggles against imperialist-dominated governments are part of a growing wave of anti-imperialist movements around the world.*

It is very important for revolutionaries in the imperialist countries like the U.S. to pay attention and support these anti-imperialist struggles in the colonies and neocolonies of the world. This is because the anti-imperialist struggles waged in the oppressed countries are part of the same struggle we are waging here, against the brutal system of capitalist-imperialism. The struggle to overthrow the monopoly capitalists who rule in the imperialist countries is inextricably linked up with the struggle against imperialist domination and

control in the oppressed countries. **Both struggles are part of the international working class struggle, for a world free from class oppression and brutal exploitation.**

Revolutionaries in the U.S. have an important role to play in opposing the brutal U.S. wars and economic plunder of dozens of other countries around the world. **It is very important that we develop powerful movements here against U.S. imperialism, as part of our internationalist efforts to support the struggles of people living in neocolonies dominated by the U.S.** But it is very important that we not just oppose U.S. imperialism, but truly

oppose the entire capitalist-imperialist system and the machinations of all imperialist powers. In particular, we cannot oppose U.S. imperialism by throwing our support behind a rival imperialist power simply because it opposes the U.S. After all, a rival imperialist power like China is playing the same game as the U.S., and if U.S. neocolonies are seized by Chinese monopoly capitalists the situation for the people there will be just as brutal and exploitative.

The truly internationalist position is to oppose imperialism in all of its forms. Here in the U.S. we must oppose not only the imperialist machinations of the U.S. monopoly capitalists but of all the imperialist powers in the world. By the same token we have to support all anti-imperialist struggles around the world, whether they occur in neocolonies dominated by the U.S., France, Russia, China, or any other imperialist power. **All of these struggles are the struggles of oppressed people against the bloody and oppressive system of capitalist-imperialism, a system which must be utterly and completely destroyed in order for the working people of the world to finally be free.** In Haiti and in many other countries around the world these struggles are intensifying. We must support these efforts by oppressed peoples to free themselves from the shackles of imperialist domination, and we must do all we can to oppose the efforts of the imperialists to keep people in chains.



# The Great March of Return and Palestinian Liberation

by Khalil

*The past year has seen an intensification of the struggle for Palestinian liberation. The Great March of Return has inspired many around the world, and further exposed the crimes of the apartheid Zionist regime in Israel. This has also played a role in growing opposition to Israel in the U.S. Given this, it is important to understand the history of the Palestinian Liberation struggle.*



*Tens of thousands of people have protested weekly during the March of Return.*

On March 30th 2018, the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip began a mass protest movement—the Great March of Return—at the Gaza-Israel border, to demand an end to the blockade and siege of Gaza, and demand their right to return to their homeland, stolen from them over 71 years ago. Over 30,000 people came out to fight back against the ongoing oppression and ethnic cleansing Palestinians face at the hands of the Israeli state. In typical fashion, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded by killing 15 and injuring 1,400 Palestinians in just the first day of the protests. **The March of Return protests have continued on a weekly basis now for over a year, and as of writing over 250 Palestinians have been killed and over 29,000 injured by the IDF in its fascist attempts to destroy any and all resistance.**

This particular movement erupted mostly spontaneously, but it did not come out of nowhere. It is the result of generations of struggle against Israeli colonialism and apartheid, the successes and failures of the movement of the past, and the increasingly dire situation the Palestinian people face. Despite the extremely brutal subjugation they face at the hands of Israel, their resistance is inspiring to people all over the world who are also struggling to break the chains of oppression. And

given all the support the U.S. ruling class gives to the Israeli state for the brutal oppression of Palestinians, revolutionaries and all progressive people of the United States have a shared interest and duty to support the March of Return in Gaza, and the Palestinian liberation struggle more broadly.

The Gaza Strip has a population of around 1.8 million people and is one of the most densely populated places on Earth. **It is effectively an open-air prison for Palestinian refugees, who make up around 74% of the population.** Before the creation of Israel in 1948, the land was part the British Mandate for Palestine. This was land previously under the control of the Ottoman Empire, which the British and French (along with other imperialists) carved up between themselves after their victory in World War I. The British sponsored Zionist efforts to colonize Palestine, and worked extensively with right-wing and fascist Zionist militias (which would later become the IDF) like the Haganah and Irgun to crush Palestinian resistance to these colonial efforts. In 1948, these militias launched a massive ethnic cleansing campaign—known to Palestinians as the “Nakba” or “catastrophe”—to drive Arab Palestinians out of Palestine and create Israel as a Jewish ethno-state.



*The Deir Yassin Massacre was one of many massacres carried out by the Zionists during the Nakba. 107 Palestinian villagers of Deir Yassin were killed by the Zionist Irgun and Lehi paramilitaries on April 9th, 1948.*

The Nakba included burning villages, massacring civilians, forced evictions, and more. **All of this forced an estimated 750,000 Palestinians their homes into slum-like refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza (which were under Jordanian and Egyptian control respectively until 1967), and to neighboring countries such as Lebanon.**

Since occupying Gaza and the West Bank, Israel has aggressively pushed for the further Israeli settlement and annexation of these areas. While this push for settlement continues to intensify in the West Bank, the resistance of the people in Gaza in the early 2000s forced all Israeli settlers to leave. However, shortly thereafter, Israel enforced a brutal blockade on Gaza which continues to this day. The blockade prevents Gazans from moving freely from the area, confining them to live in what even the United Nations has called “uninhabitable” conditions. **This blockade controls the food, water, medical supplies, building materials, commercial goods, and electricity that the people in Gaza require to survive.** Roughly 97% of the water in Gaza is undrinkable, and about 52% of the labor force is unemployed (according to official statistics). This poverty is made even worse by the fact that Israel routinely launches military operations and wars against the people of Gaza.

In the past decade alone, the Israeli military has launched over a dozen military operations there. One of the more recent and more destructive operations was the war in 2014, in

which at least 2,251 Palestinians were killed. The IDF targeted schools, mosques, crowded neighborhoods, hospitals, and more with mainly American-made missiles, planes, and other weaponry. These brutal operations and wars are waged in the name of fighting “terrorism,” but the main victims and targets are civilians. This is part of the overall Zionist aim of ethnically cleansing Palestine for the establishment of a Jewish-only state, which has been a goal of the modern Zionist movement since its founding in the 1890s.

The modern Zionist movement has always been a reactionary and settler-colonial movement. It began as a small movement among middle-class

European Jews, who openly worked with imperialist governments to establish a colonial outpost. While it gathered marginal support in the Jewish ghettos of the Russian Empire—where anti-Jewish reaction was the strongest—it remained a very small movement, largely because its main arguments did not resonate with the majority of Jewish people, who were working-class or peasants and did not see moving to Palestine as a solution to the oppression they faced. **Additionally, there was a strong revolutionary movement among the middle-class and working-class Jewish population in Russia and Eastern Europe.** The Zionist movement relied on extremely racist narratives about colonized people, especially Arabs, in order to justify the eventual theft and settlement of their land.



*Palestinian refugee tents after the Nakba in 1948.*



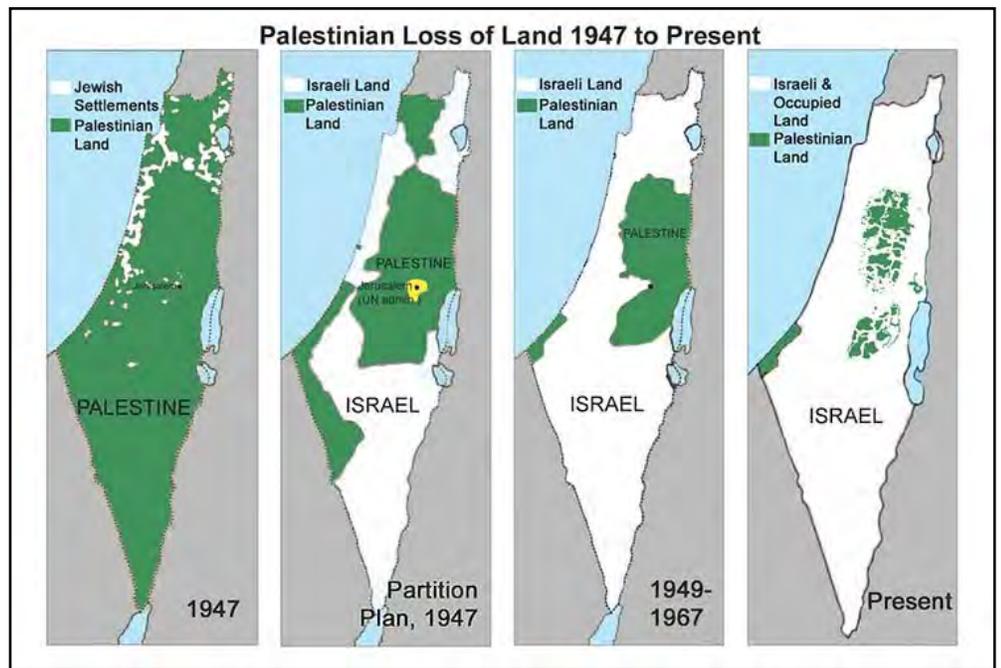
Zionism also utilized many anti-Semitic ideas to justify its goal. In fact, the main argument of Zionism mirrored the dominant anti-Semitic narrative that Jewish people could never live together with other people—therefore, argued the Zionists, they must create their own country.

**Jewish workers in the U.S. and Europe, however, were often some of the most supportive of revolutionary struggles around the world like the Russian Revolution.** This was partly due to the extreme oppression they

faced by the governments like that of the Russian Tsar, the German Kaiser, and the so-called “democratic” governments of France and Britain. But more than that, many Jewish people saw their common interests were with the poor and oppressed of all religions and nationalities, not with the small number of middle-class and capitalist Jews who also exploited the people. Instead of supporting Zionism, many Jews joined with their non-Jewish brothers and sisters in revolutionary struggle.

The fear that revolutionary movements would spread after the victory of the Russian Revolution compelled European imperialists like the British government to throw their weight behind the Zionist movement. **The British government saw Zionism as a way to maintain control of their newly acquired land in the Middle East.** Not only did Zionism help imperialists in maintaining their domestic rule and their grip over the Middle East by establishing a friendly reactionary government in region, it also provided a way to expel large portions of the Jewish population from Europe—something both the reactionary and anti-Semitic regimes and Zionist movement agreed on as a desirable goal.

**Yet since the colonization of Palestine began, there has been brave resistance on the part of the Palestinian people.** In 1936, the Great Revolt in Palestine began following a general strike of workers, and later turned into a war of resistance led by Palestinian workers and



peasants. The revolt attempted to end British rule of Palestine and its sponsorship of Zionist settlers, who had been immigrating to Palestine in larger and larger numbers and acquiring more and more land. The settlers formed right-wing militias to aid their colonial efforts, which routinely abused the Palestinians. The revolt was eventually crushed by the British army and these Zionist militias (many of which would later lead the Nakba). The suppression of the revolt was so brutal that organized resistance to Israel remained small, unorganized, and largely underground until the 1964 founding of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was committed to liberating Palestine through armed struggle.

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The PLO consisted of several different political parties in Palestine and in the refugee camps, and was quickly able to organize social programs in the camps such as schools, where Palestinian children were taught the history of their people and struggle, learned to read, and were taught both Arabic and Hebrew.



*During the late 1960s and early 1970s the PLO organized massive protests and demonstrations in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan.*

The PLO did not want to expel all Israelis from the land, but instead aimed to unify the people in a single, democratic, and secular state in which people of all nationalities and religions were equal. In fact, there had been an Arab-Jewish population in Palestine for centuries before Zionist colonization. **The enemy of the Palestinian people was not (and is not) the Jewish people, but the Zionist state.**

Based in the refugee camps in neighboring countries, the PLO won several victories against the technologically superior, U.S.-backed Israeli military. However, they were not alone in their struggle, but were supported by revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces around the world. The PLO received political and military aid from revolutionary China, and in 1965 even set up a diplomatic mission in Beijing. **Taking inspiration from the Chinese revolution, which firmly and decisively kicked out foreign imperialists in 1949, PLO fighters studied Mao's military writings and other revolutionary texts to guide them in their struggle.** This struggle reached its peak in 1967-1969, after Israel militarily occupied both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

However, the armed struggle eventually faced major setbacks. **The most significant of which was Black September in 1970, in which the Jordanian Army, with the full support of the U.S. and Israel, viciously massacred at**

**least 40,000 Palestinians.** At the time, the majority of the PLO was based in refugee camps in Jordan. Because the fedayeen (freedom fighters) of the PLO had set up parallel forms of government and were also inspiring Jordanians to take up struggle against their own reactionary ruling class, the ruling class of Jordan saw them as an existential threat. In September 1970, the Jordanian army began shelling the Palestinian refugee camps, and later launched an air and ground offensive to drive the fedayeen out. Despite the strong resistance of Palestinian fighters, the Jordanian army was successful, and this was a major blow to the Palestinian liberation struggle.

The PLO would then move its base to Lebanon, but following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 in which over 20,000 people were killed (by official Lebanese statistics), the PLO lost its remaining military strength. **More and more, its leadership began making deals and compromises with Israel, causing it to lose much of its popular support within Palestine by the time of the first intifada, a grassroots mass uprising in 1989.**

*The PLO received political and military aid from revolutionary China, and in 1965 even set up a diplomatic mission in Beijing.*

With the signing of the Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israel in the early 1990s—which put an end to the first intifada—the PLO was effectively made a puppet of Israel to oversee the territories and people in the West Bank and Gaza. **It became little more than an arm of Zionism with a Palestinian face.** To this day, the Palestinian Authority (the puppet legislature controlled by the PLO) openly collaborates with Israeli police and military to hunt down activists and break popular rebellions and protests. Many of these protests are aimed directly at the corruption and open collaboration of the PLO and PA with the Zionist state!



Despite the betrayal of the PLO, and the inability and unwillingness of other political parties in Palestine to actually chart a course forward for revolution, the Palestinian people have continued the struggle to liberate their country. The Great March of Return is but one of the more recent and powerful examples of this. The central demand of this movement—the right of return—is key to ending the Zionist oppression of Palestine. **The right of return means allowing the roughly five million Palestinian refugees and their descendants (of which around 1.6 million live in**

**UN refugee camps) to return to their homeland—stolen from them in the Nakba and in the years since.** It would allow millions of Palestinians who live in extremely oppressive conditions to regain basic rights and citizenship, and would be a major victory for their struggle. While Israel has a “Law of Return” which gives any Jewish person the right to move to and settle permanently in Israel, it has repeatedly denied Palestinians the right to return to their land.

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But often, this basic right is ignored or chided as “unrealistic” by the imperialists and Zionists. Instead, the Palestinians are urged to “compromise” on a solution to this brutal oppression. This has an impact on our movements here as well. For example, there is a common idea here in the U.S.—even within the Palestinian solidarity movement—that only the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza should be opposed, and that there should be both a Palestinian state and an Israeli state. This idea is referred to as the “Two-State Solution,” and it is an apartheid “solution.” It effectively



*The Israeli military destroyed large swaths of the Gaza Strip in its genocidal 2014 war. Due to the blockade preventing building materials from entering the region, five years later much of Gaza is still in ruins.*

allows for the continued apartheid oppression of the Palestinian people, while masquerading as a way to resolve the issues with Zionist settler-colonialism. The “Two-State Solution” is also promoted by the so-called “progressive” politicians like Bernie Sanders and Ilhan Omar. **It essentially whitewashes the history of Zionism as a settler-colonial ideology, and the genocidal campaign to remove Palestinians from their land.** In justifying the continued existence of a settler-colonial apartheid state, it justifies the continued oppression of the Palestinian people.

The right of return, in contrast, directly threatens the ability of Israel to maintain its racist rule, and would allow for a real democratic and secular state to emerge in Palestine. **Zionism is a form of apartheid rule in which Jewish Israelis are granted more rights and have an overall higher position in society over Arab Palestinians.** To maintain this while also legitimizing the absurd lie that they are “the only democracy in the Middle East,” Israel needs to maintain a majority Jewish population, but the Arab population of Israel is growing faster than the Jewish population. (The racists in Israel euphemistically refer to this as a “demographic problem”). Already, nearly two million people in Israel—21% of the population—are Arab Palestinians.



*Tear gas being fired at protesters in Gaza during March of Return protests. The fascist Israeli military, in a flimsy attempt to avoid international condemnation, made it a policy injure Palestinians (often by shooting them in the legs to cripple them for life, or suffocating them with tear gas) instead of outright slaughtering them.*

If millions of refugees were allowed to return to their homeland and regain basic democratic rights this would throw a wrench in the existing capitalist and settler-colonial democracy in Israel. At present they are able to maintain a facade of democratic legitimacy because the majority of citizens are Jewish. **However, if Palestinians were the majority, the Israel state would have to discard even this facade of democracy, thus further weakening their image and support internationally.** The return of millions of Palestinians to their land would also expand the social basis of resistance to the Zionism and thus threaten the ability of Israel to maintain its apartheid regime in the face of the resistance of millions of people. It is no surprise then that Israel and its supporters (especially the United States) have ferociously opposed any attempts to recognize this basic right on the international level. It is also no surprise that the Israeli state has turned to more and more openly fascist measures to suppress Palestinian citizens of Israel and ethnically cleanse the West Bank.

For revolutionaries and progressive people here in the U.S., it is important that we support the Palestinian people's struggle. **The U.S. is the largest supporter of Zionism in the world.** The U.S. government gives the Israeli military over \$3.8 billion every year, paid for with the tax dollars of poor workers in this country. Israeli military and surveillance technology are also bought by U.S. police and "security" agencies to

track, surveil, and oppress people here. And Israel is closely aligned with the interests of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and regularly cooperates with imperialist invasions and interventions in the Middle East. All of the above is key to understanding the powerful role we in the U.S. can play in supporting the Palestinian liberation struggle. With a large mass movement opposing U.S. support for Israel and U.S. imperialism in general, the pillars of international support keeping Zionism alive will crack and weaken, and provide openings for the Palestinian people to advance the struggle to free their homeland.

***The U.S. government gives the Israeli military over \$3.8 billion every year, paid for with the tax dollars of poor workers in this country.***

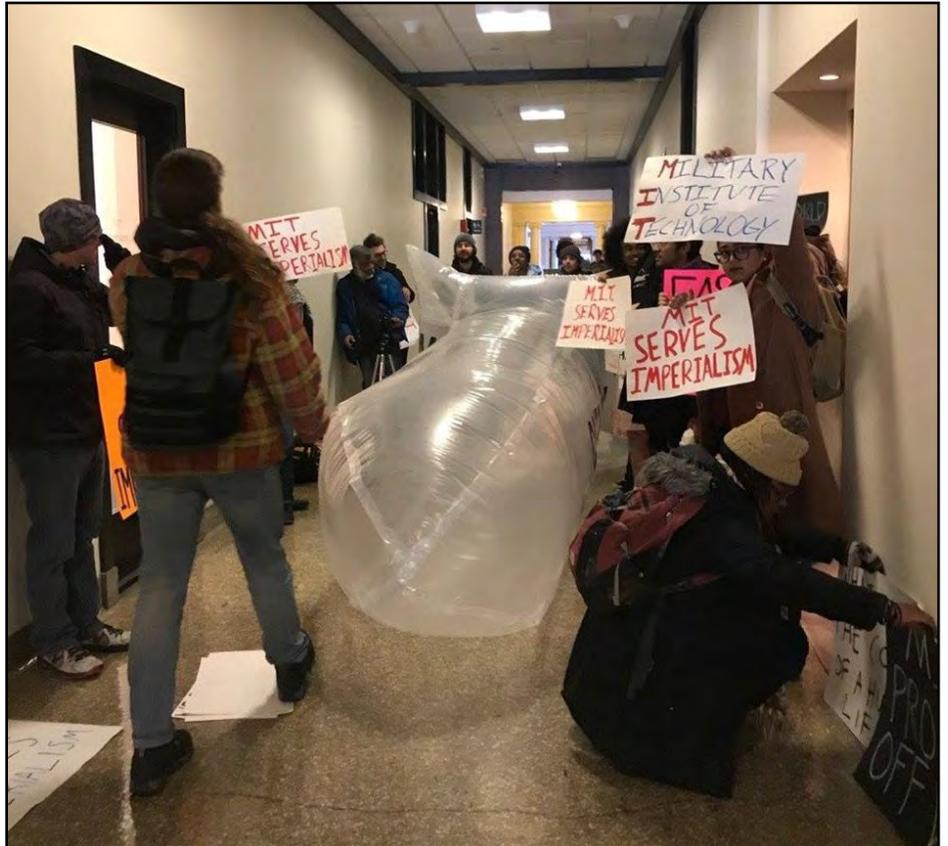
On an even more fundamental level, Zionism must be opposed because it is a wholly racist, genocidal, and settler-colonial ideology, bent on the creation of a colonial enclave in the Middle East. **And we should support Palestinian liberation because the liberation struggle in Palestine is an integral part of the global struggle to break all chains, and to free the people of the world from capitalist-imperialist domination and oppression.**



# Exposing Imperialism at Universities and Rebuilding the Anti-War Movement

by Khalil, Lena C., & Altan D.

*Anti-Imperialist demonstrations have been growing at major universities in the Boston Area. Students are increasingly disillusioned with their universities' ties to war profiteers, the U.S. military, and various despots around the world. As the U.S. and other imperialist powers race headlong toward World War III, there is an urgent need to revive the anti-war movement in this country. An important part of this effort is drawing more students into the anti-war movement, and exposing the key role that universities play in U.S. imperialism. Historically, student movements have been a key part of opposition to U.S. wars.*



*MIT students and anti-war activists stormed the president of university's office with a giant inflatable missile to protest MIT's role in U.S. imperialism.*

In early 2019, students and community members in the Boston area organized a series of protests to expose the role played by universities and war profiteers in the war in Yemen and U.S. imperialism more broadly. Corporations like Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and others play a direct role in U.S. imperialism by selling weapons both to the U.S. military and to its allies like Israel, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Egypt, India, and many other countries. In their genocidal war in Yemen, the Saudi-UAE coalition use large amounts of weaponry made by American war profiteers. **The successful protests against Raytheon and other war profiteers at Northeastern, MIT, Tufts, and Boston University demonstrated the significant potential of anti-imperialist student organizing in the Boston area and around the country.** There are signs of a revival of the anti-

war movement, and revolutionaries should support such efforts while also promoting anti-imperialist leadership and principles. It is also important to critically evaluate the emerging leadership's politics to ensure the anti-war movement is not hijacked by reactionaries, social-democrats, and liberal reformists as it has been in the past.

The United States is presently the world's most powerful empire, maintaining a global network of over **800 military bases abroad** and exerting neocolonial domination over a number of "Third World" countries. The U.S. has bases in some other imperialist, "First World" countries as well, such as Germany and Japan, as the ruling classes' of these countries have largely similar (but not completely the same) interests. The majority of U.S. overseas bases are in poor countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.



*At career fairs war profiteers like Raytheon try to convince students to work for blood money. These career fairs make it seem as if there is no alternative.*

These bases work to protect the business dealings of big American corporations and make sure that local regimes are friendly to U.S. capitalist interests. In these “Third World” countries, American corporations extract billions of dollars in profits from the labor of the people there. These corporations also work hand-in-glove with the CIA and State Department to sponsor everything from soft-coups to all-out war when the people rebel or when local despots trying to seize power look to rival imperialist powers for sponsorship.

The U.S. spreads its military over the world to protect these corporate and political interests. Yemen is currently the most brutal example of the logic of imperialism. In Yemen, the U.S. sponsors, funds, and assists Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in their efforts to bomb, blockade, and occupy the country in retribution for the Yemeni people’s 2011 revolution against the pro-American dictator, Ali Abdullah Saleh. **Saleh amassed over \$60 billion through corruption during**

his 33 year-long rule by opening up the country to plunder by imperialist powers like the United States and France, as well as regional powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Despite the country’s rich oil reserves and despite the existence of Yemen’s port cities, which are key to the global oil trade, this exploitation by foreign powers combined with the brutal and decadent corruption of Saleh and the country’s ruling elite made Yemen the poorest country in the Middle East.

After Saleh was removed from power during the 2011 Arab Spring, his Vice President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi took over. Hadi ran the country in much of the same fashion, and people’s resistance to his rule continued. After Hadi attempted to implement a massive price hike for fuel in exchange for a loan from the International Monetary Fund, he too was forced from power through massive street protests led by the Yemeni people. However, this mass movement allowed the Houthis—an insurgent group aligned with Iran—to seize control of a significant portion of the country in a coup.





*On February 15, 2003, around 500,000 people gathered in New York City to protest against the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Around 10 million people protested together around the world that day.*

This was a major threat to the interests of both the ruling classes of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. **So, with the support of the U.S. and other powers like Britain and France, the Saudis and UAE formed a military coalition to remove the Houthis from power, restore the corrupt government of Hadi, and firmly crush any resistance of the Yemeni people to foreign occupation.** This war—now in its fourth year—has pushed nearly two-thirds of Yemen’s population to the brink of famine and starvation.

**Over 1 million people in Yemen are suffering from a massive cholera outbreak, and according to UNICEF, as of November 2017, 130 children were dying of starvation every day.** The death rate since hasn’t been verified, but the conditions of famine and starvation continue to drastically worsen. While such statistics are likely underestimates, it’s been confirmed that at least 56,000 civilians have been killed by airstrikes.

The level of destruction caused in Yemen will not be known until after the war is over. The level of outrage at U.S. support for this war has even led to bills against it being passed in the U.S. Congress, only to be vetoed by Trump. Meanwhile, the weapons manufacturers like Raytheon handsomely profit from the sale of weapons to the Saudi-UAE

coalition, who routinely target civilians in markets, schools, hospitals, weddings and funerals, while also bombing farms, water treatment plants, and other infrastructure. **This genocidal strategy is supported by the U.S. and is similar to strategies employed to secure the profits of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class in Iraq, Afghanistan, and numerous other countries.**

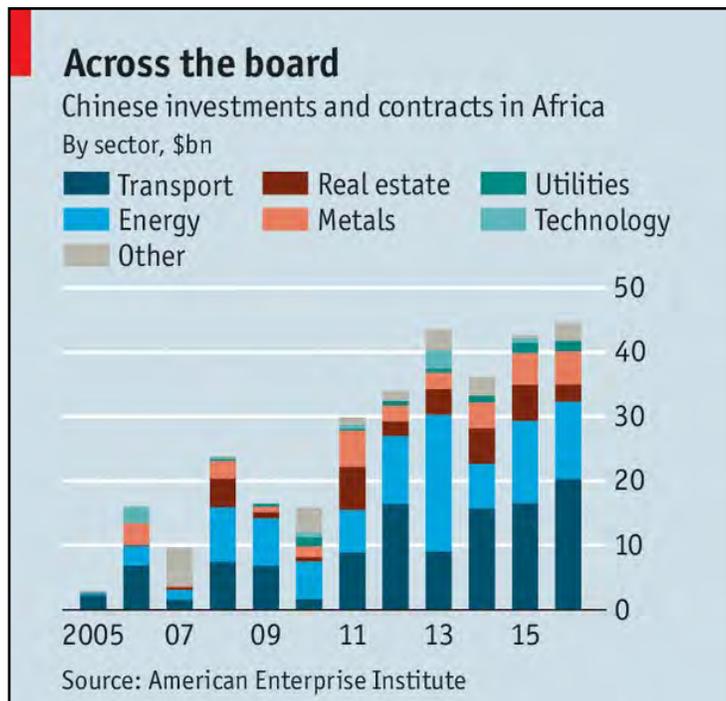
Following the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, the anti-war movement was quite strong and well organized, even with its many shortcomings. The news of massacres in Fallujah and Haditha, the exposure of the torture programs at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, and the apparent endlessness of the wars drew hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people into the streets. But the movement was led into a dead-end, as its leadership saw electing Barack Obama as the answer. **Obama promised to end the war in Iraq and bring troops home, and many believed he would. However, with his election, the U.S. anti-war movement died down as people grew complacent and trusted this politician to end the wars.** Obama did not end U.S. imperialist wars. Iraq continues to be a victim to U.S. aggression and the occupation of Afghanistan is now over 18 years old, the longest single war in U.S. history.

In fact, Obama oversaw a significant surge in the so-called “War on Terror,” began a massive drone assassination program which regularly killed civilians and continues to this day, and initiated interventions in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Pakistan, and many other places. And now, after reaching a low-point under Obama, the anti-war movement in the U.S. is slowly starting to rise back up. While there is still a long way to go, this resurgence is encouraging and should be supported by revolutionaries.

U.S. support for the war in Yemen is not just about crushing the resistance of the Yemeni people. It is also rooted in the underlying competition with other imperialist countries like China to divide up the world’s territories, resources, markets, and labor for the profits of their respective ruling classes. In the case of Yemen, the U.S. and its allies are particularly worried about growing Iranian influence in the region and Chinese influence around the world and in Africa. China has made significant inroads in countries such as the Philippines, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Pakistan with its “One Belt One Road” initiative. The One Belt One Road initiative is the Chinese ruling class’s plan to grow its global influence and to eventually overtake the U.S. as the dominant global empire. In order to do so, China has set up a series of industrial, agricultural, and infrastructure projects in dozens of countries, which these countries often finance with high-interest loans from China which come with various strings attached.

These loans and other agreements with China are similar to those used by the U.S. and other powers to trap the people of these countries in economic dependency and facilitate the plunder of these country’s labor and resources by foreign capitalists. For

example, Nigeria is one of the largest recipients of Chinese aid and loans in Africa, with some estimates showing Chinese investment and construction contracts totaling over \$21 billion between 2016-2018. While these loans are allegedly ear-marked for infrastructure (railroads, industrial parks, factories, etc.) they have very little benefit to the people of the countries that take them.



*U.S. imperialists are particularly concerned about growing Chinese investment and inroads into Africa.*

These projects are similar to Britain’s railroads in former colonies such as India and Kenya, where the British built large railway systems to easily transport raw materials and commodity goods out of India to be sold in Britain. **The railroads also helped to move soldiers throughout the colonies to “pacify” resistance to colonialism and were key to developing systems of resource extraction.**

*The railroads in Africa currently financed by China[...]facilitate the movement of goods, labor, and troops across these countries in manners which suit the interests of the Chinese elite, and not the people of these countries.*

During the old colonial period, the British relied heavily on colonial slave labor to build the railroads and work in the mines. The railroads in Africa currently financed by China function in a similar fashion. They facilitate the movement of goods, labor, and troops across these countries in manners which suit the interests of the Chinese elite, and not the people of these countries.



*Students at California Polytechnic State University protest against Raytheon and the U.S. war machine at a campus career fair.*

**The competition between the U.S. and China has grown increasingly hostile in recent years.** Just since the beginning of this 2019, the U.S. has sailed warships through the Strait of Taiwan on a monthly basis as a clear show of force. As the U.S. schemes and plots to remain the strongest imperialist power—including by preparing for a nuclear world war—a powerful and organized anti-war movement in the U.S. is desperately needed. The recent protests at Boston-area universities show that principled and serious political work can lead to a revival of the anti-war movement. While these protests were first steps, they represent a big advance in renewing the movement.

These protests in the Boston-area are not the only recent protests against war profiteers. **In fact, anti-war protests are on the rise around the country, and those in Boston were inspired by similar efforts around the country.** In April 2018, students at California Polytechnic State University protested the relationship between Raytheon and the university at a career fair. They were met with warning letters citing a “Time, Place, and Manner” policy regarding campus demonstrations and threatening formal disciplinary action if the students staged another protest inside a career fair. A petition of more than 3,600 signatures decrying the university’s

response prompted the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility to formally retract the statement that the protests violated university policy. Inspired by these actions against Raytheon, Boston-area students came together with local anti-war activists and revolutionaries to expose how universities in the area serve imperialism and to disrupt their attempts to recruit students into the war machine.

*Boston-area students came together with local anti-war activists and revolutionaries to expose how universities in the area serve imperialism.*

The protests targeted Raytheon in particular. **Raytheon is responsible for massacres of people all around the planet, yet it presents itself as a “diverse” and “fun” company, where engineers can “solve complex problems.”** It promotes U.S. chauvinism and peddles the bold-faced lies that the U.S. military is a force for good, and that the precision of their bombs ensure only the “bad guys” are killed. **Of course, in imperialist**



*Anti-war activists and BU students exposed how the university welcomes war profiteers to campus with open arms.*

**and genocidal wars like the one raging on in Yemen, the “bad guys” who are being bombed are none other than civilians and those protesting against the war!**

At Northeastern and MIT, protests spooked Raytheon recruiters and campus security. At both universities, protesters were asked to move to the sidewalk. At MIT, activists refused to move and faced a livid university bureaucrat who had to be restrained by a campus police officer. **The typical calm and order of career fairs was broken.**

At the Boston University (BU) protest, activists took an even more militant approach by conducting a loud, visible, and multi-faceted protest at the College of Engineering’s Career Fair. They stormed Raytheon’s booth while wearing printed images of the devastation in Yemen, including drone strikes, bombs exploding and children starving, with the text, “Brought to you by Raytheon” superimposed.

The activists filmed the protest and handed out fliers to other students, while one activist loudly repeated disturbing statistics on the war in Yemen and highlighted Raytheon’s role in creating such a catastrophe. Following the disruption at BU, students founded an anti-imperialist group dedicated to further exposing

the university’s connection to and facilitation of war profiteering and imperialist war.

**As expected, Raytheon employees and BU administrators, startled and nervous at the sudden burst of student rebellion, harassed the activists, repeatedly requesting that they “discuss this outside.”** After several minutes of protesting loudly, the activists decided to leave after a Raytheon employee began to film them. The activists joined a group of other students and anti-war protesters outside of the venue to continue demonstrating against the war profiteers.

At each university, students and activists voiced demands to end university partnerships with war profiteering companies like Raytheon, as well as with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, for their role in the genocide in Yemen. Questions of divestment have risen to prominence in the past year. In particular, following the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018, mainstream media outlets ran articles on the links between Harvard and MIT and Saudi Arabia. In response to the outrage at these links, MIT issued a symbolic report and “invited the community to comment” on its recommendations to continue all financial and academic relations with Saudi donors and companies.



Of course, this was a largely symbolic gesture, but it reflects the university's growing concern about public outrage over its support for Saudi Arabia and the war in Yemen. These developments are part of a growing movement to push universities to divest from Saudi Arabia and represent an opening for revolutionaries to help expose the crimes of the Saudi-UAE-U.S. genocidal war in Yemen.

Following the local career fair protests, students at MIT and community members organized to protest the university's founding of the College of Computing. The opening of the College was celebrated from February 26th to the 28th and claimed to focus on the theme of "ethics" and its importance to developing Artificial Intelligence technologies. The speakers for the event included war criminal Henry Kissinger, CEO of the largest private equity firm in the U.S. Stephen Schwarzman, and political commentator Thomas Friedman, a leading contributor to the whitewashing of Saudi crown-prince Mohammed Bin Salman's image. Over 200 people participated in the protest on February 28th and this was followed by the founding of MIT's own anti-war student organization, showcasing the potential of the anti-imperialist movement at universities.

With political momentum picking up in Boston and other cities around the country, the anti-war movement is due for a resurgence. The wave of resistance previously seen in opposition to the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan is emerging once again to oppose the war in Yemen and challenge the war profiteering of arms dealers like Raytheon. With the increasing scale of humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen—and the direct role of the U.S. in creating it—such a movement is needed now more than ever. However, if a new anti-war movement is to be effective at applying political pressure on the war-profiteers and gain momentum, it must continue to expand nationwide and remain committed to opposing war and imperialism.

Such an anti-war movement must remain true to the core revolutionary principles of anti-imperialist organizing and must not be swayed by liberal politicians who make empty promises of ending wars while continuing to perpetuate the violence of U.S. imperialism. **The reality is that the ruling class in this country relies on war and imperialist plunder to maintain its wealth and rule, and the politicians of both parties are in their pocket, even if they criticize**



aspects of war policy.

For example, prior to his election, Obama criticized the occupation of Iraq as a "dumb" war which "bogged down" the U.S. military. Even Donald Trump criticized the Iraq War as a "mistake." In essence, these criticisms only amount to a call to make the military a "smarter" and a more efficient machine for slaughter and subjugation. **For an anti-war movement to truly address the root of U.S. wars and imperialism, this paper-thin apology for imperialism must be torn down and exposed for what it is—an outright lie and justification to continue pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into the military budget, dollars which are stolen out of the pockets of workers and the people of this country.**

The movement must continue to replicate its successes and learn from the past as it gains wider attention and attracts new membership throughout the country, forming networks to gain a foothold in other major cities across the nation. **Only through revolutionary ideals, leadership, organizing, and goals can such a strong, united front composed of the people be truly capable of standing in opposition to imperialism and war profiteers.**

While the anti-war movement in this country is relatively small at present, we have seen how seizing on key openings can turn small group into a dozen people, a dozen into a hundred, and so on. By connecting the struggle against imperialism to the struggles of working people in this country and exposing the links between institutions and imperialist agendas, a powerful anti-imperialist movement in the United States can reemerge.

# The Anti-Imperialist Movement at MIT

by Smith



*Earlier this year MIT saw its largest protest since the movement against the university's ties to apartheid South Africa. Recent outrage has focused on MIT's ties to Saudi Arabia and their new College of Computing which promises to be a crucial cog in the U.S. military machine. This is part of a growing anti-imperialist movement at MIT.*

On a sunny afternoon at the end of February, around 200 people gathered on the steps of the MIT Student Center to protest against the opening of the university's new Schwarzman College of Computing. Students, MIT staff, and political activists from a series of different organizations had joined together to organize this protest. They held signs that read “**MIT Serves Imperialism**” among other things, and questioned the university's decision to invite the war criminal and elder statesman Henry Kissinger to speak on the “ethics of artificial intelligence.” On the steps near the Student Center stood a 15-foot-tall inflatable missile with the words “War Criminal” on one side.

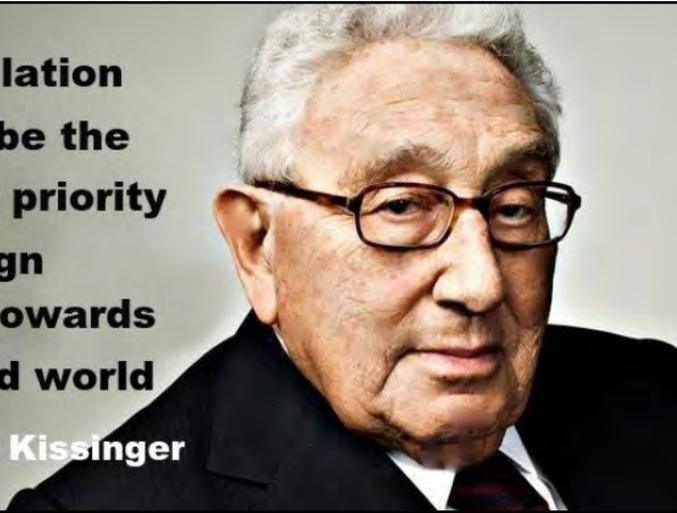
This protest was organized by a series of groups in a larger united front effort against the role MIT plays in U.S. imperialism and its deep

ties to the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. **MIT's decision to invite Kissinger to speak on ethics reveals the university's close ideological alignment with the U.S. empire.** During the Vietnam War, Kissinger repeatedly sabotaged peace talks in Vietnam and coordinated the massive bombings of Laos and Cambodia, in which the U.S. dropped more bombs on these small countries than the Allies dropped on Europe during all of WWII. To this day, children in those countries are still being killed when they stumble across unexploded bombs. As if this wasn't bad enough, Kissinger also was instrumental in the 1973 coup in Chile, which installed the fascist Pinochet regime, and greenlit the Indonesian government's decision to exterminate many of the people of East Timor—a genocide which would eventually kill one third of the East Timorese population.



**Depopulation  
should be the  
highest priority  
of foreign  
policy towards  
the third world**

**~ Henry Kissinger**



*Henry Kissinger is an openly genocidal maniac.*

These are just a few of the crimes committed by this genocidal maniac, but they show the political significance of MIT's decision to invite Kissinger to speak on ethics. However, Kissinger's invitation was just the most glaring example of the role MIT plays in U.S. imperialism. **The opening ceremony for the College of Computing featured a "Who's Who" of the U.S. ruling class.** For example, Kissinger spoke in dialogue with Thomas Friedman, the ideologue who justified the war in Yemen, the invasion of Iraq, and many other U.S. wars, in addition to promoting neoliberal policies around the world. Friedman also worked hard to paint Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman as a reformer and advocate for women's right at the same time that MBS was locking up Saudi feminist activists and killing journalists. Ashe Carter, Obama's last Secretary of Defense who greenlit the war on Yemen, was also invited to speak, as was Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google who famously dismissed the very notion of people's right to privacy as his company eagerly cooperated with the National Security Agency to expanded surveillance of everyone in this country.

Also speaking was Stephen Schwarzman, the new college's lead donor and namesake. Schwarzman is a billionaire slumlord who also runs and manages the world's largest private equity firm, The Blackstone Group. He is a close friend of Donald Trump, and has deep ties to the Saudi Royal Family. Recently his firm received a \$20 billion investment from the Saudi Royal Family's Sovereign Wealth Fund. **He also infamously compared a proposed minor tax-hike for powerful corporations to Hitler's**

**invasion of Poland, effectively arguing that making big companies pay slightly more taxes was equivalent to the Nazi Blitzkrieg.**

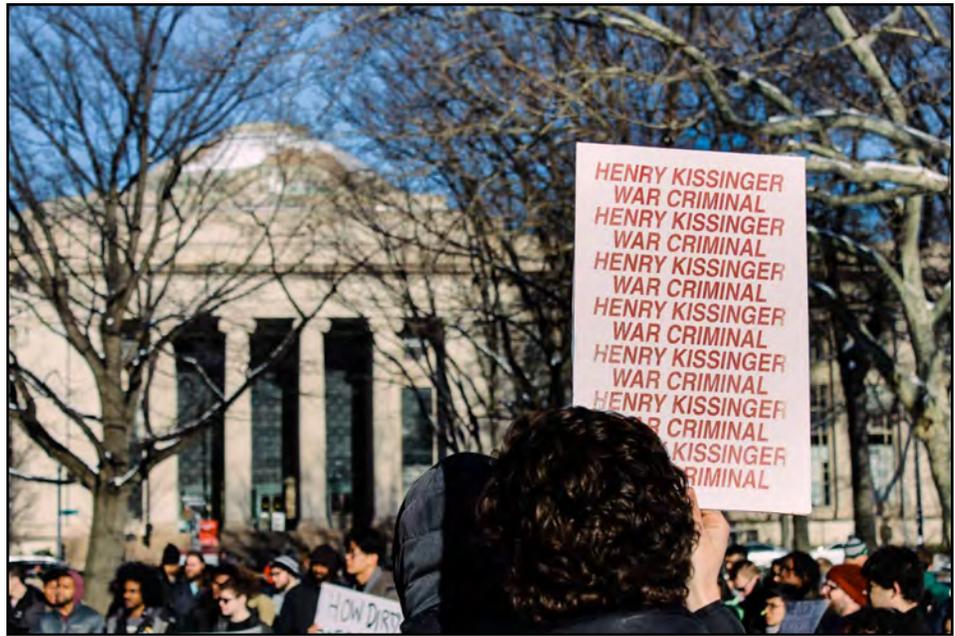
Schwarzman donated \$350 million to MIT to have the college named after him and to secure his ties with the university. When asked about why he donated so much money he said, "what's important is that the U.S. be competitive on a global basis [in AI]." In the same interview he also emphasized the need

for the U.S. government to work more closely with U.S. companies and universities to develop Artificial Intelligence to ensure that China does not out-compete the U.S. in the field. MIT President Raphael Reif, who was present in the same interview, made similar arguments. **These comments show that the new Schwarzman College of Computing will play an integral part in the AI arms race as the world powers ramp up preparations for World War III.** It should come as no surprise that MIT is mixed up in this arms race, as the university already receives well over \$1 billion in annual research funding from the U.S. Department of Defense.

***Kissinger's invitation was just the most glaring example of the role MIT plays in U.S. imperialism.***

**The protest against the opening of the Schwarzman College of Computing was not just organized in opposition to the presence of Henry Kissinger, but actually focused on the overall role that MIT plays in U.S. imperialism.** Given those involved in the opening ceremonies, there was a clear link to be made. Students, activists, and revolutionaries spoke eloquently about how research done at the new college will be used to automate increasingly large portions of the U.S. military machine, from drone strikes, to unmanned submarines, and eventually even nuclear missiles. The AI research will also work to improve and expand surveillance systems that aim to monitor and analyze every aspect of our lives.

Some also spoke about how the monopoly capitalist classes around the world dominate other countries, even if they are not at war. **Through the economic, cultural, and military domination of other countries, the U.S., China, and other imperialist powers suck the life-blood of poor and oppressed nations, ensuring that a larger share of the profits made in countries like Iraq, India, and others flow into the pockets of companies like Apple, Huawei, GE, and so on.** In the name of “development,” imperialist countries and their powerful



corporations carry out large scale neoliberal “reforms” which drive the peasantry off their land, entangle countries in debt-traps from which they can never escape, slash social-welfare programs, and put people to work for pennies in multi-national corporate owned factories. Even when countries like the U.S. and China don’t invade, these sorts of “development” policies lead to death and destruction for the people of poor countries around the world.

**Others highlighted how the working people in the imperialist countries are also oppressed and disenfranchised by imperialism.** Their interests do not fundamentally align with the interests of the imperialist powers. For example, one member of RUF spoke on how, despite record profits for the U.S. imperialists, the people of this country continue to get poorer and poorer. **In Boston, the median wealth of Black families is \$8.** Around the country, nearly one third of Americans have a negative net worth, and around two thirds are living paycheck-to-paycheck, facing the constant threat of eviction, destitution, and homelessness. While the war profiteers, big banks, and tech companies make record profits year after year, the people of this country are being bled dry.

This protest was a real step forward in developing anti-war and anti-imperialist work both at MIT and in the area. At a time where the military budget in this country is inflating by tens of billions of dollar each year, and the so-called “great powers” are building up their war machines in preparation for World War III, it is very

important to build a strong anti-war movement in this country. **Without doing so, the progressive middle class—and even a large portion of the working class—will be drawn in by the trickery and deception of the capitalist elite, as they work to rally the people to support U.S. imperialism in a war against rival empires.** We can already see this beginning to happen as liberal media outlets use the cover of opposing Trump to convince people to support continued U.S. military presence in Syria. Likewise, much of the Russia-gate coverage has been used to justify crackdowns and internet censorship in this country in the name of protecting against Russian interference in elections.

*Even when countries like the U.S. and China don't invade, these sorts of "development" policies lead to death and destruction for the people of poor countries around the world.*

However, the success of this protest did not materialize out of thin air. **It was the result of a series of struggles, both against oppressive forces and among the people.** For example, at a prior demonstration at an MIT career fair, anti-war activists protested against MIT’s ties to Saudi Arabia and the university’s role in the war in Yemen. The campus police and an MIT administrator with ties to the weapons manufacturers tried to force the people to move their protest to a designated “free speech zone” far from the career fair.





*The protest was successful in large part due to drawing on the creativity of the masses. Numerous students came together to create art for the protest, including this inflatable missile.*

The organizers were able to delay moving by talking in circles with the chief of campus police and the administrator. As they stalled more and more people joined the protest, and it eventually reached a critical mass. **At that point the people at the demonstration collectively refused to move to the “free speech zone,” knowing that MIT would not want to make a big scene by arresting a large number of students, professors, staff, and community anti-war activists.**

This struggle effectively forced MIT to concede to us the right to have anti-war demonstrations on campus. So, when the protest at the College of Computing began, the police simply came up to organizers, informed them that demonstration could happen on campus, and that they just needed to make sure that the protest did not block the entrance to the event. This was a big gain and allowed the demonstration to happen

without harassment from the campus police. Recent anti-war protests at MIT have also held onto this gain and been able to stay on campus. **This victory is not permanent and may come under attack in the future, but it is an important achievement that has been won through the struggle.**

*This struggle effectively forced MIT to concede to us the right to have anti-war demonstrations on campus.*

Another struggle took place in planning the protest at the College of Computing. This struggle was amongst the people and concerned the political content of the protest. **In the process of planning, two different political lines emerged.** The first held that the problem with the College of Computing was that MIT did not have the right people involved. This view was based on the middle-class illusion that MIT is basically a good institution and there are just some bad or short-sighted people who make decisions like inviting Kissinger to speak. The people who put forward this political line, believed that fundamental issues with the College of Computing could be rectified by uninviting Kissinger and appointing a few “good academics” to work at the College.

*This view was based on the middle-class illusion that MIT is basically a good institution and there are just some bad or short-sighted people who make decisions like inviting Kissinger to speak.*

The academics they wanted to support and promote were little more than imperialist stooges masquerading as middle class reformers. For example, one of them, Joy Buolamwini, pretends to be combating “bias in algorithms.” In reality, she is working improve the ability of facial recognition software to correctly detect and analyze the faces of Black people. She frames this work in terms of liberal identity politics to give it a progressive sheen, but even a basic investigation shows how her work is used by the police and security agencies to improve their abilities to monitor, surveil, and oppress Black people.



What's more in her YouTube video "AI, Ain't I A Woman" she praises capitalist women like Oprah and Michelle Obama, while also referring to them as "Queens" and thus playing into misogynist ideas about women. A particularly disturbing form of contemporary misogyny praises women as royalty as part of objectifying them as sex objects. **As if it wasn't disturbing enough to refer to someone as a monarch who would have ruled over impoverished peasantry and slaves, this ideology also is based on the idea that women should be worshiped as delicate sex objects, instead of treated as equals.**

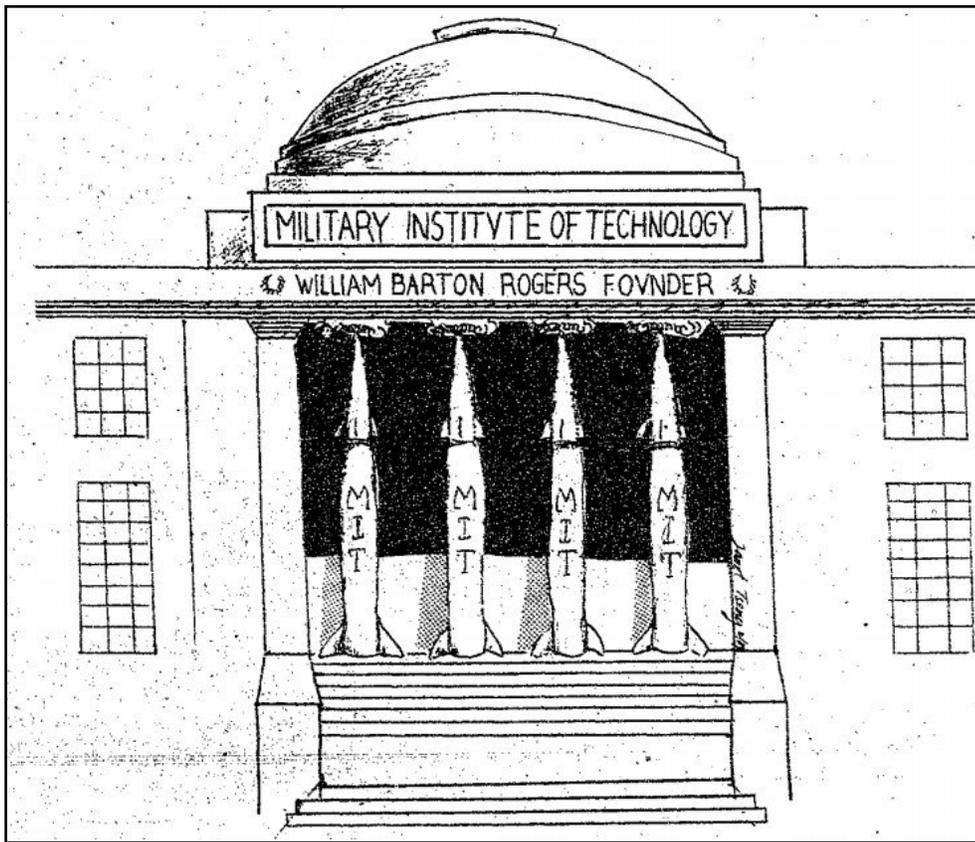
It is linked up to various reactionary trends in the Black community which present themselves as progressive, but ultimately argue for "Black excellence" on the grounds that Black folks were once kings and queens in Africa. If the worth of a people can only be measured by the fact that a small number of them used to be members of the ruling elite, this negates the basis for the oppressed and exploited to join together in their struggle against the oppressors. **Instead, it implies that the highest aim for Black folks is for a small number of them to gain power over others.** Therefore, it should come as no surprise

that Joy's work is so closely aligned with the interests of the U.S. ruling class and empire. She was even invited by Obama to a White House summit on "Computer Science for All."

Joy's work was upheld by those support her as an example of the great work in AI being done at MIT. They argued that her involvement in the College of Computing would help ensure that the AI research done there would be "ethical." In reality, having someone like this working at the College of Computing would not address the fundamental issues of MIT's role in U.S. imperialism. Instead it would only help to white-wash MIT's image while they continued to develop AI research for surveillance, drone strikes, cyber-warfare, nuclear missiles, and more.

**The other political line that emerged argued that the College of Computing—much like MIT itself—is a key part of U.S. imperialism.** Those who put this forward argued that MIT and this new college are fundamentally about military research, and part of the U.S. ruling class' overall imperialist strategy. As part of their preparations for World War III they are developing a new series of technologies aimed at securing American military and technological dominance on a number of fronts.





*MIT plays a key role in the U.S. empire and conducts huge amounts of military research on everything from nuclear missiles to AI.*

**MIT is the university which receives by far the most military funding for research, and it has long-standing ties with the military and intelligence agencies in this country.** The messaging around the opening of the College of Computing and the invitation for Kissinger to speak further clarified that MIT was developing this new college in close collaboration with the U.S. state. In short, the purpose College of Computing, much like MIT itself, is to serve imperialism. Many of the more opportunist students were unwilling to acknowledge this reality, in large part because their class position and future career prospects were tied up in MIT and the connections they make while enrolled.

*In short, the purpose College of Computing, much like MIT itself, is to serve imperialism.*

The second political line argued that it made sense to not only criticize Kissinger, but also MIT's role in U.S. imperialism more broadly. This line won out, but only after some sharp internal struggle. **Those who advocated**

**the middle class politics of reformism were hesitant to sharply criticize MIT; they used a series of back-door and bureaucratic maneuvers to silence discussion.** These tactics aimed at preventing serious debate over the politics of the protest and related events. In this struggle they repeatedly went back on decisions made in group meetings, including, for example, repeatedly trying to force the group to allow Joy to speak at the protest, even after it had been collectively decided not to work with her.

**This opportunist maneuvering and disregard for collective decision-making is typical of liberal and middle-class politics.** However, through principled collective work, the revolutionary political

line won out. This was possible only through a fairly sharp struggle that directly confronted and critiqued opportunist politics. It was important to expose the actual nature of the work that Joy and others do. While the opportunists in the group were committed to supporting her work, others were simply unclear that Joy worked to improve surveillance systems. There is a lot of money and power that promotes the illusion that Joy and others like her are progressive. **Promoting dead-end reformism and framing repressive measures as progressive reforms are essential aspects of the ruling class' strategy for maintaining its dominance.** It was only through the open struggle against opportunism that the stakes of the struggle became clear to many.

This is an important lesson, especially for those organizing for revolution in this country. The relatively low level of working class struggles and the proliferation of a series of "professional activist" jobs in non-profits—among other factors—has led to the dominance of reformist and opportunist politics throughout the country. The majority of the people, and especially middle-class college students, have generally not been exposed to revolutionary politics.





*Numerous MIT students expressed their enthusiasm for the protest. Many said they had previously felt isolated on campus when they criticized the university's collaboration with the military.*

They are surrounded and inundated with liberal reformist politics and corporate non-profit approaches to organizing. **Without struggling to expose the opportunism of these politics, many will either adopt a liberal approach themselves or drop out of the struggle altogether as they see its inability to bring about fundamental changes to the power-relations in our society.** However, with a bit of struggle, opportunists can be exposed for their unwillingness to challenge the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country. These struggles are essential to revolutionary politics.

Since this protest a new series of struggles have emerged around the future direction of the anti-war group which formed. **Will this group be exclusively for students of an elite university, or can others join as well?** Should the group appeal to the lowest common denominator of public opinion at MIT and water down its politics, or should it openly criticize MIT's role in U.S. imperialism while also developing specific campaigns to unite

people around demands for partial change? Should the group adopt the typical corporate executive structure of campus student groups, or should there be some basic principles of democratic centralism? **Should the group only criticize U.S. imperialism and refuse to discuss the crimes of rival imperialist powers like Russia and China, or should there be open criticism of all capitalist imperialist powers regardless of their relative strength?**

These and other important questions are still being struggled out internal to the group. **This sort of internal struggle is the life of any political organization.** In order to advance the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in this country, this group and others will need to work through these questions internally while also struggling against the enemies and oppressors of the people. Big gains have already been won, but a long road lies in front of us as we work to resurrect the anti-war movement in this country and battle against the middle-class politics that tail behind the Democratic Party or lead the movement into other dead-ends.



# Two Years Since Standing Rock: Reflections on the Struggle

by Zumbi



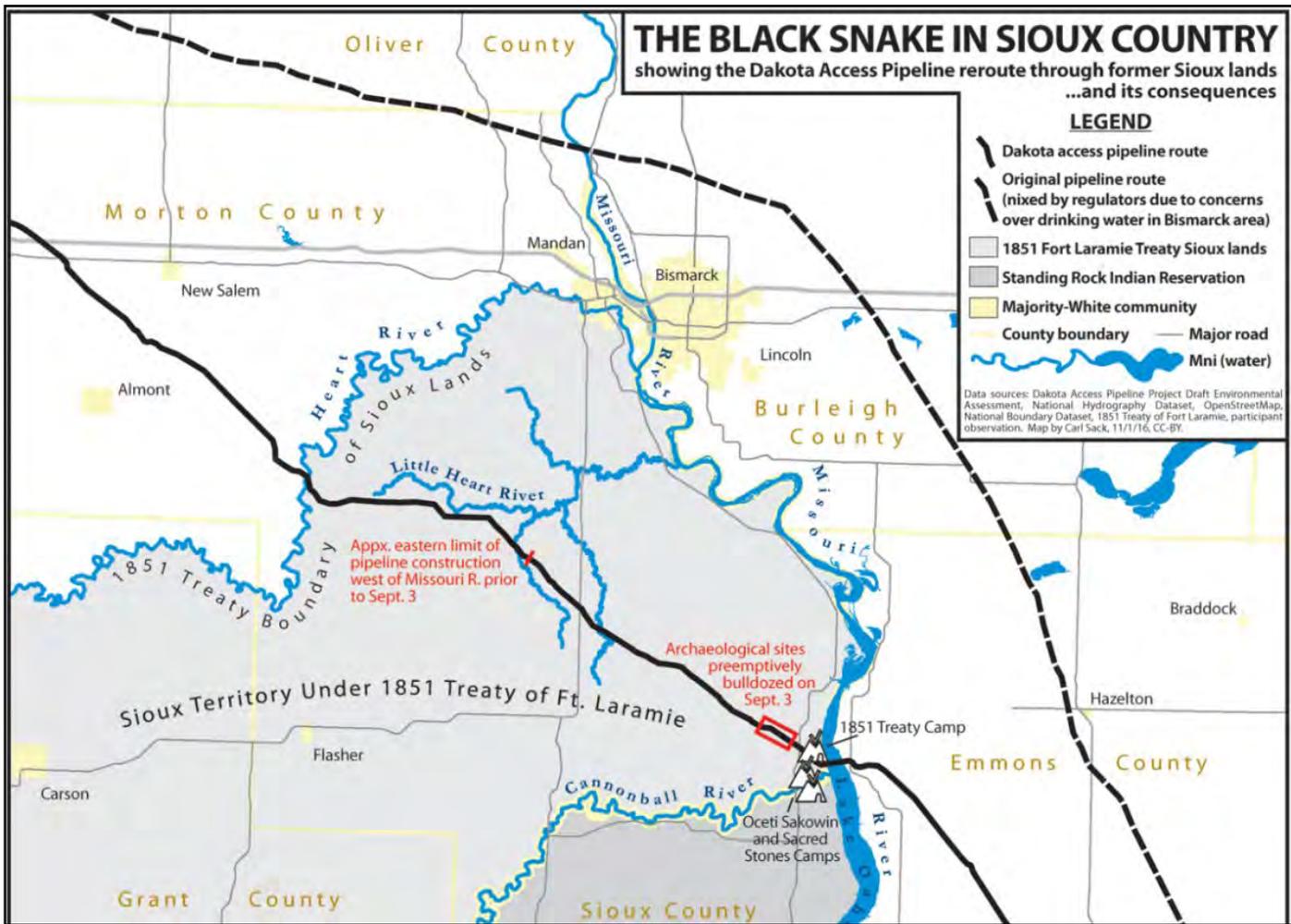
*Two years after the movement in Standing Rock, questions remain. Where did the movement succeed? Why did it fail? What could have been done differently? Was defeat inevitable? Can we win next time? Through analyzing the struggle, the successes and failures of the movement can be summed up so that successes can be replicated while we avoid repeating the same mistakes.*

★ RED STAR

A little over two years ago, the Sacred Fire at Oceti Sakowin was extinguished after almost a year of open, direct resistance to the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The Sacred fire was lit in April of 2016 to mark to beginning of the encampment to protest the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. The conflict at Standing Rock was a form of this ongoing struggle for self-determination and political power in the face of continual land grabs, and oppression. **At these grounds was a gathering of over three hundred Native nations, the largest gathering since the Sun Dance ceremony of 1876; this prior gathering ended in the Battle of Little Bighorn.** The Protest Camp at Standing Rock was eventually cleared and its occupants evicted with an executive order signed by Donald Trump. The deprivation of the land and environmental resources of the Sioux is a part of U.S. ruling class's efforts to consolidate its domestic energy production. The uprising of Standing Rock was part of the backlash to the U.S.'s strategy of energy development. Many of the participants of this struggle called

themselves, "Water Protectors, not protesters," harkening to the threat to the local water table. The resistance of the Lakota nation served as a beacon, inspiring thousands in the U.S. and internationally. I visited as part of a small group of would be volunteers in November 2016.

**The need to develop "Energy Independence" is a crucial aspect of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class' overall strategy to prevent their global decline.** The intensifying inter-imperialist competition with China and Russia is already beginning to challenge the existing international dominance of the United States and its imperialist allies. The strategy of developing domestic energy infrastructure and achieving some sort of "Energy Independence" aims at out-competing and outmaneuvering rival imperialist powers on a series of fronts. Having greater energy independence makes U.S. companies and the military less vulnerable to a disruption of energy production and transportation. When the U.S. relied heavily on oil imports from the Middle East, it was vulnerable economically and military to supply disruptions.



By developing domestic energy production, the ruling class in this country aims to secure their interests and protect against attacks from their rivals. This strategy also aims at weakening Russia's influence in Europe by redirecting Middle Eastern oil and gas to the European market. It has also been crucial for the "Pivot to the Pacific," initiated by Barack Obama, which aimed to free up U.S. military resources from conflicts in the Middle East and redeploy them in the Pacific to counter the rise of China.

*The initial plan for the Dakota Access Pipeline was much closer to the city of Bismarck but as public support quickly turned against the pipeline, Dakota Access rerouted the proposed pipeline through Lakota territory.*

The nature of indigenous reservations makes them unique sites for U.S. internal energy development. As the United States developed, it created native reservations, at the literal periphery of the larger economy. Reservations are generally located far from large population centers as well as centers of commodity production. Native people also have a contradictory relationship with the U.S. state: Indigenous nations are technically sovereign according to U.S. law, and therefore supposedly in control of their own internal affairs.

However, they lack the ability and political power to develop economically in a way that serves the people. Large corporate interests often look at indigenous nations and reservations as much easier targets for exploitation due to their political, social, and economic isolation. The DAPL itself provides an example of how this plays out: The initial plan for the Dakota Access Pipeline was much closer to the city of Bismarck but as public support quickly turned against the pipeline, Dakota Access rerouted the proposed pipeline through Lakota territory.



The Dakota Access Pipeline now passes through territory ceded to the Lakota Nation in the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1851). The pipeline is a part of the Bakken pipeline project, planned by Dakota Access, LLC which is a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners LP and Sunoco Logistics Partners LP. Energy Transfer Partners announced the pipeline project on June 25, 2014. Since completion, the pipeline has transported crude oil and natural gas from the Bakken Oil Fields of northwest North Dakota to Patoka, Illinois; crossing North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois and the Missouri River. The pipeline has been commercially operational since June 1st, 2017.

**At that time of our arrival—before the pipeline had been completed—the population of the camp had grown to almost ten thousand people.** I approached Oceti Sakowin as part of a group on the night of November 20th. It was that same night that reports started coming in about a violent clash between the Water Protectors and private and state security forces.

A small group of Water Protectors had begun to gather by the highway early that evening. They had joined together in order to remove an obstruction from the 1806 Highway. The debris itself was actually made of the charred remains of several vehicles, previously owned by Energy Transfer Partners that had been targeted and burned by more radical activists within the encampment.

**The wrecked cars had been moved onto the highway by Dakota Access personnel, cutting off the shortest route to Bismarck from the camp.** This situation had increased tension between the community of Standing Rock and the protest encampment, because emergency vehicles and commuters had to take a much longer route around the obstruction.

As the debris was being removed from the highway, security forces converged on the location and attempted to clear the crowd. Initially a small group of people had taken it



*At its peak, 10,000 people gathered at Oceti Sakowin to protest against the DAPL.*

upon themselves to remove the debris, but the commotion attracted even more people from the nearby campsite. In mere minutes, hundreds of people began to gather around the confrontation. The influx of people created intense confusion among the protestors. The police and security forces escalated the situation as they violently clashed with the people.

*Some said that in the freezing weather conditions, water cannons amounted to a lethal weapon.*

**The police continued trying to clear the crowd. State forces used a high pressure water cannon to disperse the crowd in the freezing temperatures that did not exceed 25 degrees Fahrenheit.** Some said that in the freezing weather conditions, water cannons amounted to a lethal weapon. It was also reported that tear gas was mixed in the water, causing irritation and pain, as well as inducing shock in the below freezing temperatures.

This brutal force was accompanied by police firing rubber bullets, concussion grenades, and tear gas canisters into the crowd. **One concussion grenade blew up on a woman and destroyed her arm.** She was rushed to the hospital, and doctors were able to save the arm but it never regained its function.





*During confrontation at Standing Rock, police routinely used military vehicles, concussion grenades, tear gas, and water cannons to attack the protestors.*

Roughly 200 people were injured in the confrontation. This was one of many violent attacks by state and private security forces. **A previous incident on September 3rd, involved private security using trained attack dogs and pepper spray to disperse a crowd of demonstrators that had gathered around what would be the drill pad on a Sioux cultural site that Dakota Access planned to use to tunnel underneath the Cannonball River.** Thirty-six people were injured in that attack by these repressive forces.<sup>1</sup>

The group that I was a part of entered the area at 11pm on the night of the confrontation. **The conflict would continue for another seven hours.** In all the chaos, we decided to keep our distance from the camp that first night. We passed the night in Bismarck, one hour north of the camp and returned the following morning. Arriving on the morning of the confrontation felt more like walking into a beehive than a campsite. I entered as part of a column of newcomers streaming into the encampment.

Fresh looking people got out of their vehicles, unloaded gear and supplies, and pitched tents. There was an obvious difference between the newcomers and the folks already in camp. The atmosphere was tense inside the

encampment. I saw people huddled around fires or carrying supplies from campsite to campsite. Signs adorned the doors of porta-potties and common areas reading, “Need to talk? Recognize the signs of traumatic stress.”

Within Oceti Sakowin, individual campsites were initially named after the different native nations who had set up at the site. I saw nation after nation staking down posts at different camp sites; Arapaho, Chumash, Paiute, Apache, Tupi. I encountered a Maori man, who had travelled with several comrades from New Zealand in order to perform a Haka (an ancient Maori dance) for the Elders of the Standing Rock band. Sites were not limited to ethnic distinctions but geographical, sexual, and cultural identities; “Queer camp,” “West Coast camp,” “Camp El Salvador.” I saw a wooden sign leaning against teepee that read, “Deaf Camp,” a camp composed of people that cannot hear.

**The different encampments had the effect of stratifying the people across varying social/cultural identities.** This setup reflected the lack of central organization within the encampment. There was a “Camp California,” populated with people affiliated with different Native Californian tribes, but shortly down the road there was an unrelated “Camp Bay Area” populated mainly with liberal activists.

1) <https://bit.ly/2gDr89I>



*A Seattle rally in solidarity with Standing Rock. Similar rallies took place all across the country.*

Campsites had been set up as more people had moved into the area in a disorganized fashion. This gave areas of Oceti the appearance of a fairground, with colorful signage dotting wide areas of ground. Bulletin boards around the camp were filled with postings about meetings around camp. I followed one posting to a training on direct action and civil disobedience facilitated by volunteers from several nonprofit organizations.

*Without any centralized plan, it seemed more like frantic and directionless activity than a concerted effort capable of stopping the pipeline.*

I spent the next few days asking around for information. The encampment lacked central organization or any semblance of a “plan.” The atmosphere was buzzing with activity. Cars, people, dogs, ATVs and flatbed trucks pulsed across its crisscrossed network of dirt foot paths and roads. Dwellings sprawled across the valley, hugging the foothills and creeping towards the frozen bank of the Cannonball River. However, without any centralized plan, it seemed more like frantic and directionless activity than a concerted effort capable of stopping the pipeline.

The occupants of the encampment were drawn from many other struggles in the U.S. One man’s words stood out to me, “We fought the oil companies over in Philadelphia and we lost. I came to Standing Rock to win.” I got this impression when I spoke to people, that what was going on was important. It permeated the attitudes of people there. **People had the sense that the struggle at Standing Rock was somehow different, that it had significance for so many struggles and that people flocked toward this place as a source of hope.** That with so much attention being

focused on that place, people were asking, very seriously, “Maybe we can win?”

And by traveling there from so far away, many were asking other questions, “What does this mean for my future?” The conflict at Standing Rock was very significant to such a broad section of people. This speaks to the need for mass resistance be connected to larger issues and surrounding struggles.

This solidarity is vital to the longevity of any resistance and it shouldn’t be confined to liberal notions of ‘allyship.’ **Allyship is based on the idea that folks that have some kind of ‘privilege’ owe it to those being directly oppressed to ‘donate’ their time or resources to them. A good ‘ally’ will donate their time and resources and listen, uncritically to established channels of leadership claiming to represent all of those being oppressed.**

There is a need to work to struggle against the various forms of oppression in our society, and for oppressed people to be forefront of this struggle. **However, the idea of allyship is quick to uncritically accept the existing leaders of oppressed groups as the legitimate representatives of those groups, when in fact, many of these leaders do not serve the people they claim to represent.** This is particularly clear in the indigenous communities in this country, when many official tribal leaders work hand-in-glove with the U.S. state and big corporations.



In order to advance the struggle for the interests of the people we need to struggle not only against the U.S. government and the corporate interests that it serves, but also against the opportunist leadership—including amongst oppressed groups—which aims to capitulate in the struggle. Unfortunately, this point was not clear to most people at the camp.

As my stay progressed it became obvious that among the serious participants, there were many conflicting ideas and attitudes about how to advance the struggle. Much

of my early conversations with people focused on the most recent attack by police. I met a young man from Standing Rock who expressed his frustration with many of the attitudes in camp, “I’m angry too! But some of these people, are just unsafe when they go out, north of camp and try to agitate. I know we have to stop the pipeline, but we have the legal process. If we just wait until January 1st, it won’t be profitable for them to continue.”

***Fundamentally, it was not enough to just “resist,” but it was also necessary to create a strategy that would actually defeat the pipeline.***

The man was referring to a contract that Dakota Access had which was supposedly set to expire in 2017; however, this view failed to account for reality that this pipeline was about more than just short-term profit. **It was an essential component of the U.S. imperialists’ strategy to develop domestic domestic energy production.** Even if Dakota Access lost some profitability by being delayed, there were still large economic and political incentives for the company to press on.

An older Standing Rock native was more pessimistic about the odds of an easy victory, “This whole thing is fucking illegal, every part of



*Some at Standing Rock pointed out that given that the police and security forces were so willing to break the law when attacking protestors, it was unlikely that a lawsuit alone would be able to stop the pipeline.*

*it. You know it, I know it, the media knows it, everyone is talking about it, because it’s all fucking illegal. You think they care? How many times have they been fined? Do they even have permits to do any of this construction? No! But here we all are, who is gonna stop ‘em? The police, they just kick our fucking asses, shoot old ladies in the face with rubber bullets, throw tear gas at little kids. You think they just gonna fucking give up come January 1st?”*

His opinion represented a lot of the frustration that propelled the establishment of the protest camp in April 2016. What may seem like cynicism, was actually an accurate assessment of the situation. **His frustration not only stemmed from the current repression by the state but also his feeling that there was a lack of ability to actually stop the pipeline.** Although the encampment had grown significantly, it was highly disorganized. Fundamentally, it was not enough to just “resist,” but it was also necessary to create a strategy that would actually defeat the pipeline. This man had asked a very important question, “Who is gonna stop ‘em?”

Ultimately it is up to the people to find a way to win. In Standing Rock, it wasn’t until a few people came together in resistance that the protest encampment was established. It wasn’t until word spread and the struggle became linked to surrounding native and non-native struggles that it exploded in size. But as the struggle continued, more questions came up that continually confounded participants on the reservation and those that came in solidarity.



How can so many people from so many different struggles and cultures work together? What is the relationship between legal and illegal forms of resistance within a single campaign? How does a protest encampment exist with limited support and continue through subzero weather conditions? If people do not believe that a struggle can be won, then it is hard to see a path forward. Many were convinced that the legal struggle was the only way to win. However, even among those that understood that the law would not save them, there was not a clear alternative.

The legal strategy had serious limitations, but, despite these, it had a role in advancing the struggle. **The movement had launched several legal challenges that had delayed some construction.** However activists within the movement were also engaged in civil disobedience against the pipeline. As the state increased their violent attacks on the people, serious doubts were raised by the participants about their ability to successfully engage in civil disobedience and defend against attacks from repressive forces. What was missing was a strategy that could use all of these tactics, including legal challenges in the court, civil disobedience at the site, and self-defense when the people were attacked by the police and private security.

A strong resistance will use many tools to advance the struggle, but the participants must understand how to use these tactics and how to switch between them when needed. **It is also important to keep in mind that most struggles are not quick and easy.** The ability of the protest to organize so much different work created many opportunities to expose the actions of Energy Transfer Partners and in turned helped to rally people all over the country to join the movement. **However, all these efforts did not coalesce into a unified and organized resistance, leaving the movement increasingly vulnerable to fracturing as tension mounted and other issues presented themselves.**



*Protesters at Standing Rock faced an overwhelming display of military force. In the face of this they had to use a diversity of tactics to advance the struggle.*

One of the central conflicts within the movement was the political differences between the formal tribal leadership and the participants within the protest encampment. The camp was united in the fact that the Pipeline should not exist, but beyond that there was little agreement or discussion of the issues needed to advance this fight.

*What was missing was a strategy that could use all of these tactics, including legal challenges in the court, civil disobedience at the site, and self-defense when the people were attacked by the police and private security.*

**One of the few points of unity was the belief in taking directions from indigenous leadership; however, this leadership was itself very divided.** This created a situation in which various non-profits took over a tremendous amount of the day-to-day operations of the encampment. This in turn put them in a position to promote passive and legal tactics of resistance as the only way forward. They also stressed the need to subordinate the movement to decisions made by the federally recognized tribal leadership.



*The movement at Standing Rock began as a protest led by Sioux youth.*

The official tribal leadership was distinct from both the non-elected cultural leadership and from the initial group of activists that established the encampment. It is important to understand that the federally recognized tribal leadership had a different political position than the majority of the occupation.

It was the tribe's youth that began the encampment and they had been the most clear on the need to resist the encroachment of business interests and police violence. A small group of young people, all under the age of 25, had come together found the One Mind Youth Movement (OMYM).<sup>2</sup> The OMYM was a loose group of young people who worked to support other Sioux youth through battling poverty, drug addiction, and suicide. What began as raising money to send groups of teenagers to film festivals, to see the ocean for the first time, and establishing youth group homes, became more politicized after November 2015 when Energy Transfer Partners began their scheme to build their pipeline at the Standing Rock Reservation. In April 2016, fewer than a dozen OMYM members formed a small "prayer camp" on the north end of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

I heard native youth complain that many of the tribal leaders choose to live in Bismarck rather than the less developed Reservation. **The**

tribal leadership had worked to turn the struggle into a spectacle while opposing those who called for further militant action against the DAPL. This tension between militant and more passive resisters eventually splintered the struggle. A month after my visit the Red Warrior Society announced they would be departing Oceti Sakowin, and they specifically cited the animosity of tribal government and prominent government officials as the key reason for their departure. The Red Warrior Society is a loose organization of activists that believed in resisting the construction of

the Pipeline by whatever means at their disposal and had been linked to several instances of sabotages and direct actions against the construction of the DAPL.

*I heard native youth complain that many of the tribal leaders choose to live in Bismarck rather than the less developed Reservation.*

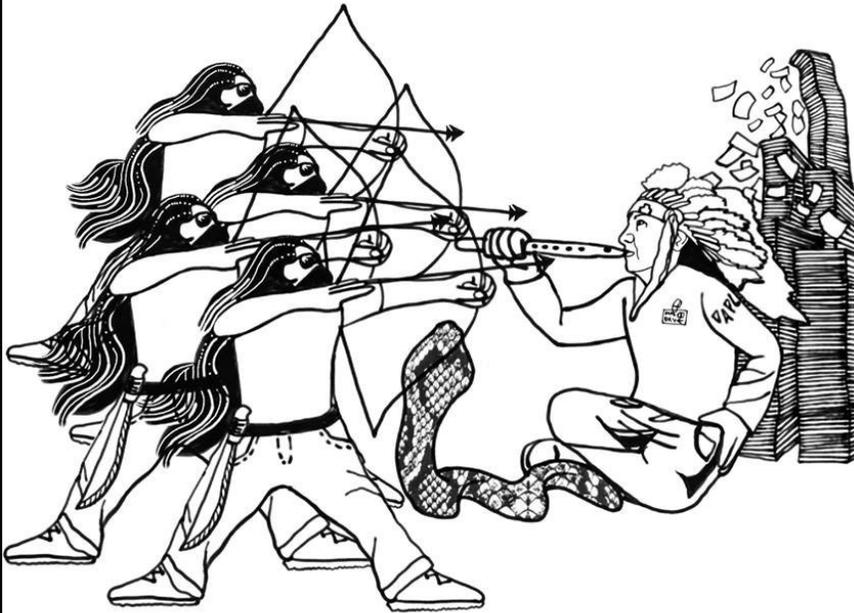
In a press statement published in December 2016, the Red Warrior Society stated, "Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Chairman Dave Archambault has made it abundantly clear that a diversity of tactics in the battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline is not respected nor wanted. We have this to say: without the courage and the actions of those who actually put their minds, bodies, and spirits in harm's way the pipeline would be built. Without the Warriors who locked down and took measures to put a stop to the work on DAPL, the black blood would already be flowing under the Missouri river. The encampment itself would not even be here right now. The hard work of the Warriors has cost ETP millions, we have struck the Black Snake a deadly blow."<sup>3</sup>

2) <https://nyti.ms/2jODngb>

3) <https://bit.ly/2Vp1OmL>



# NO COMPROMISE



# STAND FOR WATER

*The Red Warrior society was particularly critical of the way in which the official tribal leadership sold out the struggle.*

While the Tribal leadership stressed continued, “civil dialogue” between Energy Transfer Partners and the Standing Rock Tribe, the Red Warrior Society pushed almost entirely for illegal action against the pipeline. The Red Warrior Society was unable or unwilling to work with a broad section of the encampment that was not willing to participate in legal work. In such a complicated situation, that included such a broad array of people, to refuse to work with folks who also did legal work created serious limitations. This not only led to confusion but also ultimately isolated the Red Warrior Society and limited opportunities to use both tactics. There was a need to expose the fact that without organized resistance the pipeline would be constructed and to simultaneously demonstrate that even groups with different political stances can work together in the struggle.

Around this same time there was a popular viral video of a native elder in full tribal regalia speaking on the need to support the encampment.

This video came up in conversation with a member of the Standing Rock reservation and he was sharply critical: “You think that man just dresses like that? No, of course not, he wears fucking jeans and a t-shirt like the rest of us, but when the camera comes on, he puts on our culture, when its to perform for outsiders, he puts on that costume.” This primary focus on presentation of the movement to outsiders was central in the Standing Rock Tribal leadership’s ultimate decision to demand that the entire camp vacate Lakota territory.

In January of 2017, the Tribal Council of the Standing Rock reservation voted unanimously to ask the protesters to leave. The council cited the need to open the Backwater Bridge on N.D. Highway 1806 in order to assuage concerns from the residents of Standing Rock and the need to ‘normalize’ relations between the State and the Standing Rock Reservation. The irony being that protesters had made several attempts to reopen Highway 1806, all of which had been thwarted by Law Enforcement and Dakota Access personnel in violent confrontations.

*In January of 2017, the Tribal Council of the Standing Rock reservation voted unanimously to ask the protesters to leave.*

Additionally the Tribal Council stressed the need to pursue legal pathways as they prepared to demand that the pipeline resisters abandon their struggle. This sentiment was echoed by supporters of the tribal council, one of whom stated, “I truly believe we have to have faith in the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement to be conducted on the Dakota Access Pipeline)...Everything we did here is going to keep going.” A year after these statements were made, not only was the pipeline completed but it had already experienced five spills.<sup>4</sup>

4) <https://bit.ly/2ml6Fqu>



One spectator at the Standing Rock city council spoke against the actions of the Tribal Council, “I do not think all these people should be asked to go home when they fought for you guys, they fought for me, fought for my children, fought for your guys’ children...I feel sending these people home is wrong.”<sup>5</sup>

Within three months, the population of the protests camps would decrease from almost 10,000 to less than a hundred. On February 23rd, 2017, the National Guard and local law enforcement evicted the remaining occupants, and thirty-six people were arrested.

The question remains: **In a chaotic, inspirational, and ultimately tragic situation, how can people come together and actually be victorious?** While stopping the pipeline would have been a real victory, it would also only have been a partial one. Struggles like Standing Rock also need to have a long-term perspective aimed at stopping not just one pipeline, but also stopping the broader aims of the ruling elite of this country as they pollute the planet and slaughter the poor in their quest for maximum profit.

**Ultimately, it is necessary to link these sorts of struggles up with efforts to overthrow the ruling class and establish a socialism in this country, where production can be carried out to serve the needs of the people, instead of serving the interests of a tiny fraction of the population.** In this sense, it is important to see that individual struggles need to build movements and organizations that last beyond their immediate aims. For those politicized by the struggle at Standing Rock there is a need to learn from past failures and continue resistance in an ongoing, sustained way.

In understanding these questions, we must look at the founding of Oceti Sakowin and the ability of that struggle to spread and link with surrounding struggles. A handful of youth established the original encampment that swelled



*When the National Guard and local Sheriff evicted the camp at Standing Rock, they did so at gun point, threatening with deadly force even those who were praying.*

to over 10,000 in just a few months. **That required being direct about the need to not stand back and wait for established forms of protest, and instead to take resistance in their own hands, using whatever was at their disposal.** The importance of their fight spoke to a broad group of people that traveled long distances to lend a hand. Ultimately, nearly all people have a vested interest in not only defeating oppressive forces such as Dakota Access, but overthrowing the ruling elite of this country. We must think critically and collectively about a given situation in order to come together with others and create a path forward.



5) <https://bit.ly/2WIBKEP>

# History of The BPP Part 3: National Growth and The Lumpen Line

by Charles

*This is the third of a seven part series on the history, legacy, and continuing relevance of the Black Panther Party (BPP). Founded in 1966 in the spirit of the politics of the late Malcolm X, and highly influenced by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the Black Panther Party was a Black revolutionary organization. For a time they played the leading role in the Black*

*Liberation struggle in the U.S. and inspired people across the country to take up revolutionary politics. This stood in sharp contrast to many prominent voices in the civil rights movement who pushed for making peace with the white supremacist capitalist society. In the previous article in this series we analyzed the Panthers' rise to national prominence, and in this issue we will continue to examine their expansion beyond the Bay Area, including some obstacles that they faced in this process. We also assess how these obstacles related to the Panther's line that the lumpen-proletariat should be the leading force in the revolution.*



*U.S. and inspired people across the country to take up revolutionary politics. This stood in sharp contrast to many prominent voices in the civil rights movement who pushed for making peace with the white supremacist capitalist society. In the previous article in this series we analyzed the Panthers' rise to national prominence, and in this issue we will continue to examine their expansion beyond the Bay Area, including some obstacles that they faced in this process. We also assess how these obstacles related to the Panther's line that the lumpen-proletariat should be the leading force in the revolution.*

After the Panther's protest at the California Capitol<sup>1</sup>, they quickly gained national prominence. Black people around the country wanted to join the Panthers, and get involved in the Black Liberation Struggle. The Panthers saw that Black Liberation was tied up in the overall struggle for revolution in this country, and that the two could not be separated. The Panther's militancy appealed to many who had become disillusioned with the dominance of mainstream politics within the Civil Rights movement, which advocated for integration into white communities and making peace with white supremacist society. **This integrationist strategy was criticized by Malcolm X as naive and impossible.** After his death, the Panthers took up

a radical political approach inspired by his legacy. As a result of the clarity of the Party on this question, Blacks folks from all over were eager to get involved in the revolutionary struggle based on overcoming the actual oppression Blacks faced in housing, employment, police brutality, and beyond. The Panthers would quickly open chapters in major cities across the country.

However, this rise to prominence and the protest at the California State Capitol also led to increased surveillance and repression of the Party by the U.S. government. Prior to this point the Panthers had faced harassment at the hands of the local police and some degree of surveillance by the FBI. In fact, after the protest at the State Capitol, a number of key leaders would be arrested. This marked the beginning of a series of arrests and assassinations aimed at

1) For more on this protest see the previous article on the BPP in Issue #2 of *Red Star*

crippling the movement and dividing it internally. As the Panthers rose to national prominence, the state took up more serious and sophisticated efforts to infiltrate and destroy the group. **In 1968 then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover declared that the Panthers were the “greatest threat to the internal security of the country,” and massively expanded the state’s repressive campaign against them.**

Despite this repression, the Panthers began to open chapters across the country and grew for a number of years. There was incredible mass enthusiasm for the group because it put the need for militant struggle for Black Liberation front and center in a clear and straightforward manner. However, during the process of growing the Party also made a series of mistakes that ultimately led to its downfall. This period was defined in large part by this contradictory development: **On the one hand, the Party grew by leaps and bounds across the country while their newspaper circulation surpassed 200,000 copies weekly. On the other hand, the Party made a series of mistakes that caused them to begin to crumble from within.** These mistakes contributed to and greatly exacerbated problems caused by state repression. These included the FBI’s arrest and assassination of key leaders as well as the state’s ability to seed the Party with informants. All of this undermined trust and comradeship in the Party.

It is important to understand how the Party was simultaneously growing quickly while also making key mistakes that would eventually lead to its downfall. Otherwise it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking “the Panthers were all good until they were bad,” or simply blaming their defeat on the state repression that they faced. The reality is that while the state repression hurt the Panthers, they could have handled things differently and been better prepared to deal with the brutal crackdown they faced at the hands of the FBI and the U.S. government. **It is important to understand that the defeat of the Panthers was not inevitable; otherwise it is easy to fall into nihilistic defeatism and believe that it is impossible for**



*Thousands of Black people across the country were inspired by the militant and revolutionary approach of the Black Panther Party.*

**the people to stand up to their oppressors and win.** By studying the Party’s history, it becomes clear that they made a number of mistakes while growing, and these mistakes eventually began to add up and crippled their organization. Seeing things in this way is crucial for revolutionaries and activists alike. In order to advance the struggle today, it is necessary to sum up the successes and failures of past movements. That way successes can be emulated while also avoiding the repetition of past mistakes.

### **The Lumpen Line**

The Panthers made a series of mistakes that left them vulnerable to infiltration. These included underestimating the degree to which the state would try to infiltrate and destroy their work, operating openly in a way that exposed their members to attacks and killings from the police, and a willingness to let people join the party who had not yet proven their commitment to the struggle and their grasp of the Party’s political principles. **These errors all related to the Party’s line that lumpen-proletariat was the most revolutionary class.**

The lumpen is the social class which lives through scamming and cheating others. This class includes everyone from organized criminals engaged in large-scale theft, to low-level drug-dealers, pimps, and scam artists who make a living ripping off poor folks.





*The Panthers' funk band was called "The Lumpen"*

The Panthers were confused about the nature and composition of the lumpen, particularly from reading the work of Franz Fanon. Because of this confusion many members from lumpen backgrounds exercised leadership within the Party that reflected the ideas they developed from their lives as scam-artists, pimps, and dealers.

While there is a basis for people from the lumpen-proletariat to get involved in revolutionary politics and serve the people, lumpen ideas and politics cannot play the leading role in any revolutionary movement, because the lumpen's daily existence necessitates predatory practices at the expense of poor and working people. Whether it be running scams, oppressing women who are forced to work as prostitutes, or selling addictive drugs to the people, the lumpen exists as a parasitic social class that enriches itself at the expense of others. **When members of this class can and do get involved in a revolutionary movement, there is a need to struggle against the various predatory ideas and outlooks they have internalized as part of their lives as con-artists.**

Unfortunately, the Panther's did not fully grasp the need to wage this struggle, in part

because they were confused about the nature and composition of the lumpen-proletariat. One aspect of this confusion was their belief that the lumpen was composed not only of various scam-artists but also the unemployed and underemployed. This confusion is expressed in Bobby Seale's book *Seize the Time*, in which he stated that the lumpen-proletariat includes "*the brother who's pimping, the brother who's hustling, the unemployed, the downtrodden, the brother who's robbing banks, who's not politically conscious.*"<sup>2</sup> Bobby's understanding of the class conflated objective factors—such as

*Lumpen ideas and politics cannot play the leading role in any revolutionary movement, because the lumpen's daily existence necessitates predatory practices at the expense of poor and working people.*

what one does for a living—with subjective factors like political consciousness. **What's more, based on this definition, the lumpen-proletariat would include nearly every poor person in the country who is not a revolutionary.**

2) Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time*, p. 21-22.



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Because of this confusion, Bobby and others in the Panthers were concerned with Marx and Engels' dismissal of the lumpen as "the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society," which allow it to easily become "a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue"<sup>3</sup> against the revolutionary movement. **The Panthers believed that the vast majority of Black folks belonged to the lumpen-proletariat, and that Marxist analysis was effectively dismissing the possibility of them getting involved in the revolutionary movement.** In 1968 Bobby even went so far as to say that "Marx and Lenin would probably turn over in their graves if they could see lumpen proletariat Afro-Americans putting together the ideology of the Black Panther Party."<sup>4</sup>

**However, what Bobby and the Panthers did not understand was that their analysis actually bunched together members of the lumpen-proletariat and the working class.** The unemployed, underemployed, and those dependent

on various meager social welfare programs are part of the working class. Workers are regularly laid off, especially during times of crisis and seasonal shifts, and are forced to go without employment for months or even years at a time. **According to Marx, the lumpen only includes those who make a parasitic living praying off the poor and oppressed through things like pimping, drug-dealing, and running various cons.** In *Capital: Volume 1*, Marx describes the lumpen-proletariat as "vagabonds, criminals, [and] prostitutes,"<sup>5</sup> and he is careful to differentiate them from those who are unemployed and underemployed.

In contrast to the lumpen line, Marxists argue that the working class is the most revolutionary class because its emancipation is only possible through the collective emancipation of all the oppressed and exploited people. Therefore as a class, it has an objective interest in struggling against every form of oppression and breaking all chains. Ajith, a member of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), summed this up well:

*"Though other classes and social sections will be important partners in the historical movement to destroy capitalism (its highest stage of imperialism) they cannot provide leadership. In each instance the issue of liberation is specific[...]Being specific they are also partial, in the context of the whole revolutionary project. But this is not the situation of the proletariat. Capitalist bondage is different from earlier exploiting systems like caste-feudalism. It imposes no other compulsion on the workers other than the pangs of hunger. And since, in principle, [workers] are free, there can be no specific liberation suiting them. Every form of exploitation and oppression must be ended. Thus the emancipation of the whole of humanity becomes a precondition for the liberation of this class. The leading role of the proletariat derives from this objective social position. It obliges the proletariat to continue the revolution all the way up till realizing a world rid of exploitation."*

5) Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*, p. 797.

In various activist circles there is a tendency to refer to prostitutes as "sex-workers" and to argue that "sex work is just like any other form of work." However, in addition to the work being brutally oppressive, prostitutes are forced to sell sexual intimacy and present themselves in a degrading and sexualized fashion in order to survive. While prostitutes will join the revolutionary movement, they are not going to be a leading force in the struggle. Additionally, unlike other forms of labor, prostitution has no place in a pro-people society.

3) Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, p. 20.

4) *Seize the Time*, p. ix.



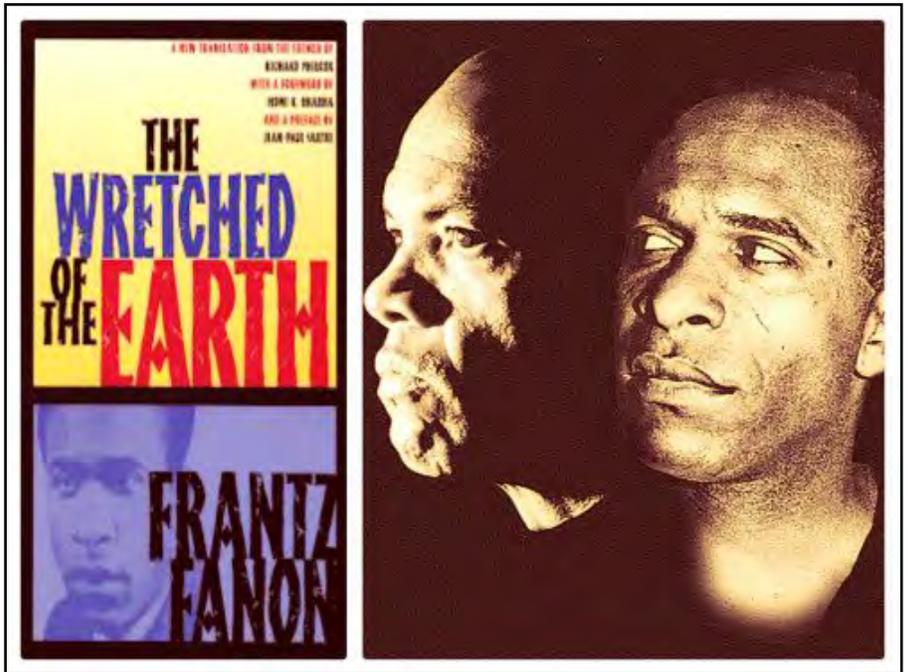
Of course, this does not mean that working class people are automatically going to be revolutionaries. In class society everyone is bombarded by the ideology and propaganda of the ruling elite. As a result, many internalize the competitive and brutal logic of our oppressive society. There is a need for a revolutionary organization to struggle against these tendencies among the people, and help them overcome the ideological domination by the ruling class. In order to succeed in this effort on a mass level, it is important for revolutionary organizations in capitalist countries—where working-class people are the vast majority of the population—to base themselves among the working class and organize in line with their objective interest in revolution.

In contrast to this, the Panther's line led them to welcome a large number of lumpen and semi-lumpen people into leadership roles within the Party. They were also unclear about the need to struggle against lumpen ideology. This in turn led to the growth of predatory, adventurist, and capitalist ideas in the Party.

*There is a need for a revolutionary organization to struggle against these tendencies among the people, and help them overcome the ideological domination by the ruling class.*

Much of this confusion over the lumpen-proletariat probably came from Frantz Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth*, which was very influential for Huey and Bobby. They read it before writing the Party's Ten-Point Program. In fact Bobby's definition of the lumpen-proletariat was likely heavily influenced by Fanon's own definition in *The Wretched of the Earth* which included "the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed, and the petty criminals."<sup>6</sup>

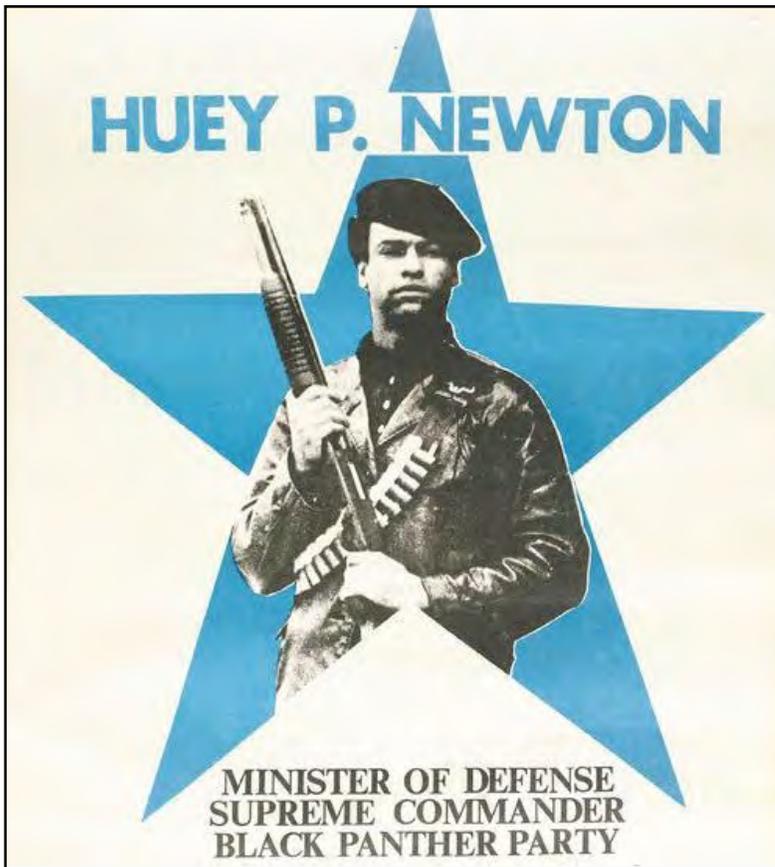
6) Franz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, p. 130.



In Fanon's view these people "would throw themselves into the struggle for liberation like stout working men" and play the leading role in urban revolutionary struggles. However, the experiences of the Algerian Revolution, from which Fanon drew this conclusion, point in a different direction. **Given the anti-people ideas of con-artists and organized criminals who sold addictive drugs to the poor, the lumpen was generally very willing to cut deals with the French Colonial government and often worked to sabotage the revolutionary struggle.**

In a similar fashion, many of those who became snitches, informants, and agent-provocateurs for the FBI were members of the lumpen-proletariat. For example, Louis Tackwood, an informant in LA, was a petty criminal before becoming an informant and agent provocateur for the LAPD. Although he never was a Party member, he affiliated with the Panthers, and used his experiences on the street to get close to the Party and to deflect criticism of his lack of discipline and recklessness. He played a very destructive role, as did William O'Neil, who was also a member of the lumpen-proletariat; he was busted for stealing a car and impersonating a federal officer, at which point he was offered a deal by the pigs to become an informant on the BPP. **William went on to join the Chicago Panthers and was instrumental in helping the police and FBI kill Fred Hampton, who was the leader of the Chicago branch of the Party.**

The Panthers' lumpen line left them open to such informants infiltrating their organization.



To an extent, this line was present in the Party from the beginning. In his autobiography Huey stated that prior to the founding of the Party he “*ran with the brothers on the block,*” and that “*any money [he] had came from petty crime, an old pattern.*”<sup>7</sup> While studying at Merritt College in Oakland, Huey said he was “*was an angry young man at this time, drinking wine and fighting on the block, burglarizing homes in the Berkeley Hills.*” Even after founding the Party he still held onto these ideas to some extent. They were integral to the idea that the Party needed to relate to and win over “the brothers on the block,” by which he meant the pimps, petty criminals, and drug dealers. **While Huey himself only stole from the rich in the Berkley Hills, some of those from a lumpen background who joined the Party had a history of preying on the Black community.**

Revolutionary organizations must base themselves among the most oppressed and exploited sections of the masses, and in doing so they will also win over some lumpen and anti-people groups that primarily make their living by preying on the people and committing crimes against their own community. These

7) Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 83.

individuals and groups will in turn transform their actions and outlook as part of the revolutionary struggle. However, it is impossible for a revolutionary organization to base itself primarily amongst the lumpen-proletariat. This class, insofar as it ekes out its existence by social predation, cannot be the leading class in a revolutionary movement. **At best some members can be wavering allies, but this class has fundamentally capitalist aspirations based off competition instead of cooperation.** Historically they have betrayed the revolutionary movement time and time again. They are generally willing to compromise with and be bought off by the ruling class.

The Panther’s confusion over the political nature of the lumpen-proletariat was not just a theoretical question, it was also a question of immediate practical and political importance. The Party’s lumpen line led them to allow a series of members who harbored deep anti-people ideas to exert a big influence on the development of the Party’s line itself. **This negative impact extended far beyond snitches; it limited the Party’s ability to unite with positive forces, to self-critically assess their shortcomings, and to develop an organization of professional revolutionaries who make it their lives’ work to destroy the old world and create a new society free from oppression and exploitation.**

*It is impossible for a revolutionary organization to base itself primarily amongst the lumpen-proletariat.*

### Growth and Setbacks

After the protest at the California Capitol, the Panthers grew quickly. The demonstration had inspired folks around the country and raised the Party to prominence on a national level. This provided an impetus for the growth of a whole series of party branches in major cities across the country. **Within a year of the protest, new branches would be founded in Richmond, San Fransisco, Seattle, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and New York City.** Mumia Abu-Jamal, who joined the Panthers in Philadelphia when he was fifteen years old, described this rapid growth of the party:





*Mumia takings calls at the Philadelphia Panther office in 1969.*

*“The Party, not yet a year old, was growing at a rapid pace. Over the next three years, the Party expanded almost exponentially. It first spread to Richmond [California], then over the bay to San Francisco, and then southward to Los Angeles. It sprang out from California to every possible region where a Black community welcomed its youth and energy; north to Seattle; east to Kansas City; to the Black Mecca of Chicago; to Boston; New York’s Harlem, Bronx, and Brooklyn boroughs; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Baltimore; Nashville, Tennessee; and New Orleans.”*

By 1969, over forty chapters would exist nationwide, and the party’s membership grew to over 4,000. In these cities, the Panthers ran a series of political programs aimed at organizing the Black community and providing much needed revolutionary political education. At same time, they also worked with many members of the lumpen-proletariat who brought with them various ideas they had developed from their predatory existence.

**The Panthers also began to link up with the anti-war movement which was growing in strength and prominence.** The Party’s leaders were invited to speak all over the country at various universities and political events. This provided them with the means to spread their message far and wide and win support for the

revolution among a broad section of the population. The readership of The Black Panther newspaper grew exponentially during this period as well.

However, this growth did not go unnoticed by repressive forces. **In August of 1967 then FBI director J. Edgar Hoover ordered the agency to focus their Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to “neutralize” the Panthers who he referred to as a “black nationalist hate group.”** COINTELPRO was originally developed as a McCarthy-era program aimed at destroying the Communist Party USA and crushing the labor movement. However, the FBI maintained and expanded the program as the Civil Rights movement grew, using it in an attempt to hold back the growing

mass movement in opposition to Jim Crow segregation in the South and ghetto segregation in the North. When the Black Liberation and New Communist movements emerged in the late 1960s, the FBI was quick to shift COINTELPRO’s focus to undermining new revolutionary groups like the Panthers and the Revolutionary Union.

***By 1969, over forty chapters would exist nationwide, and the party’s membership grew to over 4,000.***

In the case of the Panthers this began by the FBI coercing a member to become an informant. Earl Anthony was an early member of the Party who had attended college and was studying law. After joining the Party he was drafted to serve in the Vietnam War. To avoid being conscripted he went to his draft board hearing dressed in “full BPP uniform and regalia.” He warned the draft board that he was a Communist, a member of the Panthers, and stated that, *“If they do send me to Vietnam, I will shoot my lieutenant and sergeant in the head once we get into the field, and escape over to the North Vietnamese. So I am telling the draft board . . . Hell, no, I won't go.”*



A few days after this incident friends he had made in law school after joining the Party showed up at his apartment. Except, they weren't really friends and they weren't really in law school. **They were FBI agents who had pretended to be law students so they could monitor Earl and the Party.** Anthony described how they coerced him into becoming an informant that day:

*"They came right to the point: I was under investigation for the bombing of the Van Nuys draft board. I was stunned. Not only did I know nothing about the bombing, I hadn't even been told or heard on the news that the place had been bombed.*

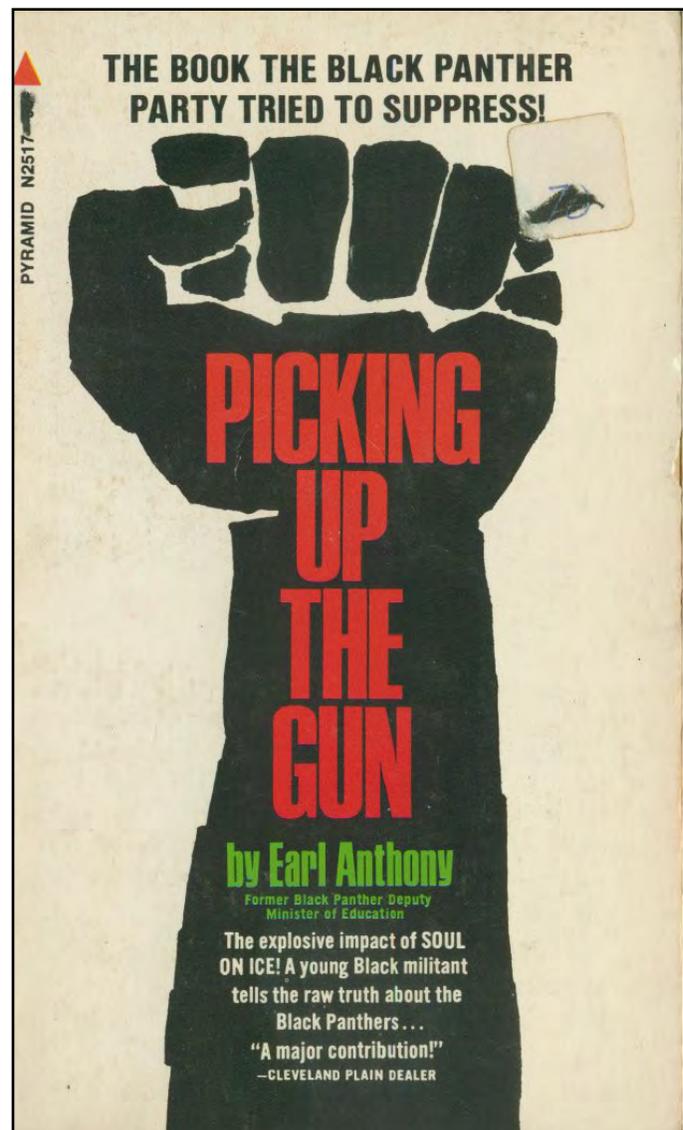
*"Of course they said they didn't believe me, but would offer me a deal. They would not charge me if I would become an informant for the FBI inside the Black Panther Party. I started laughing, and instantly O'Connor threw a right fist upside my jaw, knocking me against the wall. Kizenski grabbed me, and O'Connor threw a series of rights and lefts, knocking me unconscious.*

*"When I regained consciousness, they were still there, sitting down with guns drawn on me. Kizenski said something about them being Vietnam vets and that they didn't like my 'smartass' attitude. They proposed their deal to me again. They would get the charges of bombing my draft board dropped, because no one was killed, if I became an FBI informant-agent-provocateur inside the Black Panther Party.*

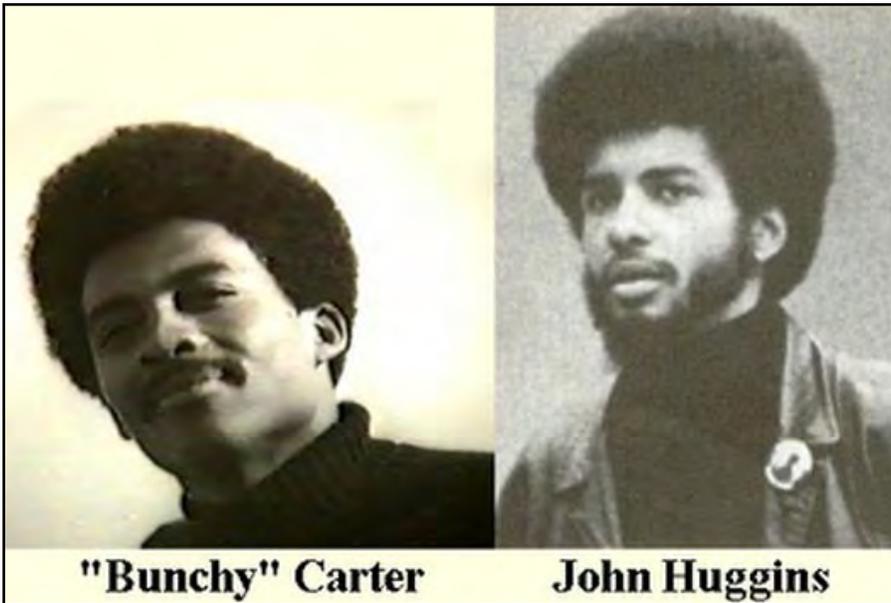
*"I agreed and as far as I know, became the first of dozens of Black Panthers who were to accept the same type of deal from the COINTELPRO division. Still others became local police informants. **There were soon so many of us that we were informing on each other.**"*

Anthony, like many other snitches, would go on to play a destructive role in the Party's history. Before it became clear that he had become an informant, the Party sent him to Los Angeles to help found a branch there. Over the next two years he would be at the center of a series of controversies and incidents that seriously impeded the Party's growth in LA, nationally, and internationally. Right off the bat, he started making trouble in Los Angeles. The Party needed to develop a branch in this city, especially given the oppression that people faced and the mass outrage at this oppression which had erupted in the Watts Rebellion a few years prior.

Out of this rebellion an organization had formed known as the "US Organization." US was an eclectic organization which had a whole series of strange practices. Some of what they did was progressive, like advocating for a Black Studies department at UCLA, while others were stranger, such as the Fu Manchu style mustaches that members grew to imitate their leader, Maulana "Ron" Karenga. Relatedly, all US members had to learn some KiSwahili and adopt KiSwahili names, even if their ancestors were from a part of Africa that did not speak this language. **Overall, US was a Black cultural nationalist organization that saw the taking up of separate language, clothing, and rituals as a way to liberate people rather than revolutionary struggle.**



*After leaving the Panthers Earl Anthony went on to publish a book (with the help of the U.S. government) that spread lies and rumors aimed at discrediting the Panthers.*



After the founding of the LA chapter of the BPP, Earl Anthony pushed the Party into greater and greater conflict with the US Organization. This would eventually lead to the death of two Black Panther Party members, Deputy Minister of Defense Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and Deputy Minister of Information Jon Huggins. **Although the US Organization was eclectic and cultural nationalist and it would have been hard for the Panthers to work with this group, a violent and deadly confrontation between the organizations was not inevitable and could have been avoided if not for the role of informants in sowing the seeds of conflict.**

According to Anthony, the FBI specifically instructed him to sow discord between the two groups. The FBI also used other methods to create conflict such as sending forged death threats to the Panthers from US and vice versa. They also sent mocking and derogatory cartoons to both organizations, making it appear to both the Panthers and the US organization that the other was aiming for an armed conflict.

**This conflict was exacerbated by the presence of a large number of former gang-members in the Panthers.** Bunchy was a former member Saulson Street Gang, and he had done time for armed robbery. In prison he joined the Nation of Islam, and met Eldridge Cleaver. Later, through conversations with Eldridge Cleaver, the Panther’s Minister of Information, he decided to leave the Nation and join the Panthers. Bunchy helped found the LA Chapter of the Panthers, and played very positive role in getting the Panthers going in LA. However, he also maintained ties to the Saulson Street Gang, and

even recruited a number of their members into the Party. While some were sharp and revolutionary, many still retained various lumpen ideologies, and were quick to escalate feud between the Panthers and the US Organization; **they did not realize that the FBI was stoking the flames behind the scenes.**

Anthony was not the only informant involved in sparking the conflict, there were informants in the US Organization as well. There was also another member of the LA Panthers who was working for the FBI, Elaine Brown,<sup>7</sup> who would go to be instrumental in the split in the

Party as well as its eventual destruction. Prior to joining the Party, Elaine Brown was living with and having an affair with a former OSS (the precursor to the CIA) officer Jay Richard Kennedy who was at that point an FBI and CIA informant. While they were together he wrote a novel about a CIA agent tasked with assassinating Mao Zedong. **In her book, *A Taste of Power*, Elaine Brown describes how Kennedy taught her to “be a woman” and how he got her interested in joining “the movement.”**

*Prior to joining the Party, Elaine Brown was living with and having an affair with a former OSS (the precursor to the CIA) officer Jay Richard Kennedy who was at that point an FBI and CIA informant.*

Brown first got involved in the Party by making sexual advances on Eldridge Cleaver. She and John Huggins then started sleeping together while John’s wife Erika was pregnant. At this point tensions between the Panthers and the US Organization were high. Two groups had been struggling on a number of fronts. One issue was the appointment of the director of UCLA’s newly founded Black Studies department. The Panthers realized that whoever was appointed would have a

8) <https://bit.ly/2Hn6gPt>



*Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown ran for political office together in 1973. She was instrumental in pushing the Party away from revolutionary politics and towards electoral reformism.*

large influence on the Black community in the area, and hoped that someone revolutionary minded would get the position. Bunchy Carter and John Huggins were both students at UCLA and had a good sense of the lay of the land. The US Organization aimed to have a more cultural nationalist director appointed.

*[Geronimo] was later targeted by COINTELPRO and locked up for 27 years on false charges for murder, until the conviction was overturned.*

In large part due to the work of Elaine Brown and Earl Anthony, the conflict between the Panthers and the US Organization had grown acute and the struggle threatened to boil over into violence. Given this climate, the Panthers arranged a meeting to deescalate the situation. Geronimo Ji-Jaga was the Deputy Minister of Defense of the LA chapter at the time. He was a Vietnam Veteran and his military experience and dedication to the revolutionary struggle played a key role in the LA Chapter's growth and success, especially when the police began serious raids and attacks on the Panthers. He was later targeted by COINTELPRO and locked up for 27 years on false charges for murder, until the conviction was overturned. He described the 1969 conflict with

the US Organization that led to the deaths of Jon Huggins and Bunchy Carter:

*“On the campus of UCLA at a carefully pre-arranged meeting between the US group and the Panthers[...]Elaine Brown would incite a ruckus by slapping one of the US members whom she also had sexual relations with, then ran to John Huggins screaming that she'd been assaulted by this US member! John Huggins immediately pulled a 357 magnum from his waist and shot at the US member who returned fire resulting in Huggins and Bunchy's deaths.”<sup>9</sup>*

Elaine would go on to voluntarily testify in a court case on the matter, spinning a web of lies and breaking the Party's rules against testifying in court on this sort of matter. After this disastrous

incident, open conflict continued with the US Organization, often devolving into fights.

Even before the deaths of John and Bunchy other members of the LA chapter had already been critical of both Elaine Brown and Earl Anthony. However, despite these criticisms Earl was appointed by Huey to make a trip to Japan in 1968 with Kathleen Cleaver. The Party had been invited to Japan by revolutionary students who were inspired by Panthers' work as well as the Cultural Revolution in China. However, the U.S. government prevented Kathleen from making the trip by holding up her visa.

When Earl arrived in Japan alone he proceeded to spew all sorts of nonsense aimed at discrediting the Party. In his autobiography, *Revolutionary Suicide*, Huey P. Newton described how this played out:

*“When Anthony got to Japan, everything went wrong. Instead of stating the Party's position, he presented a personal platform, a strictly white and Black line—about how the Black world would fight the white world, and that would be the end of it. His whole talk was just that simple, the same line Stokely Carmichael was following. He showed no awareness of class issues and did not even try to describe them in terms of this country. To him the whole problem was a matter of racism, which cried out for separatism.*

9) <https://bit.ly/2Hn6gPt>





*"I heard a tape recording of some of the Japanese sessions—a friend brought it to me—and I was angered. The Japanese students put Anthony down left and right. They asked good questions—questions that dealt with contradictions in a dialectical way—whereas Anthony was dealing in absolutes. For him, all meaning lay in the white world's oppression of Blacks. Certainly, this is much of the problem, but it fits into a larger context. Ironically, it was the Japanese students who stated the Party's actual position by pointing out other reasons and circumstances that complicate the Black-white situation. Anthony betrayed the purpose of his visit by going on a solo trip and narrowing the possibilities of international solidarity. No wonder the Japanese students were disillusioned with the Party[...]*

*"Anyway, when we heard the tapes, we were disgusted. The Central Committee censured Anthony and relieved him of all duties dealing with sensitive issues. He went back to Los Angeles and worked with the Party for a while, but eventually dropped out and wrote a shallow and opportunistic book about the Party."*

What Huey didn't know at the time was the Earl dropped out of the Party shortly after the death of Jon and Bunchy because he came under criticism and suspicion of being a snitch. It was only years later that Earl Anthony would publicly admit that he was an FBI informant. **To this day, Elaine Brown continues to deny that she was an informant and has gone on to a lucrative**

**government-funded career in the non-profit sector.**

Even after all the destruction wrought by these informants in the clashes with the US Organization, the branch in LA continued to grow in numbers and organizational capacity for a time, largely due to the dedicated and principled work of members like Geronimo. However, these mistakes with informants did hurt the Party. After Anthony's disastrous trip to Japan he probably should have been expelled from the Party. **Even though the Party didn't know he was a snitch, it was clear from his comments on the trip that at the very least he did not understand or agree with the**

**Panthers program.**

Likewise, greater cautions should have been taken to prevent Elaine Brown from playing such a destructive role. Geronimo tried, but as a local leader in LA he did not have the ability to prevent her from reeking havoc in other locations. Additionally, Geronimo was framed and locked away shortly after the killings of John and Bunchy. **Elaine would eventually go on to date Huey and convince him to call all BPP members to dissolve their local chapters and come to Oakland.**

***Additionally, the influxes of lumpen and semi-lumpen people to the branch hurt their ability to deescalate the conflict with the US Organization, and left them open to infiltration by snitches.***

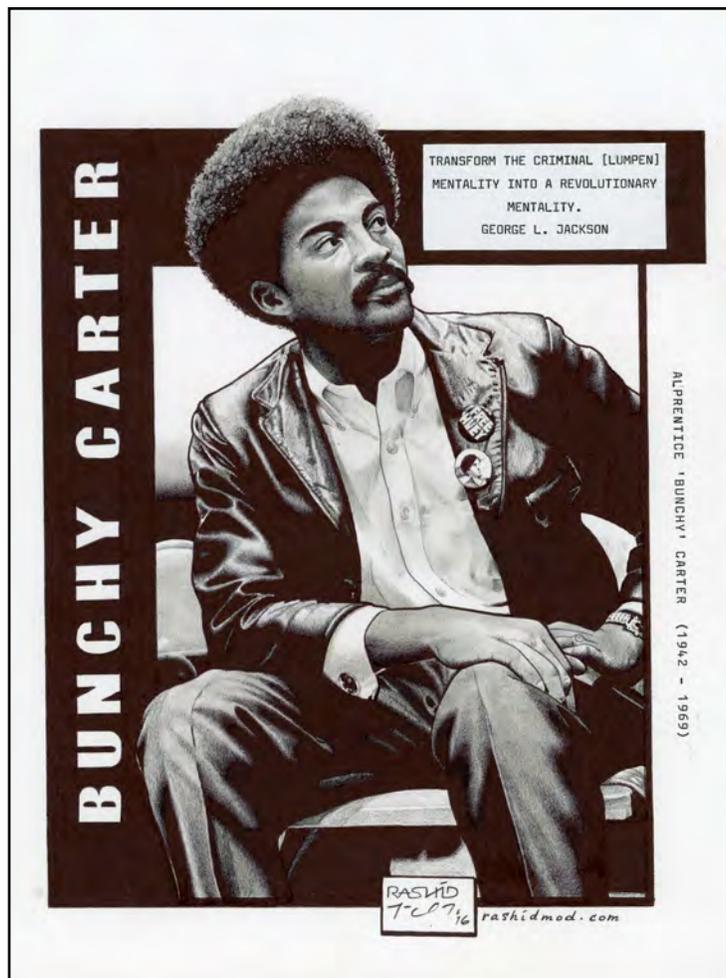
Additionally, the influxes of lumpen and semi-lumpen people to the branch hurt their ability to deescalate the conflict with the US Organization, and left them open to infiltration by snitches including Julio Butler, who was a former marine and police officer and would go on to be the key State's witness in framing Geronimo. Another snitch in the LA Chapter was the third in command, Melvin "Cotton" Smith. He had used his knowledge of and access to weapons to build his credentials with the

Panthers. From the beginning he was an informant, and provided the FBI and LAPD with floor-plans of the LA Panther's headquarters to help the police in their raids. **He also planted illegal firearms in the building before raids which gave the LAPD justification for raiding the headquarters based on "tips" of the presence of illegal weapons.**

Given the destructive role of these and other informants, it is important to understand what mistakes the Panthers made that led to their infiltration by so many informants. This way similar mistakes can be avoided and related obstacles can be overcome. **Developing a clear understanding of these mistakes also breaks through the illusion that the defeat of the Panthers was inevitable and the related pessimism that incorrectly concludes that the state will automatically destroy any resistance and that victory for the people is impossible.**

Because the Panthers considered unemployed and underemployed workers to be part of the lumpen-proletariat they also developed a strong social base among members of the Black working class and for a time this counteracted the development of lumpen ideas within the organization. However, this confusion and other related mistakes prevented the Party from self-critically assessing their short-comings and eventually mistakes began to add up.

By 1973 these ideas were increasingly dominant within the Party, on both sides of the split. In his autobiography, *Revolutionary Suicide*, Huey quoted Mikhail Bakunin, claiming that "*The brigand [bandit]...is the true and only revolutionary,*"<sup>10</sup> and argued that Bakunin "*spoke for the most militant wing of the First International.*" **In short, the Party had gone from advocating for the working people of this country to overthrow the ruling class in a revolution, to arguing that the most and only revolutionary thing one can do is to rob the rich.** While no revolutionary will shed tears when capitalists are robbed, there is a big difference between thievery—even if a portion of the loot is shared with the poor—and revolutionary struggle. While the former steals part of the wealth of an individual capitalist, the latter aims to overthrow the entire capitalist class. Thievery can be carried out by a small group of individuals, but revolution requires uniting a huge portion of the population in the



struggle. **It is no coincidence that Huey began to promote this idea of robin-hood politics around the same time the Party turned away from revolutionary struggle and began electoral campaigns.**

Despite these serious issues that developed in the Party, the Panthers remained a revolutionary force at the front of the Black Liberation Struggle for a number of years. While the growth of the Party was marked by a series of errors and setbacks, there were also big victories and steps forward. **Making mistakes and facing setbacks are inevitable part of revolutionary struggles.** If revolutionary organizations are able to self-critically assess their mistakes and rectify various errors, then even huge setbacks can be overcome. For a time the Panthers were able to do this, but eventually serious mistakes compounded and they split and eventually collapsed. The next article will cover the history of the BPP in Chicago where Fred Hampton and others were able to make big strides in uniting Black, Latino, and white people in revolutionary struggle.



10) *Revolutionary Suicide*, p. 101

# An Update on the Struggle Against Homelessness and Displacement

by Zumbi and Smith

*Over the past year, RUF has been organizing among the homeless and semi-homeless in the Bay Area. The rents in San Francisco are the highest of any city in the country, and Oakland and Berkeley are not much cheaper. Tens of thousands of working people have been driven from their homes and onto the street. In these dire conditions RUF has been building militant organized resistance and learning from our mistakes and setbacks in the struggle.*



*Oakland Department of Public Works workers destroy a homeless man's shelter and destroy his belongings as part of an eviction at Raimondi Park.*

As more and more people are evicted and forced to live on the streets all over the Bay Area and across the country, the situation for homeless people continues to grow more dire. This is a result of the deepening capitalist crisis that we are in and have been in since 2008. **The stock market and corporate profits have “recovered,” shooting up to new heights over this past decade. But working people can hardly make ends meet.** Rising rents, low wages, the shrinking availability of full-time work, and growing debt burdens have led to an increasingly desperate situation for most working people. Two thirds of Americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck, unable to afford an unexpected \$500 expense. One third of Americans are so in debt that they actually have a negative net worth. Meaning that they have so much debt, that even if they sold everything they owned, they would be unable to pay off everything they owe. In short the rich are getting richer, while the poor keep getting poorer. This is an inevitable law of capitalist development and it has led to a massive spike in homelessness across the country.

This is particularly acute in the Bay Area where the rents are some of the highest in the country and at least 55,000 people are homeless. Generally people first lose their job or have an unexpected cost (like a medical bill or a parking ticket), and then lose their apartment after which they go to live in their vehicle if they have one. From there it is only a matter of time until the parking tickets pile up, their registration lapses, and their vehicle gets towed, leaving people with nowhere to sleep but the streets. In this context, RUF has been organizing among the homeless in the Bay Area, building serious and militant opposition to displacement.

**Through these effort we have been able to stop some evictions and expose the ways in which the city governments serve the interests of the capitalist developers and routinely break the law in doing so. However, the struggle has not simply been one success after another.** There have also been setbacks, failures, and difficulties. For example, after successfully stopping one eviction attempt at an encampment in West Oakland, we were unable to prevent the eviction of a number of people living in RVs at a





*Rents in the Bay Area are among the most most expensive in the country and have risen exponentially over the past decade.*

nearby park. Many people's vehicles were then illegally destroyed, along with everything they had in them, including everything from clothes to immigration documents.

After they were evicted we staged a series of protests at city hall, the offices of the company which towed the RVs, and other government building to expose the injustice and illegality of these towings and subsequent destruction of RVs and vehicles. **These efforts included getting coverage of the evictions in a way that further pressured the city government and developers to temporarily halt evictions.** We used this time to organize more in the encampments and to work to bring people together in a larger united front against evictions and displacement.

**The struggle against displacement and evictions does not only concern homeless people, it is part of the larger working-class struggle against capitalist plunder and corporate barbarism.** Also, given that Black and Latino people are generally among the poorest in the country, it is also part of the struggle against white supremacy. Therefore, there is a significant basis to unite a huge number of people in support of these efforts. Even if working people aren't yet homeless, the rising rents and ever-shrinking job opportunities are creating the conditions that push more and more people onto the streets.

In our efforts to build a larger united front around this issue we have worked with various progressive groups and even some non-profit organizations. In order to work with these people we had to be clear that some of them were

temporarily and unreliable allies at best. While they do oppose some of the oppression that homeless people face, these progressive and non-profit groups often still believe that there is a way to "solve" the issue of homelessness within the existing system. As such, they have a tendency to tail behind politicians and focus on various minor legal reforms (despite the fact that city governments, developers, and police routinely break their own laws).

**What's more many non-profit activists have a tendency to see their efforts as charity**

**work, instead of understanding these efforts as part of the class struggle.** Therefore, they tend to think of homeless people—and oppressed people in general—as agency-less victims in need of a kind upper-class benefactor. In contrast to this, our approach has been to join with the homeless in their struggle, and bring people together to discuss and debate the issues so that they can share their ideas and work together to coordinate resistance. We have seen first-hand how oppressed people have the power to fight back against their oppressors and win.

*We have seen first-hand how oppressed people have the power to fight back against their oppressors and win.*

Given these issues with non-profit activists, we have also worked to get students and radicals in the area involved in the struggle. Additionally, we have begun to develop stronger links between this struggle against displacement and similar fights in San Francisco and Berkeley. All of this has led to an emerging Bay Area united front against displacement. **However, this work is still at an early stage, and it will require ongoing struggle to advance these efforts and prevent liberal politics from taking over.**

This is all the more important because the relatively brief stay on evictions around the West Oakland encampment seems to have come to an end; they have begun to evict people in the area once again.





*Ever since people were evicted from their vehicles last fall, Raimondi Park has filled with tents and more make-shift shelters.*

## Raimondi Park

A group of homeless people has been living in Raimondi Park for a little over a year. Residents had relocated there after being kicked out of various other locations in the area. Many of the people now living in the park lived in their vehicles until recently. But when the city illegally towed and destroyed their RVs and cars this past fall, many were forced onto the streets and into the park.

The public park had become a minor refuge from the harassment that they experienced regularly in the surrounding area. However, a new luxury housing development is being built next to the park. **As part of an effort to prepare the area for further development, the City of Oakland has begun moving homeless people into more and more isolated areas.**

In early May, residents were warned by the city that in the following weeks they would be relocated onto an easement created on the side of a busy street at the other side of the park. After hearing about this eviction notice we began to coordinate a response. Our hope was that we would be able to resist this eviction attempt as we had done last fall when the police tried to evict people at an encampment up the road. However, no RUF members could be there

during the time of this eviction. What's more while around fifteen non-profit and liberal activists agreed to be there to resist the eviction, only two actually showed up. These unreliable allies were particularly flaky when it came to their commitment to stand up to the police, even though eviction can often mean death for the homeless as they lose what few possessions and little stability they have.

**Additionally the level of organization among the people in the park and at the nearby encampment remains relatively low.** Some people have really come forward and seen the importance of the struggle, but many are nihilistic. Drug-use and alcohol are also big problems, as are fights and contradictions among the people. Many from the encampment will not walk the two blocks to talk with residents at the park, and vice versa. At the nearby encampment, conflict between residents led someone to light a number of people's shelters on fire while they were sleeping in them. The residents of the encampment have since resolved some of these disputes, but these fires were not an isolated incident. A small minority among the homeless have a tendency to escalate disputes with violence and arson.



*An eviction notice for residents of the park. Note that while the document claims that they will store people's property, DPW actually just threw everything away.*

Given these circumstances, uniting the people in resistance is challenging, but not impossible. In the previous issue of Red Star, we wrote about how we were able to rally people to join in the struggle by a few of us working closely together with an orientation towards serving the people. However, in the case of the more recent eviction, we were not able to mount a successful resistance.

### The Eviction

Escorted by the Oakland Police Department, the Department of Public Works descended onto the park in the early morning on the day of the eviction. Some residents of the park had frantically tried to move some of their belongings during the previous days. Others had decided not to move, and hoped that they could mount a successful resistance and prevent the eviction. **Some said that they felt that moving to the other side of the park, as the city**

**demanded, was only the first step to being evicted from the area entirely.**

So, most people still had a lot of stuff in the park that morning. The situation was made more challenging because local businesses and even people living in houses in the area started to dump their garbage in the park once they heard about the eviction. Most did this simply to avoid paying fees at local dumps, but some also wanted to provide further justification for the eviction by dumping garbage and blaming the homeless for the mess in the park.

The police and the Department of Public Works (DPW) showed up on the morning of the eviction with a small bulldozer, a few garbage trucks, a backhoe-claw attached to a dump truck, and around 30 DPW workers. **City workers treated everything in the park as trash and worked quickly to get rid of all that they could.** The liberal non-profit activists' unwillingness to take a strong stand combined with the still low-level of organization among the residents of the encampment meant that we were unable to mount an effective resistance to this eviction. Equally significant was that no RUF members could be present to provide revolutionary leadership to the resistance and unite those who were wavering in the moment.

In the face of an eviction under the oversight of the police, it is necessary to mount a serious and militant opposition. In the previous issue of Red Star, we described how it only took a minute or so of chanting and protesting to drive away the police when they came to evict an encampment. This was in large part because RUF members and the residents of the encampment directly confronted them, chanting "Hell No We Won't Go." Even people who were uncertain about fighting the eviction joined in when they saw the strong showing of resistance.

*Others had decided not to move, and hoped that they could mount a successful resistance and prevent the eviction.*

In contrast, during this eviction at the park, only a few people were ready to resist, and without a larger unified resistance, those who were less certain did not join in the fight. Therefore, the police and DPW were able to evict people with relative ease.





*Oakland DPW used machines like this to indiscriminately destroy the few possessions that the residents of the park had.*

One resident of the encampment wondered why the DPW workers were so “gung ho” about trashing people’s stuff. He noted that they got paid by the hour, so there was no rush, and they could have let people move their stuff without trouble. However, some of the younger workers in particular seemed to enjoy destroying people’s shelters and throwing away what few belongings they had. **He thought that some of them must have internalized all the anti-homeless propaganda that the wealthy spread to justify their evictions and “development” policies.** Only after some residents protested, did the DPW agree to let some people move what remained of their property to the new site across the field.

*One resident of the encampment wondered why the DPW workers were so “gung ho” about trashing people’s stuff.*

A city official claimed that the move was to make room for summer youth athletic programs but residents were relocated even closer to where youth teams practice. While the City of Oakland put down some k-rails (concrete barriers) to protect residents from traffic and

installed a single porta potty (to serve over fifteen people), **the new location is smaller, more vulnerable to the elements, and puts them at risk of being hit by oncoming traffic.**

As residents began to settle into their new location, other officers from the Oakland Police department showed up and warned the residents that they weren’t supposed to be there. They threatened them, saying that they would soon be evicted from this location, despite the fact that city officials had posted notices of the relocation.

Plain-clothed officers took photos of the homeless people, trying to intimidate them. A couple days later an officer approached a man camped in this new location. **He told the resident, “Next month, you all are gonna**

*be moved out of here.”*

## **How to Advance the Struggle from Here**

The eviction at the park was a significant setback. We were not able to mount an effective resistance to prevent the eviction, and many people in the encampment had their possessions and shelters destroyed. **However, despite these setbacks, the struggle is not over; it continues and based on the threats from the pigs, it seems likely that there will be another eviction attempt relatively soon.** Through summing up our failures, we can learn from our mistakes and do better in the future. As the saying goes, “a fall in a pit, a gain in your wit.”

**In order to prevent future evictions and win more victories in the struggle we need to strengthen and develop the organizations at all levels.** In RUF we need to work better together to ensure that when the next eviction comes, we can have a number of members there, ready to lead the struggle and rally people to resist. We also need to advance the organization among those at the park. We can clarify the need to resist through talking with folks about the most recent eviction, as well as discussing the larger social issues that lead to homelessness and displacement. We must also work more closely with those at the park who are already serious



*RUF has been working to link up the struggles in West Oakland with other anti-displacement struggles like the one at People's Park in Berkeley.*

about resisting eviction. They know the lay of the land and can help us figure out who in the park will be most likely to join in the struggle. They can also take the lead in developing stronger ties between the resistance in the park and folks at the nearby encampment.

***Through summing up our failures, we can learn from our mistakes and do better in the future.***

Additionally, we need to strengthen the Bay Area united front against displacement. There were over fifteen activists from this group who were supposed to show up to stop the eviction. Only two did. This speaks to the dominance of liberal politics and individualism within many organizations in this united front. **We need to identify who among these people are serious about the struggle, and which people and groups are consolidated to a charity and non-profit approach.** The former we can work with in a big way; the latter will be unwilling to do much beyond the typical "call your elected representative" and "give some food to the homeless" initiatives. While we can continue to work with them on some basis, we can't rely on them to show up to stop an eviction, or for other serious matters.

Another way that we can struggle against liberal tendencies within this united front is by further linking it up with other anti-displacement struggles across the Bay Area. We have already begun to develop ties with these struggles in Berkeley and San Francisco. However, we need to strengthen these ties by both advancing the movement in these locations and demonstrating the basis to join up with struggles in other areas.

Throughout all of this, we must put revolutionary politics front and center and expose how homelessness and pauperisation of the masses are an inevitable result of capitalist development. By doing so we will expose people to the fact that revolution is ultimately needed to resolve the problems that they face in this capitalist society. **We can and must sum up our mistakes,**

**strengthen our organization, struggle against liberalism, have confidence in the masses of people, unite all those who can be united, and put the need for revolution front and center.** If we do all of this we will surely advance the struggle against displacement in the Bay Area, which is itself part of the revolutionary movement in this country and the larger revolutionary movement around the world.



*Through consistent protests at the Oakland Mayor's office, we got the city to back-off evictions in the past. Similar demonstrations will be needed in the future*





# RED STAR

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