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# Red Star

A Publication of
The Revolutionary
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*"We have two evils to fight, capitalism and racism. We must destroy both racism and capitalism."*

-Huey P. Newton
Founder of the Black Panther Party

*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 cut through the lies and deceit spread by the capitalist pigs who run this country and clarify what's really going on. 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.

*Arise, wretched of the Earth*
*Arise, prisoners of starvation*
*Let our rebellion be the spark*
*That sets the prairie aflame*
*Let the corrupt and decadent rulers*
*Tremble and cower before our might*

*The State oppresses us and the law cheats us*
*Taxes bleed us dry and bosses give us crumbs*
*The courts arraign us and the politicians deceive us*
*But let us be deceived no more*
*For we will no longer cower*
*In fear and complacence*

*Let our rebellion be the spark*
*That sets the prairie aflame*
*Arise, wretched of the Earth*
*Arise, prisoners of starvation*

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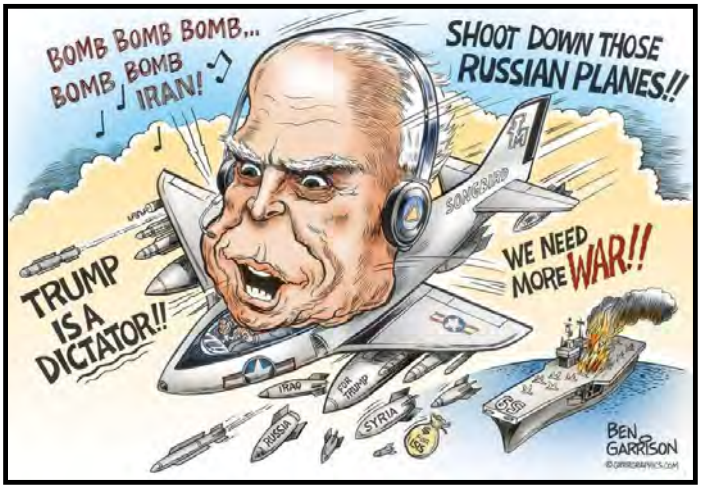
# *U.S. Senator John McCain is Dead: Good!*

*by Nadia*




After the recent death of John McCain, the U.S. ruling class and its ideologues have been tripping over themselves to confer honors on McCain and laud his accomplishments. In particular, he has been portrayed as a progressive figure playing a key role in the "resistance" to Trump. But McCain was a reactionary and an enemy of the people who spent decades in the service of the U.S. capitalist ruling class. He advanced U.S. interests internationally by coordinating coups and setting up pro-U.S. puppet regimes and parties around the world, and he worked for decades to expand and improve the U.S. military.

Portraying McCain as progressive is part of an overall effort to portray anyone who opposes Trump as a progressive force, and whitewash the history of the U.S. state's oppression at home and abroad. In reality, many who oppose Trump are, like McCain, reactionary enemies of the people. It is not progressive to support these representatives of U.S. imperialism. This should be a basic dividing line for progressive politics, but the reality is that the ruling class in the U.S. has been able to successfully portray opposition to single representatives of the U.S. ruling class as the only "really" progressive option for decades.

For people looking for a way forward today, a basic starting point has to be the recognition that it is not enough to simply oppose Trump, and that the crimes and the reactionary politics of members of the "resistance" against Trump must be criticized and opposed as well. A closer examination of McCain's career and actions reveals this whitewashing of U.S. history, and show how many "progressive" critics of Trump actually fully support U.S. imperialism.

McCain began his military career in the late fifties, entering a military school to train as a pilot. He eventually became a pilot for ground attack aircraft, and was deployed to Vietnam aboard the U.S.S. Forestal aircraft carrier. From that carrier, he participated in a brutal bombing campaign against North Vietnam known as Operation Rolling Thunder, until he was shot down during a mission and captured by North Vietnamese forces. After his capture he was held as a prisoner of war for five years.

During this operation, which lasted from 1965 to 1968, the U.S. dropped more bombs on North Vietnam than it did during the entirety of the Korean war from 1950 to 1953 The campaign focused on destroying infrastructure like bridges

**This section of *Red Star* provides revolutionary analysis of current events in the U.S. and around the world. The ruling class bombards us with their media which reflects their narrow and selfish interests. To really understand what is going on in the world we need to read and watch their media closely, and analyze it from a revolutionary perspective. This section contains our analysis of a number of important current events.**

*Over 500 unarmed villagers were killed by U.S. troops in the My Lai massacre. This was just one of many similar killings in the genocidal war.*

and railways, and on attacking the economy of North Vietnam. This was part of an overall strategy that was intended to pummel North Vietnam into submission by destroying the country's economy, leading to shortages of basic goods, starvation, and ultimately the destruction of the North Vietnamese people's ability to resist. This campaign was ultimately a failure, mainly because of the all-out mobilization of the people in North Vietnam against the U.S. invasion. However, in the course of the bombing at least 50,000 Vietnamese people were killed, and hundreds of thousands of people were exposed to poisonous defoliant chemicals like Agent Orange.

The U.S. war in Vietnam is often talked of as a war to defend "freedom" or "democracy," but in reality it was nothing of the sort. It was an imperialist war waged by the U.S. to protect their puppet government in South Vietnam, which was enormously unpopular and opposed by a huge section of the Vietnamese people. In fact, many within the U.S. government and intelligence agencies admit that if they had allowed open elections in South Vietnam, their puppet government would have been voted out of office. In the course of the war the U.S. military committed numerous genocidal crimes against the Vietnamese people, including the infamous My Lai massacre, where more than 500 civilians of all ages were systematically raped, tortured, and murdered by U.S. soldiers. There has never been a systematic uncovering of all the war crimes committed by the U.S. military in Vietnam, but many whistleblowers and progressive journalists have uncovered evidence that the My Lai massacre is simply the most well known among hundreds or even thousands of such atrocities.

The genocidal and imperialist nature of the U.S. war in Vietnam was exposed by returning veterans and progressive journalists, which led to the development of a massive anti-war movement. This included protests by soldiers who refused to carry out orders and mass protests at home. The anti-war movement was so widespread that many celebrities and public figures began to get involved, coordinating concerts and other events to galvanize support for ending the war. McCain,

***Many within the U.S. government and intelligence agencies admit that if they had allowed open elections in South Vietnam, their puppet government would have been voted out of office.***

by contrast, wanted to participate in the war. After he was released by the North Vietnamese, he returned to military service. In the years since, the only criticism he has made of the Vietnam war was that it was not run better. McCain's concern was not that the war was a genocidal crime against humanity, but that if it had been managed better perhaps the U.S. could have won. These are clearly not the actions or positions of a progressive person, but instead of a reactionary agent of the U.S. state.

After his release from capitivity in North Vietnam McCain returned to military service for a few years before starting a political career. He was initially elected to the House of Representatives in 1982, later joining the Senate in 1987. Throughout his political career he has done all he could to expand the U.S. military, and he has eagerly supported U.S. military interventions in dozens of countries. In the Senate he joined the Armed Services Committee, which oversees the funding and direction of the military.

He supported the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and said of the invasion of Iraq that the Iraqi people would view the U.S. troops as "liberators." At the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, in 2011, McCain called for U.S. troops to invade the country. In fact, the only time we could find McCain on record opposing a U.S. military

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*McCain speaking in support of Ukrainian Nazi and American ally Oleh Tyahnybok. McCain has long been a supporter of far-right governments that are willing to toady U.S. imperialism.*

intervention was in 1983, when he opposed Reagan's plan to keep U.S. Marines deployed in Lebanon. McCain's reasoning was not that the U.S. had no business being there in the first place, but that the troops were unlikely to be able to achieve their goals because not enough troops had been sent. In short, even when he opposed U.S. military intervention, it was a way of pushing for more war. The wars that the U.S. has been involved in, from Korea and Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, have always involved massive civilian casualties and the creation of huge numbers of refugees. McCain and others like him have played a key role in pushing for these wars, knowing full well the devastating effects they have on the people in the countries the U.S. invades.

The effort to portray McCain as a progressive figure because of his opposition to Trump is a part of the overall effort to portray U.S. wars of aggression abroad in a progressive light. The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 was justified in part by saying that it would "liberate" the women of Afghanistan from oppression at the hands of the Taliban. Laura Bush gave a radio address in November, 2001, a few months after the U.S. invasion, in which she said: "*Afghan women know, through hard experience, what the rest of the world is discovering: The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists. Long before the current war began, the Taliban and its terrorist allies were making the lives of children and women in Afghanistan miserable.*"

***While Afghan women did face oppression at the hands of the Taliban, the U.S. military invasion and occupation has not led to their liberation. Instead they have been subjected to torture, rape, killings, bombings, and more at the hands of U.S. soldiers.***

Her radio address painted a picture of poor oppressed Afghan women, who needed to be liberated and saved by a Western imperialist invasion. While Afghan women did face oppression at the hands of the Taliban, the U.S. military invasion and occupation has not led to their liberation. Instead they have been subjected to torture, rape, killings, bombings, and more at the hands of U.S. soldiers. Portraying McCain as a progressive figure is part and parcel of the same effort to portray the U.S., and in particular its brutal wars of aggression abroad, as a positive force in the world.

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In addition to serving as one of the chief hawks in the U.S. Senate, McCain spent the last 25 years of his life as the chair of an organization called the International Republican Institute (IRI). This group is a U.S. government-funded organization which works to, in its own words, "advance democracy worldwide." In reality, the main thing that they do is set up pro-U.S. political parties and organizations all around the world. In 2002 and 2003 they provided training and support to forces who went on to carry out the 2004 U.S.-backed coup d'état in Haiti. The IRI also helped to form several right-wing parties in Poland after the collapse the Soviet Union, and in several other Eastern European countries.

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These kinds of maneuvers abroad are a key way that the U.S. maintains its position in the world, by sponsoring a variety of different groups and organizations in other countries. Through elections, media coverage, and various other kinds of "soft power" they work to put pro-U.S. policies into effect, almost always at the expense of the poor and oppressed people in their country. These can take the form of favorable trade deals, agreements to buy U.S. products, or commitments to join a U.S.-dominated military alliance like NATO. The U.S. has invaded countless countries in the name of protecting and spreading just this sort of "democracy."

*John McCain and meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu. McCain has been a long-time supporter of Israel's occupation of Palestine.*

The U.S. government and various U.S. capitalists spend millions of dollars to influence elections, buy off politicians, and, when things get out of hand, sponsor coup attempts in other countries. Organizations like the IRI coordinate and carry out these efforts. They also play a key role in distorting what is going on. The work they do, to set up pro-U.S. parties abroad and bamboozle people into voting for them, is described not as meddling in the affairs of other countries but as "spreading democracy." To cloak their underlying imperialist aims they often adopt vaguely progressive or humanist-sounding language to describe what they do. McCain, as the head of this organization, played a central role in coordinating these projects to advance the interests of U.S. capitalists around the world. This represents a consolidated commitment on his part

***The U.S. government and various U.S. capitalists spend millions of dollars to influence elections, buy off politicians, and, when things get out of hand, sponsor coup attempts in other countries. Organizations like the IRI coordinate and carry out these efforts.***

to meddling in the internal affairs of other countries in order to make them more favorable to U.S. business interests and geopolitical strategy. This is far from a progressive stance, and instead represents a totally anti-people and reactionary worldview.

The ruling class in the U.S. and the media have, for decades, worked to cultivate the image that the U.S. is a progressive force in the world. At times these ideas have been dispelled on a mass level, as was the case during the anti-Vietnam War movement, when many Americans eventually recognized that the U.S. was not fighting to protect "democracy" or "freedom" but instead that it was waging a brutal war of aggression. In our current moment, however, pro-American ideas are largely unchallenged. One form they take is saying that the only progressive option is to oppose or support politicians in elections. By this faulty logic anyone who opposes Trump is a progressive figure, regardless of what kind of role they have played.

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John McCain, in particular, has been held up as a progressive hero, and praised for disagreeing with Trump over certain policies. In reality, however, McCain was a massive hawk, calling for as many U.S. military interventions abroad as possible, and he spent decades doing the worst kind of skulduggery abroad for U.S. imperialism. Supporting McCain as a progressive figure totally ignores this reality and whitewashes the crimes that the U.S. commits internationally. To chart a really progressive path forward we need to criticize and expose the crimes of all representatives of the brutal U.S. government, and we need to be clear that opposing Trump is not enough to demonstrate that someone is a positive or progressive figure.


*John McCain leaves behind a legacy of death, destruction, and war crimes. While some have mourned his passing because of his meager opposition to a few of Trump's policies, others are glad to see McCain, a life-long reactionary, dead and gone.*

Current Events

# *The Crisis in Turkey & its Relation to U.S. Imperialism*

*by Jack Reed*

*U.S. President Donald Trump (left) speaks to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (right).*

The recent geopolitical strife between the U.S. and Turkey has drawn significant attention from the international press. There has been speculation that the related depreciation of the Lira (the currency in Turkey), resulting inflation in the country, and the flight of foreign capital from the country could spark a major international economic crisis. These recent spats between the U.S. and Turkey, including public criticism of the U.S. government by a number of Turkish politicians and officials, are related to deepening contradictions between the interests of the Turkish state and ruling class—especially the Justice and Development Party (AKP) which is currently in power—and the interests of U.S. imperialists.

Since its official founding as a state in 1923, Turkey has largely existed under the neo-colonial domination of the U.S. and its allies. That is to say, Turkey is nominally an independent country but is actually dependent on and subordinate to foreign imperialists. While the ruling class in Turkey has been able to profit immensely off the exploitation of the people of Turkey—and especially the Kurdish and Arab populations who face severe discrimination and oppression at the hands of the Turkish state—their existence and rule has historically depended on aid, investment, and support from foreign powers. For example, the Turkish government and Turkish companies need around $230 billion in foreign capital each year just to keep the country's economy going. This is more that 25% of the country's Gross Domestic Product—a measurement of how much money the whole country makes in a year—and it shows the degree to which foreign capitalists are able to control the country. If they cut off funding, the country's economy will largely grind to a halt. What's more, many of the profits made in Turkey leave the country, as foreign capitalists often own part or all of many factories and shops throughout the country.

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Given that the interests of the Turkish ruling class have been historically subordinated to those of foreign imperialists, the overall policy and development of the Turkish state has been carried out in a way which primarily serves the interests of foreign capitalists, and secondarily serves the interests of the ruling class in Turkey. This is a reflection of the underlying contradiction between the interests of the Turkish ruling class and the imperialists. While both these classes exist by oppressing and exploiting the people of Turkey, their interests do come into contradiction on certain fronts, and increasingly so of late.

***The Turkish government and Turkish companies need around $230 billion in foreign capital each year just to keep the country's economy going.***

*Turkish troops hand out Turkish flags to Syrian children in Idlib. These are part of their larger efforts to establish a permanent presence in the Syrian province of Idlib.*

For example, in the Syrian Civil War, Turkey and the U.S. have increasingly diverging interests. While they initially worked closely together to topple the Syrian government, primarily through arming and supplying various Islamic and Salafist militant groups, the U.S. government and military have more recently shifted away from this strategy. Instead, they have been arming, training, commanding, and advising Kurdish groups in Syria such as the People's Protection Units (YPG). The Turkish ruling class sees the arming of these groups as a threat to its existence given that a related group, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), has waged an armed struggle against the Turkish state for decades.

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As part of their shift to support the YPG and related Kurdish groups, the U.S. has withdrawn support for the Islamist groups in Syria that Turkey continues to support. The ruling class in Turkey sees the existence of these Islamist groups, their territorial holdings in Syria, and their continued loyalty to Turkey as key strategic assets, so much so that they have deployed the Turkish army to support these groups and help them maintain control of the Idlib province in northwest Syria.

Their existence ensures that Turkey will have a significant say in the reconstruction of Syria as the civil war draws to a close. The Turkish ruling class has also invested heavily in infrastructure and factories in this territory, and if they lose control of the territory, the factories will fall into the hands of the Syrian government and ruling class.

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The Turkish government has also taken in millions of refugees from the Syrian Civil War. They have not done so out of the kindness of their hearts, but rather because the European Union has paid them billions to do so and granted them a variety of political concessions. And while some of these refugees have been put to work for the profit of the Turkish ruling class in Turkish factories, millions are unemployed in the cities and in concentration camps around the country. These refugees, organized as a political force or even engaged in spontaneous rebellion, could pose a real threat to the Turkish state. Therefore, Turkey has been working hard to ship these refugees out of Turkey and into Idlib, and put them to work at the Turkish owned factories and businesses there.

These conflicting interests in Syria have played a major role in the increasingly open hostility between the ruling classes of Turkey and

*Kurdish YPG soldier (left) listens to U.S. soldier (right). The U.S. military has armed, trained, and commanded the YPG in Syria, which has angered the Turkish government.*

*Turkish citizens climb atop a tank during the 2016 coup attempt which was likely sponsored by the U.S.*

the U.S. As these contradictions have come to a head, one section of the Turkish ruling class attempted a coup to overthrow the AKP, the ruling party. This occurred in the fall of 2016, and was led by members of the Gülen movement (also know as "Hizmet," Turkish for service). When the AKP first came to power in Turkey in the early 2000s, it did so in a coalition with Hizmet. However, differences between the two grew over time and eventually in 2013, the leader of Hizmet—Fethullah Gülen—fled Turkey and moved to the U.S., where he currently resides.

***It seems likely that the coup attempt was carried out at least with a degree of support from the U.S. government and intelligence agencies, and that the coup represented the actions of a section of the Turkish ruling class more closely aligned with the interests of U.S. imperialism.***

Given his residence in the U.S. and the fact that the U.S. embassy in Turkey initially characterized the 2016 coup as an "uprising"—in a tweet that was subsequently taken down—it seems likely that the coup attempt was carried out at least with a degree of support from the U.S. government and intelligence agencies, and that the coup represented the actions of a section of the Turkish ruling class more closely aligned with the interests of U.S. imperialism. Since the coup failed, the AKP government in Turkey has led a massive crackdown, arresting hundreds of thousands of people on the grounds that they were part of the coup, and carrying out major attacks on democratic rights and freedoms.

Since then, Turkey has repeatedly demanded that the U.S. extradite Gülen, has threatened to attack the U.S. military bases in Syria affiliated with the Kurds, and has moved to purchase the S-400 anti-aircraft missile system from Russia. Given Turkey's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), this overture to Russia is unprecedented. Much of NATO's planning and strategy is aimed at preparing for a future war with Russia, which is a major strategic rival of the U.S. The S-400 system is also specifically designed to shoot down the U.S.'s F-35 jet fighter, a stealth fighter-bomber which the U.S. has sold to a large number of its NATO allies. In response to Turkey's plans to purchase the S-400 system, the U.S. Congress recently banned Turkey from acquiring the F-35s which the U.S. had previously promised to sell to the country.

All of this is important background to understand the rapidly deteriorating relations between the U.S. and Turkey. As these relations continue to deteriorate, the Trump administration has demanded the release of U.S. pastor Andrew Brunson, who was arrested in Turkey and accused of supporting the failed coup. After Turkey refused to release him, the U.S. imposed sanctions on key Turkish officials. While the refusal to release Brunson was presented as the official reason for the sanctions, the reality is that they are more a reflection of larger situation and the growing contradictions between the two states.

The situation has led foreign capitalists to cancel future investment plans in Turkey, to wind down existing operations, and to withdraw capital from the country. This has led to a related sell-off in the Lira, which has driven down the value of the currency and caused inflation in the country to spike. As a neocolony, Turkey is heavily dependent on imported foreign goods, even for basic necessities.

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As the value of the Lira falls relative to other currencies, the price of these imported good significantly increases. While this hurts Turkish businesses, it has the biggest impact on the masses of people in Turkey who depend on imported good for basic necessities like food and clothing. Therefore, the rising inflation and falling value of the Lira is having a disastrous impact on the lives of the Turkish people.

What's more, many European countries,

such as Spain and Italy, have invested heavily in Lira-denominated bonds, and there is a fear that the skyrocketing inflation (over 40%) and the deteriorating economic situation in Turkey could lead the government and businesses to default on their debt. This in turn could lead to the economic crisis spreading to Spain and Italy, and eventually to the rest of the world as it triggers a chain reaction of larger sell-offs and defaults.

***As their interests have grown increasingly divergent with the interests of U.S. imperialism, the Turkish ruling class has looked to develop a closer relationship with Russian imperialists.***

As Turkey's political interests come increasingly into conflict with those of the U.S. there are real fears that the escalating tensions between the two countries could lead to a larger political and even military crisis. The U.S. even stores a number of nuclear bombs in Turkey, some of which the Turkish Air Force can use—with NATO approval—in a nuclear conflict. There is real concern that these nuclear bombs could be seized by the Turkish military and even potentially be used by them—or an Islamist group that they support—in a military conflict.

As their interests have grown increasingly divergent with the interests of U.S. imperialism, the Turkish ruling class has looked to develop a closer relationship with Russian imperialists. They hoped that by strengthening their ties with Russia, they could better protect themselves from the fallout of various spats with the U.S. These overtures to Russia included purchasing the S-400s, and opening more dialogue with Moscow on a number of matters. The Turkish government also began a triparty peace discussion on the Syrian Civil War—known as the Astana Process—with the Russian and Iranian ruling class. These discussions, which took place without the U.S., have been another source of tension between the U.S. and Turkey.

However, Russian and Turkish interests appear to be increasingly diverging in Syria as the Syrian Army—with assistance from Russian military advisors and air support—prepares for an assault on Idlib province, where Turkey has invested heavily and has sponsored various militias and Islamist groups. The Turkish ruling class is fast approaching a major crisis on multiple fronts as it is faced with skyrocketing inflation, sharpening contradictions with two major imperialist powers, mass opposition to its fascist


*A demonstration in Munich, Germany in support of the TKP/ML and broader revolutionary movement in Turkey. A portrait of martyred founder of the TKP/ML, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, can be seen in center rear of the image.*

crackdowns on dissent, and a potential major political and military defeat in Syria. All of these factors are contributing to the increasingly unstable situation in Turkey.

Given these circumstances, the situation is increasingly desperate for the Turkish masses. Despite these trying times and the escalating crisis for Turkey domestically and internationally, there is a real hope that the people's struggles against the Turkish government and foreign imperialism can advance. In particular the Maoist organization, the Turkish Communist Party/Marxist Leninist (TKP/ML), has been working hard to provide revolutionary leadership to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles in the country.

While the situation in Turkey is dire, and there is a possibility of a major crisis developing in the country, these difficult circumstances also provide real openings for revolutionaries to expose the corrupt and oppressive nature of the government, and the related need for revolutionary struggle. As the crisis matures, there is hope that the Turkish masses and the revolutionary organizations in the country can advance the struggle for revolution, national liberation, and new democracy despite the difficult circumstances.

***The Maoist organization, the Turkish Communist Party/Marxist Leninist (TKP/ML), has been working hard to provide revolutionary leadership to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles in the country.***

Current Events

# *The Rohingya Genocide in Myanmar*

*by Zuri Allen*

*A police officer guards a concentration camp in Myanmar full of Rohingya. Over a million Rohingya have been displaced from their land by the military and police in Myanmar.*

The ongoing genocide of the Rohingya People in Rakhine State, Myanmar recently received newfound international recognition after the United Nations (U.N.) issued a report on the ongoing genocide in the country. U.N. reports and resolutions like this are generally not effective at stopping brutal crimes against humanity, but serve to recognize, after a genocide has been going on for some time, what has already happened. The reality is that the Rohingya people have been subject to terrible abuse and attack by the army of Myanmar for decades. This has included mass killings, mass rapes, burning of villages, and forced displacement at gunpoint. The oppression of the Rohingya people in Myanmar has its roots in British colonial rule but it has accelerated and reached new heights under the pressure of major infrastructure projects being built by India and China in Rakhine state, where the Rohingya are concentrated.

This reached a peak in 2016 when more than half of the Rohingyas living in Myanmar were expelled to neighboring Bangladesh amidst widespread violence and destruction. This violence and oppression which has been going on for generations cannot be fully addressed by a U.N. fact-finding mission, but can only be overcome by pro-people organizations and resistance.

The Rohingya are a group who live mainly in Rakhine state, which is located along the western coast of Myanmar. A majority of the Rohingya are Muslims, and they have their own language, cultural traditions, and ways of life. They have long been brutally discriminated against in Myanmar, which has since the time of British rule been run by a ruling class composed of people from the dominant Bamar ethnic group, who make up 68% of the population.

The ruling class has for many years supported a form of Buddhist fascism. They portray the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Myanmar as outsiders and the source of problems in the society. They have long spread a lie that the Rohingya are not an ethnic group from the area but instead are recent “illegal immigrants” from Bangladesh.

Many of the Rohingyas live as poor peasants, scraping together a meager existence from what they can produce themselves on the land. The Rohingyas land has put them in the cross-hairs of the ruling class of Myanmar, which wants to carry out infrastructure and development projects on their land. This led to hundreds of thousands of people being displaced in the last two years at gunpoint, with hundreds of thousands fleeing from atrocity after atrocity. Over 600,000 displaced Rohingyas are now living in huge refugee camps in Bangladesh in very desperate conditions with little access to healthcare, food, or clean water. Many described entire villages burnt to the ground, women gang-raped and then murdered, sexual abuse of children, and mass execution. These crimes were carried out by the military of Myanmar in a deliberate campaign to inflict terror upon the Rohingya and force them to flee from the country.

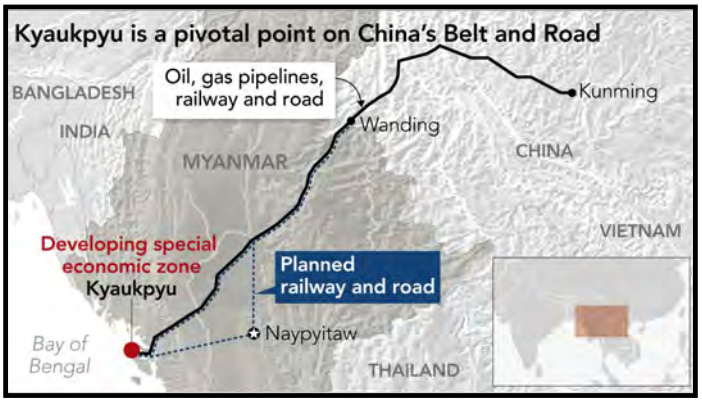
Chinese and Indian infrastructure projects in Rakhine state have contributed a lot to the attacks on the Rohingyas. Myanmar's strategic location, on the west side of the Bay of Bengal, means it is crucial for India to get further access to markets in South East Asia, such as Thailand and Vietnam. India currently relies on a 1300 mile long land shipping route to get goods to most of Myanmar, even though the Indian city of Kolkata, in West Bengal, is located right across the Bay of Bengal from several cities in Myanmar.

***Many described entire villages burnt to the ground, women gang-raped and then murdered, sexual abuse of children, and mass execution. These crimes were carried out by the military of Myanmar in a deliberate campaign to inflict terror upon the Rohingya and force them to flee from the country.***

India has started to develop and construct a major infrastructure project called the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport project. It mainly consists of road and highway infrastructure, which will better connect the port city of Kaladan, located in Rakhine state, with the rest of Myanmar. This will let Indian goods reach markets in Myanmar by sea, avoiding the costly and slow land route.

Likewise, for China, which has a long land border with Myanmar, having a sea port on the Bay of Bengal under their control would grant them increased access to markets in South Asia. They have invested $7.3 billion in constructing a deep-sea port in city of Kyaukpyu, also located in Rakhine state. This project also involves the creation of a so-called Special Economic Zone (SEZ). This is essentially an "anything goes" area

*Myanmar troops have burned countless Rohingya villages to the ground as they make way for Chinese and Indian infrastructure projects and other investments.*




*China is working to develop rail and highway connections to their port and other infrastructure in the city of Kyaukpyu, Myanmar. Much of this development is planned on the Rohingya's land.*

where Chinese capitalists can set up factories to exploit local workers.

In most SEZ's around the world the minimum wage laws, work safety rules, and unions that exist in the rest of the country do not apply and foreign companies are able to brutally exploit workers who have next to no legal rights. Chinese capitalists are setting up factories abroad in many African countries as well as they work to find cheap labor and avoid paying rising wages to workers in China.

***Chinese and Indian infrastructure projects in Rakhine state have contributed a lot to the attacks on the Rohingyas.***

Although China and India are not cooperating in their projects and are actually competing to control the markets in Myanmar they do both agree about pushing the Rohingyas off their land. Highway and rail projects in a country like Myanmar, especially in an undeveloped region like Rakhine state, take a massive toll on the people. They are often displaced from their land to make way for the new infrastructure. For the people who have been kicked out there is often no choice but to become beggars or to go to work in terribly oppressive factories.

China and India have both benefited from the attacks on the Rohingyas but the displacement and genocide has been carried out and orchestrated by the Myanmar government. The current Prime Minister is Aung San Suu Kyi, who once received a Nobel "Peace Prize." Her government's army has orchestrated this brutal campaign.


*Burmese Buddhist Monks protest against the arrival of a shipful of food and other aid for the Rohingya. This sort of fascist oppostion to the Rohingya is common.*

The Myanmar government with the help of the imperialist Chinese government and the expansionist Indian government is actively suppressing efforts to report on the atrocities and provide humanitarian support. For the government of Myanmar appeasing foreign investors is more important than the lives of the Rohingya. To oppose this destructive, genocidal military campaign it's essential that a pro-people force develop to fight for the survival of the Rohingya people.

The Burmese ruling class justifies its genocidal attacks on the Rohingyas by whipping up Buddhist nationalism and Islamophobia. The existence of Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar goes back to British colonial rule during the 1860s, when the British ruling class sought to strengthen their grip on what was then known as British India by encouraging division and discord along national and religious lines.

***The Burmese ruling class justifies its genocidal attacks on the Rohingyas by whipping up Buddhist nationalism and Islamophobia.***

During this era it was common to see slogans for nationalist and religious organizations such as "to be Burmese is to be Buddhist," in spite of the existence of a large Muslim minority in the country. Buddhist nationalism was further cemented with the drafting of the Pang long Agreement. This document was drafted in 1947 by Aung San Suu Kyi's father, Gen. Aung San, after a conference between major ethnic groups about the future of the country after independence from Britain.

It officially set down the recognized ethnicities of Burma, as Myanmar was then known, and decided which peoples living in the geographical area would receive citizenship in the newly independent state. Even though the Rohingyas were living in Rakhine state at the time and had been for generations they were left off of this list and never received citizenship in the new country.

***Islamophobia has also contributed to the attacks on the Rohingya. The U.S. "war on terror" has provided justification for many countries to attack Muslim minority groups by painting them as terrorists.***

Even more recently the Burmese military junta again left the Rohingya out of a second citizenship list in 1982. Many of the ruling class and their ideologues and supporters insist that the Rohingya are actually Bengali people who were "illegal immigrants" during the time of British rule. This constant refusal to acknowledge the Rohingyas' existence as a people ultimately justifies the brutal violence which they have faced.

Islamophobia has also contributed to the attacks on the Rohingya. The U.S. "war on terror" has provided justification for many countries to attack Muslim minority groups by painting them as terrorists. For the ruling class in India this has been a key way to drum up xenophobic feelings towards the oppressed Muslim-majority population in Kashmir where there has been an armed separatist movement for decades. The ruling class in Myanmar has eagerly taken this up and has cooked up fake stories about Rohingyas visiting Afghanistan and Libya for "terrorist training."

*Hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas have been forced into refugee camps in Bangladesh where they live in makeshift shelters in abject poverty.*

Many international leaders have prodded Aung Sn Suu Kyi, the leader of Myanmar, to condemn the violence against the Rohingyas. She has so far refused to do so, which reveals that waiting for her and various imperialist interests to address the situation cannot be on the table. Instead, serious, long-term organizational efforts, including among the Rohingya people are the only way forward. The peoples of Myanmar can arm themselves to defend against the ongoing attacks, and they can organize collective resistance to the government of Myanmar and to imperialist powers like China and the U.S. This is a struggle itself to accomplish but this type of organization can fight against all forces which seek to subjugate and destroy the Rohingya.

***Serious, long-term organizational efforts, including among the Rohingya people are the only way forward. The peoples of Myanmar can arm themselves to defend against the ongoing attacks, and they can organize collective resistance to the government of Myanmar and to imperialist powers like China and the U.S.***

NGO groups like Doctors without Borders and the Red Cross have been ineffective at helping the situation, as the Myanmar government has expelled them from the country. These types of NGO groups also only treat the symptom of a rotten situation. They provide medical aid or food, to address some of the people's needs, but they generally oppose and even sometimes work to sabotage people's efforts to organize for self-defense and to ultimately overthrow their oppressors. So it's important for a pro-people force to develop, which can methodically work to resist the attacks of the Burmese military.

*Rohingyas clamor for food in a refugee camp in Bangladesh. Food and other basic necessities are incredibly scarce in these camps.*

*Over 40,000 Rohingya joined in a protest on August 25, 2018 in the Kutupalong Refugee Camp in Bangladesh, which is now the largest refugee camp in the world.*

Myanmar Buddhist nationalism and the economic interests of China and India have led to the displacement the Rohingya people. There has been some push back from the bourgeois international community and the UN. However, these efforts have only addressed the surface level problems at hand, and have only retroactively recognized the suffering of the Rohingya, after some of the very worst crimes have already been committed.

***To change this situation the Rohingya and those who want to support their struggle internationally cannot be content with U.N. resolutions and condemnations from international aid groups. We have to support pro-people resistance movements developed among the peoples of Myanmar.***

The result is hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees living in destitute camps in Bangladesh with thousands of people still fleeing across the border from Myanmar into Bangladesh every day. To change this situation the Rohingya and those who want to support their struggle internationally cannot be content with U.N. resolutions and condemnations from international aid groups. We have to support pro-people resistance movements developed among the peoples of Myanmar. While these movements may be small at the present moment, they can develop into a mighty force capable of overcoming their oppressors and liberating the Rohingya and other people from the domination of the government of Myanmar and the plague of foreign imperialist investment and development.

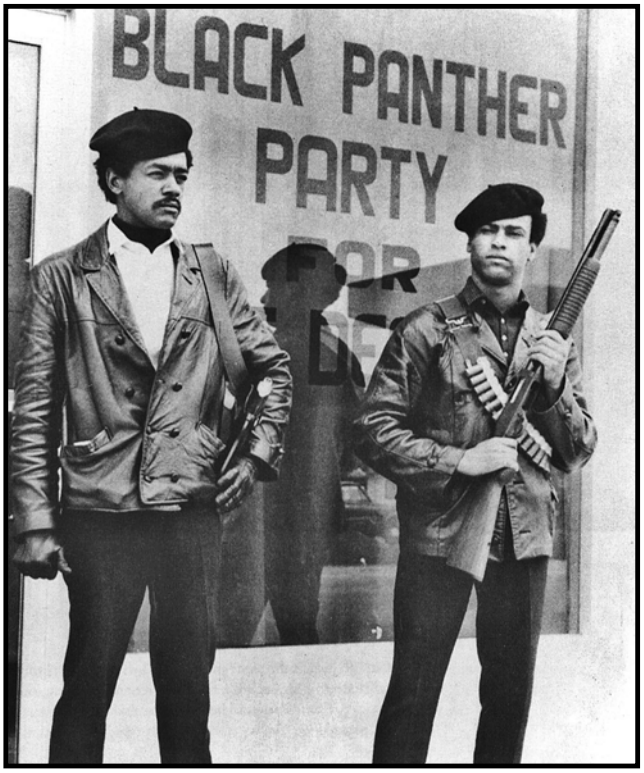
The History of Revolutionary Struggles

# *History of the Black Panther Party Part 1: The Founding*

*by John Brown*

**This is the first of a four part series on the history, legacy, and continuing relevance of the Black Panther Party. 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 Marxist-Leninist 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 much of the civil rights movement which pushed for integration into white supremacist capitalist society.**

The Black Panther Party was founded in 1966 during a time of major social upheaval in the U.S. and internationally. Malcolm X had been killed the year prior—by the Nation of Islam, the NYPD, and the FBI. In 1965 there had also been a major rebellion against police brutality in Watts, a Black neighborhood in Los Angeles. There was also a growing anti-war movement in the U.S. as more and more people were inspired by the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people against the U.S. invasion. And in China, Mao and others had launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in an effort to stay on the revolutionary road to communism and struggle against those pushing for the restoration of capitalism in the country.




*Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, founders of the Black Panther Party.*

This political climate was essential to the founding of the Panthers. BPP founders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale's first conversation was a debate over whether it made sense to support the U.S. government and the civil rights movements. While Bobby was more inclined to support them, Huey had heard Malcolm X speak in Oakland before, and used Malcolm's arguments to convince Bobby that it didn't make sense to seek integration into a white supremacist capitalist power structure. A few years later, when they started working together to found the Black Panther Party, they both read a lot of Malcolm's writings. Malcolm's views and clear political

**This section of *Red Star* focuses on the history of revolutionary struggles in the U.S. and around the world. The people of the world have a long history of struggling against their oppressors. We have a lot to learn from these struggles. Close study of the successes and failures of past revolutionary movements and organizations can help us to replicate things that they did well and allow us to avoid repeating their mistakes.**

criticism of white supremacy were essential to the political development of Bobby and Huey, as well as so many others. While Malcolm died too soon after breaking with the Nation of Islam to implement his new political ideas, it was precisely these ideas that had such a profound impact on the founding and development of the BPP. As Huey put it in his autobiography, *Revolutionary Suicide*:

*Bobby had collected all of Malcolm X's speeches and ideas from papers like "The Militant" and "Muhammad Speaks." These we studied carefully. Although Malcolm's program for the Organization of Afro-American Unity [which Malcolm founded shortly before his death] was never put into operation, he had made it clear that Blacks ought to arm. Malcolm's influence was ever-present. We continue to believe that the Black Panther Party exists in the spirit of Malcolm...the words on this page cannot convey the effect that Malcolm has had on the Black Panther Party, although, as far as I am concerned, the Party is a living testament to his life work...Malcolm's spirit is in us.*

But Malcolm was not the only influence on the Panthers, they also looked to revolutionaries internationally such as Franz Fanon, the West Indian Marxist revolutionary, who eventually joined the Algerian National Liberation Front and fought and died in their war of national liberation from French colonial rule. His book, *The Wretched of the Earth* became required reading for new members of the Party. This book outlined the psychological impact of colonialism and racism on the oppressed and spoke to how colonial domination pushes some of oppressed to seek integration into the oppressive society of the colonizers.


*Malcolm X, revolutionary, advocate of armed-self defense for the Black community, and founder of the Organization for Afro-American Unity. Malcolm's final platform inspired the Panthers.*

The founding of the Panthers was also influenced by the writings of Mao Zedong, the Chinese Revolution, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). Not only had Mao and the Chinese Communist Party led the struggle of 600 million people to drive out the Japanese fascist invaders and overcome the U.S.-sponsored Chinese Nationalist government, but Mao and others in the CCP were also doing everything they could to continue the revolution after overthrowing their oppressors. The GPCR was an effort by Mao and his allies to struggle against those with the CCP who were intent on overturning the revolution, restoring capitalism, and establishing themselves as a new ruling class.



***We continue to believe that the Black Panther Party exists in the spirit of Malcolm.***

This struggle was eventually defeated, and capitalism was restored in China. A new capitalist class has emerged there which not only oppresses its own people but is increasingly dominating people around the world in poor countries in Africa, Asia, and South America.

The GPCR in China, while eventually defeated, inspired revolutionary movements around the world, from the Panthers to peasant revolts in India, revolutionary demonstrations in the Philippines, the strikes and student actions of May 1968 in France, and much more. At the time revolutionary movements around the world were on the advance, and the imperialist powers were on the retreat. In this political climate there was enthusiasm the whole world over for revolutionary developments, and real hope that despite the difficult trials in front of them, the people could

*Black Panther Deputy Chairman Fred Hampton (right) and Bobby Rush (left) in the Chicago BPP headquarters. Behind them are posters of Mao, Huey, Malcolm and other revolutionaries.*

make a better world. The wide-spread belief that a better world is possible, and that people have the power to bring it about through struggle, was also an essential ingredient in the founding of the BPP. Without hope of making real change, rebellion becomes a mere ritual, a futile exercise. But when people have hope, rebellion is an earth-shaking force that can move mountains and topple governments.

It's in this context that mass rebellions developed throughout the U.S. in the 60s, and in particular in Black ghettos across the cities of America. In 1964-1965 there were major uprisings and rebellions in the Black ghettos of almost every major city in the U.S. At this time the cities, even those in the North, were incredibly segregated, even more so than they are today. And, much like today, the mass rebellions were often sparked by police brutality and white supremacist violence. Uprisings occurred in Cleveland, New York City, Philadelphia, Rochester, Jersey City, and many other places.

The social situation, the people's hope for change, and the brutal oppression that Black people faced made the ghettos a powder keg. People were ready to fight back against injustice and oppression together, albeit in a spontaneous and relatively unorganized fashion. Perhaps the most significant of these was the uprising in Watts, a Black ghetto in Los Angeles. Watts was poor, the people oppressed, and the LAPD brutal. So when the pigs brutalized a Black man and his mother after a traffic stop, things popped off.

The rebellion in Watts lasted five days, during which more than 4,000 people were arrested—most of them Black—35 people were killed—mostly by police gunfire—many were injured by the pigs, and over $200 million worth of property was damaged. All told it was the most violent urban outbreak in the U.S. since World War II. In the end the National Guard had to be called in to put down the rebellion by force. While the rebellion was eventually defeated, it showed the power that Black folks had, and also the brutality with which the U.S. government treated them when they started to fight back.

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The rebellion in Watts had a huge impact in the Black community. The former BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver described this change in his book about his time in Folsom prison, *Soul on Ice*. Prior to the rebellion, most people were ashamed to be from Watts. As he put it, "Watts was a place of shame. We used to use Watts as an epithet in much the same way as city boys used 'country' as a term of derision." It was such a poor and run down ghetto and people didn't feel pride in coming from there. But after the rebellion Eldridge noticed a big difference in "all the Blacks in Folsom." People were proud to be from Watts, they saw the rebellion as a heroic and courageous struggle, even though it was eventually put down. As Eldridge put it, Black people in Folsom were "saying, 'I'm from Watts, Baby!'—whether true or not." One prisoner contrasted the approach taken in Watts with the integrationists who advocated that Black people

needed to be content with minor token changes to white supremacist society. The prisoner said that the people in Watts were "putting an end to that 'go slow' crap and putting sweet Watts on the map—my black ass is in Folsom this morning but my black heart is in Watts!" Eldridge noted that "tears of joy" were rolling from the prisoner's eyes as he made this proclamation.

The shift was a big one, from shame of being from a poor and oppressed community, to proud identification with the heroic struggles of that community against the white supremacist capitalist power structure. The rebellion in Watts played a big role in inspiring others to stand up and fight back. Two years later, in 1967, there were 123 major and minor uprisings or similar "outbreaks" in cities across the U.S. according to the National Advisory Committee on Urban Disorders.

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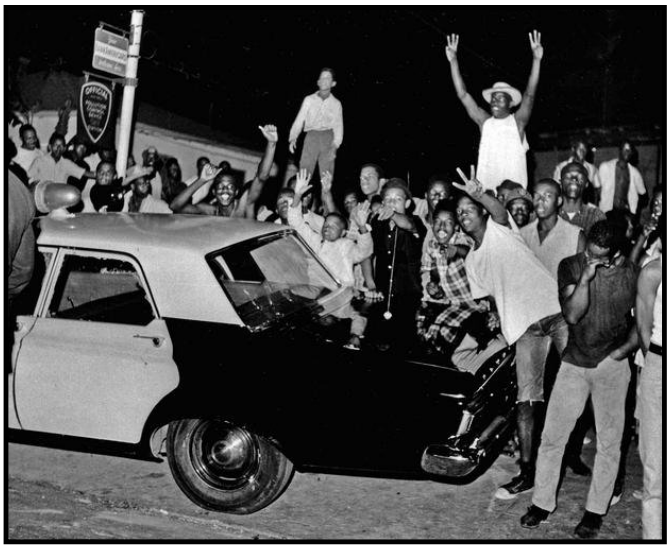
Beyond just inspiring the poor folks in the ghettos and the prisons, who Malcolm called the "grass roots," the Watts rebellion also had a big impact on some progressive middle-class Blacks in the Civil Rights Movement. For them, it helped to clarify that integration into the white supremacist capitalist power structure in the U.S. was little more than an illusion, a way to keep people chasing after a dream that can never be achieved, a dream that plays into the hands of the oppressor and quickly becomes a nightmare for the oppressed.

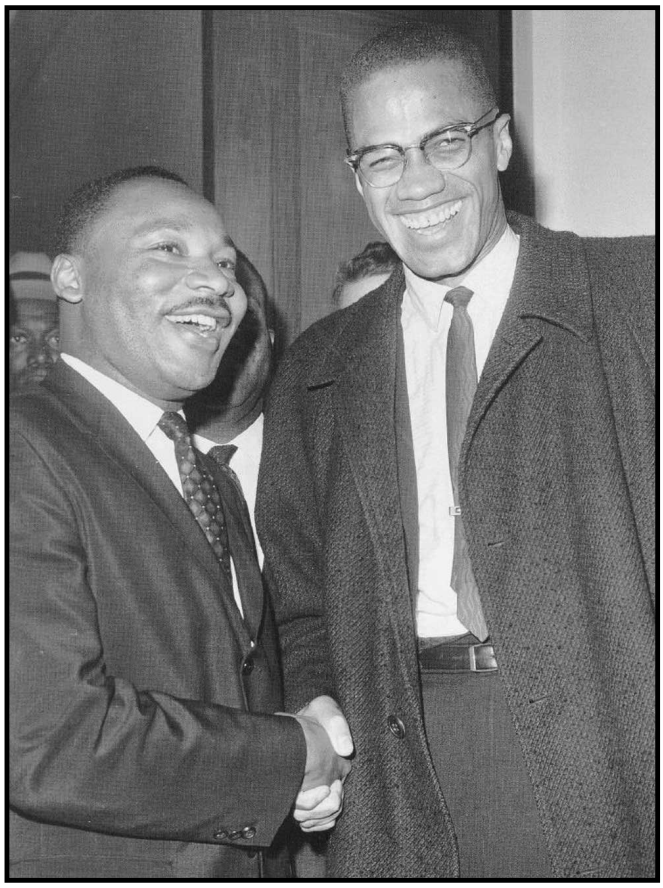
The Watts rebellion had a particularly profound impact on Martin Luther King Jr. Prior to this point MLK had largely been pushing an integrationist approach. However, the death of Malcolm X a few months before Watts, and their conversation in 1964 made a big impact on MLK. After the Watts rebellion MLK spoke of the Black ghetto as a "system of internal colonialism." The next year, he stated that "the purpose of the slum is to confine those who have no power and perpetuate their powerlessness...The slum is little more than a domestic colony which leaves its inhabitants dominated politically, exploited economically, segregated and humiliated at every turn." He went on to state that "now is the time to have a confrontation between the forces resisting change and the forces demanding change."

***It helped to clarify that integration into the white supremacist capitalist power structure in the U.S. was little more than an illusion, a way to keep people chasing after a dream that can never be achieved, a dream that plays into the hands of the oppressor and quickly becomes a nightmare for the oppressed.***

However, while Watts was a major turning point and an inspiration for many, it was eventually put down by the force of the U.S. government. The spontaneous movement had its limits. In his autobiography, Huey P. Newton wrote of the contradictory nature of the Watts rebellion. While the rebellion itself was immensely powerful and inspirational, it also showed that without a serious organized movement, and real revolutionary leadership, the pigs and the army would be able to crush similar rebellions time and time again. And yet, in 1965, there was not a single organization which could carry out such tasks and provide revolutionary leadership to the movement. The Organization of Afro-American Unity might have been able to do so if Malcolm had lived longer, but it had fallen apart after his death.



*Residents in Watts celebrate their triumph over the pigs during the rebellion by posing for a photo near a police car.*



*Martin and Malcolm shaking hands in 1964. This was the only time that they met in person.*

Huey and Bobby were in dialogue about these issues at the time:

*Much of our conversation revolved around the groups in the San Fransisco, Oakland, and Berkeley areas. Knowing the people who belonged to them, we could evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of their characters and the nature of their organizations...We started throwing around ideas. None of these groups were able to recruit and involve the very people they professed to represent—the poor people in the community who never went to college, probably were not even able to finish high school. Yet these were our people; they were the vast majority of the Black population in the area. Any group talking about Blacks was in fact talking about those low on the ladder in terms of well-being, self-respect, and the amount of concern the government had for them. All of us were talking, and nobody was reaching them.*

This left them in a difficult predicament. On the one hand, Black people across the country were fighting back against the white supremacist capitalist power structure. On the other hand, by itself their spontaneous rebellion could not overcome this power structure, and there was no existing political organization that was willing or able to organize among the poor and marginalized who constituted the vast majority of the Black population. In response to this situation, Huey and Bobby didn't give up hope. Instead they saw it as a problem that had to be solved to advance the Black Liberation struggle.

At first they tried pushing some existing organizations to become more radical. But quickly they came up against obstacles. Those organizations which did exist talked a lot, but they were not actually interested in organizing among the Black masses. These were their established practices and tendencies and they weren't too interested in doing new things. They also were particularly opposed to revolutionary politics—even if they occasionally claimed otherwise—and the need for armed self-defense in the Black community.

***In 1965, there was not a single organization which could...provide revolutionary leadership to the movement. The Organization of Afro-American Unity might have been able to do so if Malcolm had lived longer, but it had fallen apart after his death.***

Again they faced an obstacle, but again Huey and Bobby did not give up. Instead, they realized that even though none of the existing organizations were revolutionary, there was still a need for revolutionary organization in the Black community. And so, the solution was to create a new organization, from scratch. This may seem like a daunting task, especially given that it was only the two of them at the start. But despite the fact that it was only two of them, that neither had ever been part of a revolutionary organization before, and countless other obstacles, Huey and Bobby courageously went ahead and worked to get a revolutionary organization together.

Describing how the events in Watts and around the world had influenced the two of them and Black people more broadly Huey stated:

*We recognized that the rising consciousness of Black people was almost at the point of explosion. One must relate to the history of one's community and to its future. Everything we had seen convinced us that our time had come. Out of this need sprang the Black Panther Party. Bobby and I had no choice but to form an organization that would involve the lower-class brothers.*

This speaks to the reality of the situation and Huey and Bobby's political conviction. They recognized that if they wanted to advance the Black Liberation struggle, they had to form a new organization. There was no other way forward.

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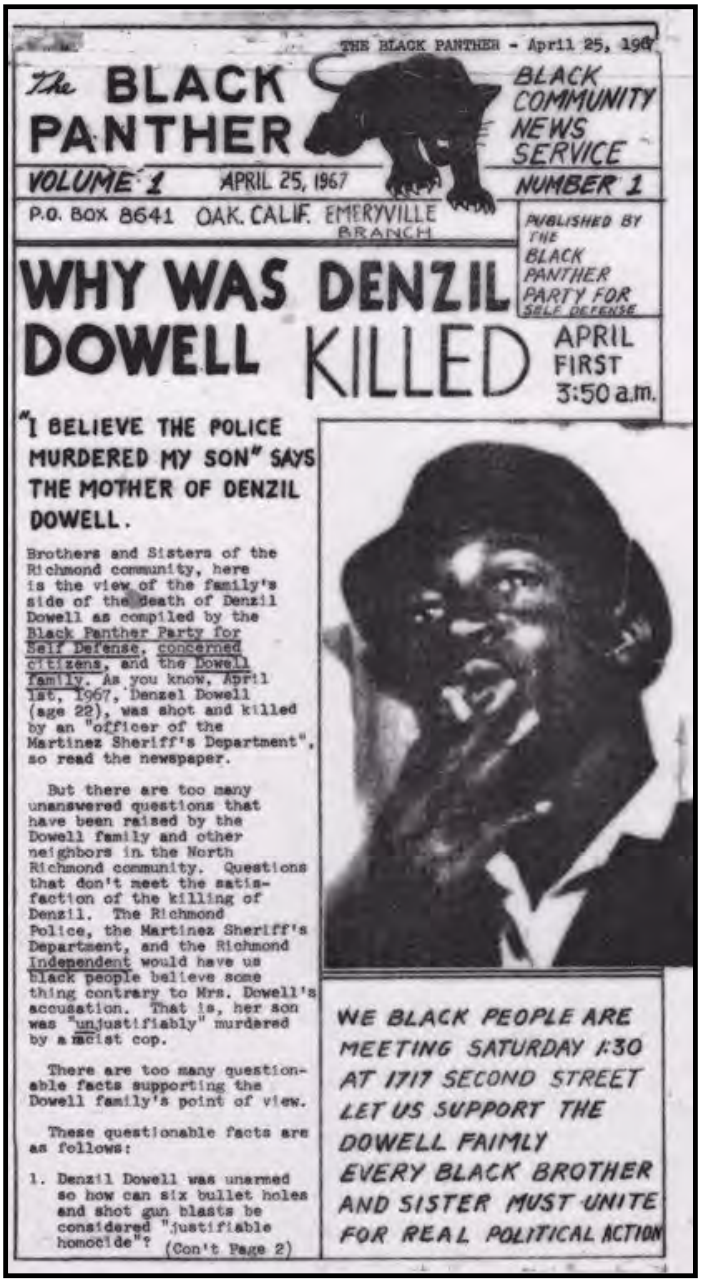
In order to be better able to build this organization they read the works of revolutionaries like Franz Fanon and Mao Zedong. Reading the works of these and other revolutionaries had a profound impact on Huey, Bobby, and the formation and development of the BPP. They recognized that many had come before them and struggled for revolution and liberation. By reading about these struggles they gained valuable lessons that they applied to their own situation in the U.S. As Huey put it:

*We read these men's works because we saw them as kinsmen; the oppressor who controlled them was controlling us, both directly and indirectly. We believed it was necessary to know how they gained their freedom in order to go about getting ours. However, we did not want to merely import ideas and strategies; we had to transform what we learned into principles and methods acceptable to the brothers on the block.*

***They recognized that many had come before them and struggled for revolution and liberation. By reading about these struggles they gained valuable lessons that they applied to their own situation in the U.S.***

This method was essential the success of the BPP: Learning the general lessons from the particularities of other revolutionary struggles and then applying these general lessons to the particular situation that the Panthers found themselves in. In fact, it was preciously this approach that led to the founding of the Panthers and the creation of the Ten-Point Program. Huey and Bobby closely studied the programs of the Cuban and Chinese revolutions, but also realized that the program they developed had to deal with the situation in the U.S. and therefore would necessarily be different from those pursued by revolutionaries in other parts of the world. From this approach they developed the Party's program which would inspire thousands of people across the country and become required reading for all BPP members.

The program itself consisted of ten points, with each point broken into two parts of "What We Want" and "What We Believe." In this way the basic goals of the Party were spelled out, and the beliefs behind them laid clear in a way that directly appealed to Black people around the country. For example, in the program they stated



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PUBLISHED BY THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF DEFENSE

WHY WAS DENZIL DOWELL KILLED APRIL FIRST 3:50 a.m.

"I BELIEVE THE POLICE MURDERED MY SON" SAYS THE MOTHER OF DENZIL DOWELL.

Brothers and Sisters of the Richmond community, here is the view of the family's side of the death of Denzil Dowell as compiled by the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, concerned citizens, and the Dowell family. As you know, April 1st, 1967, Denzel Dowell (age 22), was shot and killed by an "officer of the Martinez Sheriff's Department", so read the newspaper.

But there are too many unanswered questions that have been raised by the Dowell family and other neighbors in the North Richmond community. Questions that don't meet the satisfaction of the killing of Denzil. The Richmond Police, the Martinez Sheriff's Department, and the Richmond Independent would have us Black people believe some thing contrary to Mrs. Dowell's accusation. That is, her son was "unjustifiably" murdered by a racist cop.

There are too many questionable facts supporting the Dowell family's point of view.

These questionable facts are as follows:

1. Denzil Dowell was unarmed so how can six bullet holes and shot gun blasts be considered "justifiable homocide"? (Con't Page 2)

WE BLACK PEOPLE ARE MEETING SATURDAY 1:30 AT 1717 SECOND STREET LET US SUPPORT THE DOWELL FAIMLY EVERY BLACK BROTHER AND SISTER MUST UNITE FOR REAL POLITICAL ACTION

*Cover of the first issue of "The Black Panther." Originally a four page newsletter, the publication later developed into the Party's newspaper which was sold in cities all across the country.*

that they wanted "Black men to be exempt from military service." They also clarified that "we believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like Black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America." In this way, they were able to clarify the larger political issues behind what the Party wanted, and spell out an analysis of the situation in the U.S. and internationally that was clear, cutting, and expressed—in an organized fashion—many of the most advanced ideas that were being put forward in the Black community and in mass rebellions like Watts.

***In advocating greater degrees of gun control, well-meaning liberals often fail to realize the fact that armed self-defense has historically been an essential way in which oppressed communities defend themselves from their oppressors.***

One of the most well known, and often misunderstood and misrepresented points of the program is the call for Black people to arm themselves in self-defense. This is especially true today where the question of gun control is typically framed in terms of progressive people advocating more gun control against conservatives and reactionaries who push for Second Amendment rights. While the NRA and conservative gun-nuts are definitely not friends of the people, much of the contemporary debate on gun control ignores the reality that the oppressed people of this country are regularly subject to oppression and violence at the hands of the armed agents of the racist capitalist government, namely the police, "correctional" officers, and other such pigs.

In advocating greater degrees of gun control, well-meaning liberals often fail to realize the fact that armed self-defense has historically been an essential way in which oppressed communities defend themselves from their oppressors. What's more without such an approach, its impossible to actually overcome the oppressors, who are more than willing to have their armed representatives use the most brutal forms of violence to crush the rebellions of the oppressed and exploited masses. It's undoubtedly true that many "well-intentioned" liberals are


*Cover of a 1970 edition of "The Black Panther" showing the link between Malcolm X, the Panthers, and the need for armed-self defense.*

simply unwilling to accept the fact that the U.S. government is not for the people, but rather is a racist criminal state run by and for the capitalist pigs who profit off the oppression and exploitation of the people of this country and those around the world.

***Many "well-intentioned" liberals are simply unwilling to accept the fact that the U.S. government is not for the people, but rather is a racist criminal state run by and for the capitalist pigs who profit off the oppression and exploitation of the people of this country and those around the world.***

Even in the Panther's time, there were many such liberals. However, Huey and Bobby knew that they couldn't tailor their program to the illusions of vaguely progressive middle-class Americans. Instead, they needed to put forward a program for Black Liberation that drew on the lessons of revolutionary history and resonated


*The art of Black Panther Emory Douglas captures the revolutionary link between Black Liberation and armed self-defense.*

with the most advanced ideas of the Black masses. Speaking to this point and the need for armed self-defense Huey wrote:

*Mao and Fanon and [Che] Guevara all saw clearly that the people had been stripped of their birthright and their dignity, not by any philosophy or mere words, but at gunpoint. They had suffered a holdup by gangsters, and rape; for them, the only way to win freedom was to meet force with force. At bottom, this is a form of self-defense. Although that defense might at times take on characteristics of aggression, in the final analysis the people do not initiate; they simply respond to what has been inflicted upon them. People respect the expression of strength and dignity displayed by men who refuse to bow to the weapons of oppression.*

In this spirit of revolutionary struggle, and with this clarity on the importance of armed self-defense, Huey and Bobby founded the Black Panther Party. Their first community program was to patrol the police while armed. Huey emphasized that they began with this program because they saw that it would get the attention of the community, give them something to identify with, and clarify the difference between the Panthers and non-violent Civil Rights groups who passively accepted being attacked by the police and white supremacists.

***At bottom, this is a form of self-defense. Although that defense might at times take on characteristics of aggression, in the final analysis the people do not initiate; they simply respond to what has been inflicted upon them.***

The patrols were initially a huge success. A few Panthers would go around the community with their guns and stop whenever they saw a pig questioning someone. The law at the time allowed people to monitor the police from a "safe distance," and even do so while armed as long as they did not "interfere with the police performing their duty." When they came across a pig questioning a community member, the Panthers would ask the person if the pigs were abusing them. They would also recite the relevant portions of the penal code to everyone in the area to inform people of their rights and show them that they could stand up to the pigs.

***The patrols attracted a lot of attention from the community, and when the Panthers stood up for someone being harassed by the police, many people were excited to hear about their organization, the Ten-Point Program, and how to get involved.***

The patrols attracted a lot of attention from the community, and when the Panthers stood up for someone being harassed by the police, many people were excited to hear about their organization, the Ten-Point Program, and how to get involved. As Huey put it, "The chief purpose of the patrols was to teach the community security against the police," and it was huge success. Police brutality and murder fell dramatically in the communities that they patrolled, and many people joined the party.

As the Party grew and expanded its programs, Black people in the surrounding areas and across the country were excited to get involved. The Panthers represented a real break with the middle-class integrationist politics of the Civil Rights groups. Instead of passively

Reggie Schell, head of the Philadelphia Panthers (right), records the testimony of a witness to an alleged act of police brutality.

accepting police beatings and attacks from other white supremacists, the Panthers armed themselves and defended against these attacks. Instead of advocating slow-progress and integration into the white supremacist capitalist power structure, the Panthers advocated self-determination for the Black community, national liberation, and socialist revolution.

These ideas resonated with working class and poor Black folks across the country, who knew from their daily experiences that promises of integration were little more than a fleeting illusion, a carrot to keep them complacent and obedient. Perhaps some of their middle-class and upper-class brothers and sisters could partially integrate into white supremacist society, but for the poor and working-class Black folks, there was no such hope. And if they ever forgot it, bosses, racists, and the pigs reminded them of "their place" by firings, lynchings, arrests, and the like.

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One such working-class Black person was Reggie Schell from Philadelphia. Reggie worked at a sheet metal plant for years, and the plant itself was segregated. White workers worked in the top floor of the plant, largely as skilled laborers and technicians working on the machines and they got paid better than their Black counterparts. All the Black people worked in the lower level of the plant at the foundry, the sheet metal department, and on the punch presses.

These were dangerous forms of manual labor in a factory that placed little value on the safety of the Black workers. People on the line would often lose a finger or even worse during the day, and the company provided little or no support to workers injured on the job. In response to the dangerous conditions, the racist attitudes of the management, and the pay discrepancies between white and Black workers, Reggie led an effort to unionize the workers at the plant. This effort itself represented real class consciousness, the understanding the need for working people to get organized and fight back against those who oppress and exploit them.

***In response to the dangerous conditions, the racist attitudes of the management, and the pay discrepancies between white and Black workers, Reggie led an effort to unionize the workers at the plant.***

However, Reggie said that it was the events in Selma that really developed his political consciousness in a larger sense. In 1965 MLK and others in the Civil Rights Movement organized a series of marches from Selma, Alabama to the state capital of Montgomery. These marches were a protest against the suppression of voting rights of Black people in the South, and they were met with violent opposition by the police and other white supremacists. The pigs even "deputized" a number of these white supremacists to give them legal protection for attacking Black folks.


*Pigs attack peaceful protestors in Selma, Alabama. The vicious beatings inflicted on the protests demonstrated to many the limitations of the Civil Rights Movement's non-violent approach.*


*Reggie Schell, Defense Captain of the Philidelphia Branch of the BPP, speaks to Panthers at a rally.*

However, MLK and the other leadership of the marches advocated a non-violent approach, so the marchers did not fight back or defend themselves as the pigs and other white supremacists attacked them, beat some of them unconscious, and even killed a number of the marchers.

***These marches were a protest against the suppression of voting rights of Black people in the South, and they were met with violent opposition by the police and other white supremacists. The pigs even "deputized" a number of these white supremacists to give them legal protection for attacking Black folks.***

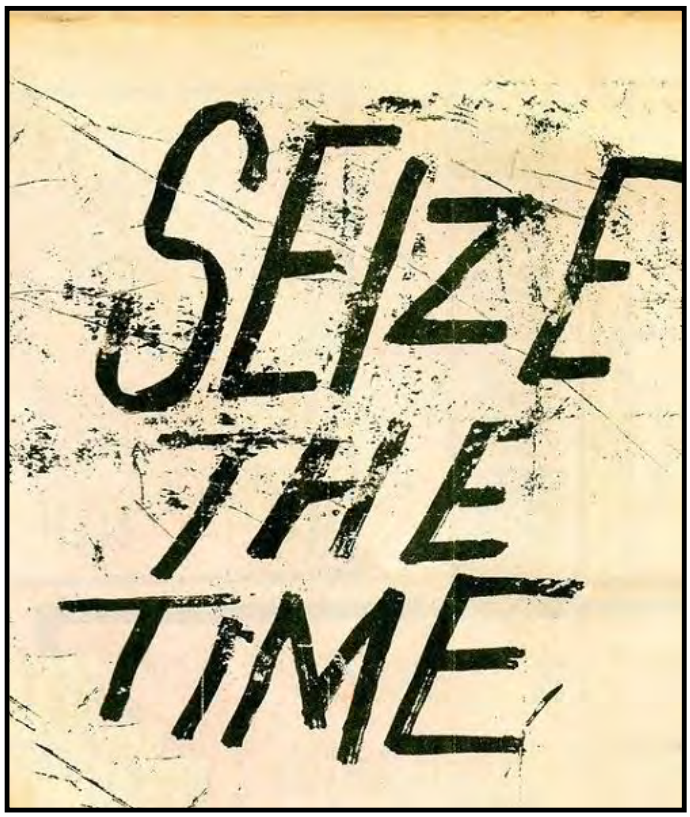
Reggie described the effect that watching these events had on him:

*I used to come home from work and just watch how the police beat the women and the children. You know, just about every day I used to think forward to watching that, because it did something to me inside. Like I say, I had started to pick up some kind of militancy on the job. Then I met with some people and started talking about trying to do something or join something that we thought would help change the situation for Black people in this country. After a couple of months of just kicking around, reading, and studying together, we decided that it would be this new group, the Black Panther Party.*

*I think the first time we heard about them was when the Panthers stormed Sacramento with guns. We heard about it on TV and in the papers. We knew then that after looking at Selma and Birmingham, and continually just watching people being beaten and there was no struggle back—I think that was really the thing that excited me about it [joining the Panthers]: that at least we'd have a chance to fight back now.*

Reggie went on to found the Philadelphia branch of the BPP and eventually became the Defense Captain of that branch. His story is typical of many Black folks around the country who joined the Panthers. They already had some good ideas, they saw the limitations of the Civil Rights Movement's integrationist approach and non-violent resistance, and they knew that Black people needed to fight back against the white supremacist capitalist power structure if they wanted to achieve liberation. The Panthers gave an organizational form to these aspirations, they inspired and galvanized thousands across the country to get involved in the struggle, and they provided much needed leadership to political struggles in Black communities across the country.

In the next section of this series we will discuss the development of the BPP in greater detail, focusing on how they grew from a local group in Oakland to a national organization with branches in major cities all across the country.



## Political Struggles in the United States

# *Drowning in the "Blue Wave" Why Democrats Are Not the Solution*

*by Joaquin Murrieta*


*The U.S. ruling class has been pushing the lie that voting for the Democraic Party in the 2018 Midterms will solve all of the country's problems from student loans to healthcare issues, ending racism, and even creating a four day weekend.*

In November, the mid-term elections will decide who will represent the U.S. ruling class for the next few years in the halls of Congress. The Republican Party (GOP) has, for a long time now, adopted the policy of appealing to the most pro-war, white supremacist, misogynist, and reactionary sections of the population. It fully and openly supports the worst of U.S. capitalism and the oppression that comes with it. On the other hand, the Democrats have been trying to use the GOP's disorganization and the sloppiness of Trump's government to their advantage.

The Democratics are more and more marketing themselves as the Party of the oppressed, of minorities, of women, as the Party that can bring about "real change." Part of their adoption of this strategy is in response to the growing political consciousness of many people in this country. These sorts of strategies are essential to the Two-Party System which is a particular form of rule that the U.S. ruling class favors. Part of this system is promoting the idea that the Democrats represent a real alternative to the present status-quo and that electing them is a way to bring about real progressive change for the oppressed and exploited masses.

There is a growing discontent among the masses of people in the U.S. It's gotten to the point where some Democratic candidates, who historically have been vehemently opposed to the term "socialism," are embracing the label to get votes from the growing generation of young radicals and workers who are sick and tired of low wages, gentrification, endless wars, crumbling infrastructure, police brutality, violence against women, lying politicians, and an altogether backwards, racist, and corrupt system.

Playing off genuine mass opposition to oppressive policies and marketing their own Party as the "progressive" alternative has been the Democrat's strategy for decades, but in the past two years, in efforts to retake the majority in Congress from the GOP, they have further escalated this strategy in hopes of bringing a "Blue Wave" to Washington DC. With this wave, they argue, the bad policies of Trump will be consistently blocked by the "good" Democrats. But despite some squabbles between the two parties on subjects such as gun control and

**This section of *Red Star* focuses on contemporary political struggles in the United States. We provide analysis of ongoing struggles, offer critical assessments of various movements, and expose the efforts of the ruling class to coopt people's struggles. Through this we aim to link the lessons of past revolutions to the present moment and chart a course forward to liberation.**

abortion, they are in agreement over one thing: maintaining and expanding the power of US capitalists at home and abroad.

The two parties represent one class. No matter how "progressive" one may appear against another, as Marx and Engels wrote in The Communist Manifesto: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." The reality is, despite some differences between the parties' platforms and general attitudes, they reflect the united interests of the capitalist class. Within the ruling class there are conflicting interests and numerous disagreements about how to best maintain the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country, and these contradictions often manifest in struggle between the two parties and internal to them as well. However, the Democrats and Republicans are both funded and supported by the ruling class in this country. While the capitalists who run this country often compete with each other and disagree on many isuses, they fundamentally are in agreement about maintaing their class rule over the oppressed and exploited masses of this country.

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The politicians and officials of both parties are deep in the pockets of the ruling class and effectively represent not the people, but the capitalists. And even the most "progressive" and "anti-establishment" members of these political parties routinely support and create legislation that benefits the ruling class at the expense of the poor and oppressed people of this country. In addition to reflecting genuine differences within the ruling class, the two-party system also is beneficial to their rule since it creates avenues of "opposition" to the status-quo which are really nothing but dead ends.

The Democrats have more or less successfully been able to portray themselves as a real progressive alternative to the white supremacist capitalist power structure. They have

*The Democratic Party has historically been supported by members of the bourgeoisie like serial rapist Harvey Weinstein. These people and their elected lackies are not a real progressive alternative to Donald Trump and his supporters.*

worked hard to appear as a party that represents and supports oppressed and exploited people in this country. But in reality, they can never actually represent oppressed and exploited people because the Democrats are funded and run by the capitalist ruling class. This becomes apparent when we look at the actual actions, and not just the words, of Democratic politicians.

With Trump's presidency being so massively unpopular, sections of the ruling class have tried to depict the eight years of Obama's presidency as an example of what "good" leadership is like. In doing so, they aim to white-wash his presidency and make it appear as one that really "served the people," in contrast to Trump's more explicit bigotry and idiocy. But really Obama's tenure is full of examples of his commitment to U.S. capitalism and white supremacy, as well as his support for terrorizing people abroad and strong-arming other nations into economic and political subservience to U.S. business interests.

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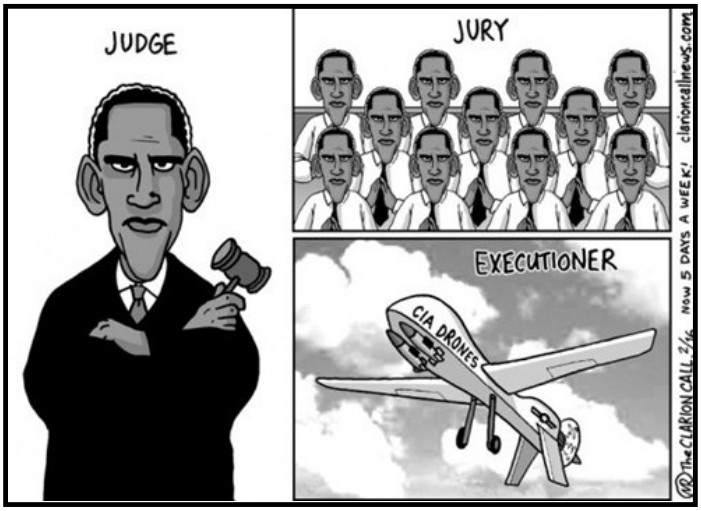
For example, during the 2008 elections, Obama promised to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but instead he escalated U.S. involvement in the whole region and massively increased drone warfare and assassinations in North Africa and the Middle East. According to one estimate, for each "enemy" killed by a drone




*Obama oversaw a massive increase in the number of drone strikes and the expansion of executive power which allowed him to singlehandedly decide if people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and elsewhere should be slaughtered from above.*

strike, eight civilians die as "collateral damage." The Obama administration had a well documented practice of outright lying about the number of drones strikes they carried out and how many civilian casualties resulted from them. While we don't know all of the details, we do know that under Obama's "progressive" leadership, there were far more drone strikes than during George W. Bush's presidency. These drone strikes were part of a larger reign of terror on the masses of countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Syria that Obama and the US military led and oversaw.

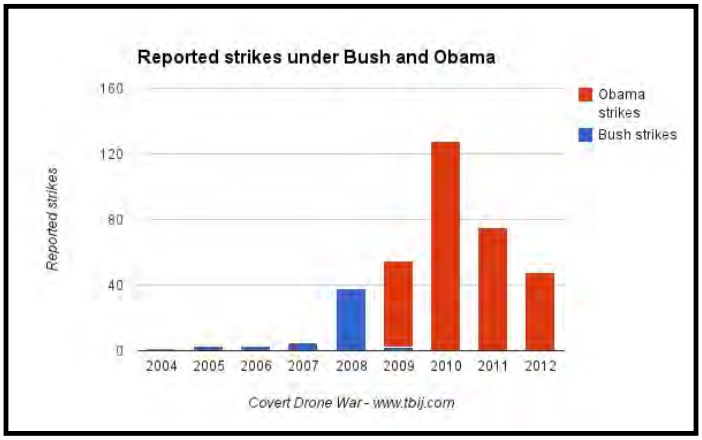
***According to the one estimate, for each "enemy" killed by a drone strike, eight civilians die as "collateral damage."***

During Obama's campaign the Democrats repeatedly emphasized that having a Black president would be a huge step forward for civil rights. However, when massive protests broke out across the country against the killings of black men and women by police, Obama chided "absentee Black fathers" and reiterated his support for the racist police system. In effect, he endorsed white supremacist narratives that the police protect and serve the people, and that "law and order" are really for the people, instead of a unjust and criminal system of oppression and exploitation run by and for the capitalist ruling class. Obama's comments about Black fathers are particularly disturbing as they echo the narratives of open racists and white supremacists who blame the problems in the Black community on the "bad choices" of individuals instead of the white supremacist capitalist power structure which systematically oppresses and exploits Black people in this country.

On the issue of immigration Obama's track record was not any better, despite his publicly stated support for immigrants. What's more, many of the policies that Trump is currently pursuing were actually pioneered by Obama's administration, which deported millions of people from the country, more than any president before him. Obama flat out lied about closing Guantanamo Bay, criminalized and jailed whistleblowers of U.S. war crimes, and the list goes on. Despite his public appearance as a progressive force, the reality is that Obama carried out the real reactionary agenda of the U.S. ruling class.

***Obama's administration...deported millions of people from the country, more than any president before him.***

Hillary Clinton is another example of a so-called "progressive" wholly supporting the reactionary and imperialist interests of the capitalist pigs who run this country. Clinton served as Secretary of State under Obama and played a major role in the U.S.'s imperialists efforts to destabilize Libya and Syria. She was also was very influential in expanding U.S. military operations in the Middle East. Throughout her 2016 presidential campaign she vowed to support Israel in its ongoing genocidal policies against Palestinians. These policies include daily harassment and abuse of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers, an apartheid and segregated society, an ongoing economic



*Hillary Clinton greets then Israeli President Shimon Peres during a 2012 visit to the country. She and the Democratic Party have a long-standing history of supporting Israel.*

blockade which has created a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and regular surveillance, arrests, and massacres of Palestinians.

The U.S. ruling class supports these policies because Israel is pivotal to U.S. interests in the region: helping start wars, coups, and other such meddling to maintain the U.S.'s economic and political control over countries like Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, and others. Clinton's (and every other Democrat's) support for Israel is a reflection of these interests. Even before her involvement in politics she was firmly pro-capitalist, defending big businesses in court as a corporate lawyer for 15 years in Arkansas. And with the campaign donations she received from Peter Thiel (the billionaire founder of PayPal who literally receives regular blood transfusions from young men to keep his vampiric self youthful), the investment company Goldman Sachs, and many other capitalists, she promised to continue that track-record. Given her history it is really quite surreal to see Hillary Clinton promoted as a progressive force.

***Even before [Hillary's] involvement in politics she was firmly pro-capitalist, defending big businesses in court as a corporate lawyer for 15 years in Arkansas.***

Elizabeth Warren, who is a likely contender for president in 2020, has recently championed a "nicer capitalism" with her so-called "Accountable Capitalism Act." This act is partly an alternative to other social reform programs and partly a way to slow the growth of the so-called "democratic socialists" in the Democratic Party. The theory behind this platform is a supposed return to the "good old days" of capitalism after World War II but before the Reagan era. The myth is that this Act would force big corporations to "consider the interests" of both shareholders, customers, and employees in making decisions. But the reality is that no matter how much corporations "consider the interests" of others, their profits always come from exploiting the labor of the working class. They will always have an interest in preserving that exploitation and oppression.

Capitalism is a system of class rule, in which a small handful of wealthy individuals profit immensely off of the blood, sweat, and tears of the broad masses, who are forced to sell themselves into wage-slavery to avoid homelessness and starvation. The concentration of wealth and the gap between rich and poor are far greater under capitalism than at any other point in human history. It's a sad joke that Warren's platform, which is explicitly aimed at "saving capitalism," is being portrayed as a progressive alternative to the status-quo. The reality is that the bill is nothing more than another in a long series of attempts to paint the Democratic Party as a progressive force or at least as a "lesser evil." But this has become more difficult for the Democrats as the people become more and more fed up with the current system.

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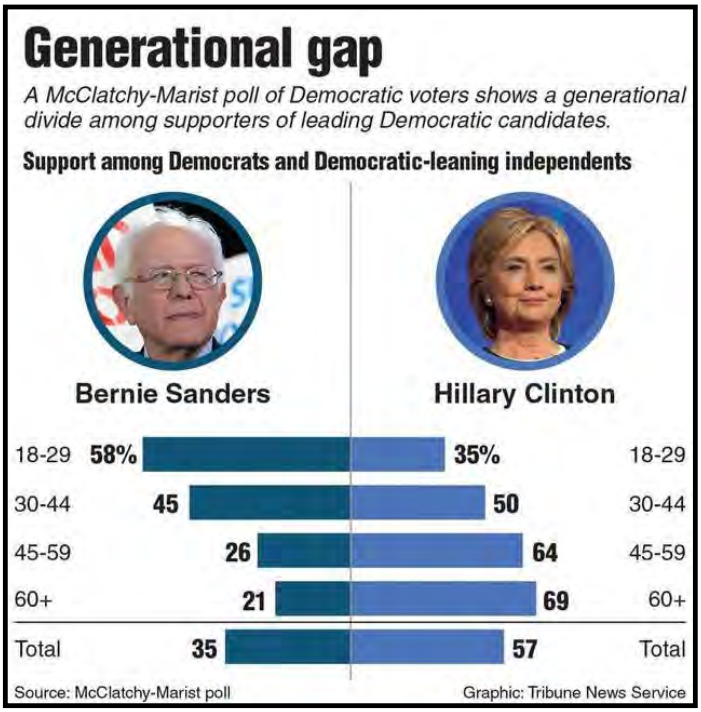
Recently, the inability of established Democrats such as Hillary Clinton to win elections—or even maintain a high enough level of support for the Democratic Party among the people—has led some sections of the bourgeoisie to push for a different approach. Namely, supporting more "left-wing" candidates such as Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cynthia Nixon, and others. Candidates in this section of the Democratic Party have put forward plans for social reform in healthcare, education, immigration, and more. Some have even called themselves "democratic socialists." But the fact is that they are not really opposed to capitalism, imperialism, or anything of the sort.




*A lack of support for Hillary Clinton (and similar candidates) by young people has pushed the Democratic Party to adopt a new strategy of sponsoring refomist candidates like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. These candidates claim to support socialism, but actually just support some minor reforms.*

When these reformers speak of "socialism" they are not talking about a system of government run by and for the oppressed and exploited masses. Instead, they are working to pass minor reforms while leaving the underlying white supremacist capitalist power structure of this country in place. This agenda is being carried out at the behest of some members of the capitalist ruling class, who see minor reforms and window-dressing as the best way to quell the rising tide of rebellion in this country.

These sorts of reforms and window-dressing are typically unpopular among the capitalist ruling class because they force them to give up some of their profits to maintain a larger social-welfare system, but when facing the risk of mass rebellion and revolutionary upheaval, history has shown they will gladly give away a big chunk of their profits if it keeps them in power. We aren't on the verge of a revolutionary upsurge in this country, but even still recent mass protests and rebellion have got some of the capitalist ruling class thinking that it might be best to sponsor some "progressive" political candidates and pass some reforms to head off further upheavals.

In many other countries, especially in Europe, the "progressive" opposition parties in parliaments have to call themselves Socialists or Communists in order to keep the votes, even though they betray the basic principles of socialism and communism daily.

One particularly bitter example is the "socialist" SYRIZA coalition in Greece, which came to power in 2015 after huge strikes in the country against the austerity measures imposed on it by the European Union in the wake of Greece's debt crisis. At that time, the masses in Greece were growing increasingly rebellious and were fed up with the exploitation and oppression that they faced at the hands of the ruling class.

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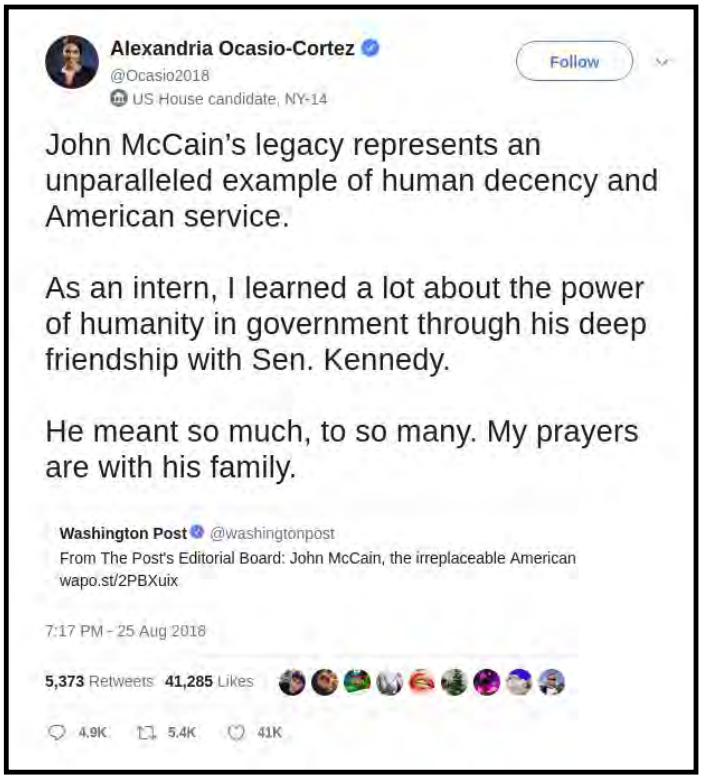
They also saw the EU's austerity plan as an attack on their rights and a way to cut back many social safety nets. SYRIZA was able to portray itself as a progressive vehicle for social change, and a big part of this was claiming that it was socialist. However, after the coalition won the majority in parliament it ended up enforcing some of the most brutal austerity measures in the country since 2008, creating even more suffering and poverty for the masses of people in Greece.

These new "progressive" reformist candidates in the U.S. are similar to SYRIZA. They put forward some progressive ideas in the abstract and make big campaign promises. However, they aren't actually interested in toppling the current system which is built on the oppression and exploitation of the masses. And because of their support for the U.S. state and the ruling class, they are constantly hedging and qualifying their more progressive statements to make it clear that they actually support the status quo. Even if they do get elected, they will ultimately be forced to "play the game" and support the agenda of the U.S. ruling class.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is one particularly striking example of this. She won an election against a high-level, openly corporate Democrat in New York City on a platform of abolishing ICE, free healthcare, and tuition free public education. These views put her at odds




*"Socialist" and Democratic Nominee for Congress Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweets out her support for deceased war criminal John McCain.*

with much of the political establishment in this country. However, since her victory she has repeatedly hedged and "clarified" these positions, especially in regards to U.S. imperialism, to make it clear that she supports the ruling class and its policies overall.

She has clarified that "abolishing ICE does not mean abolishing deportations" and has refused to publicly criticize other Democrats like Nancy Pelosi. She even walked back her earlier criticisms of Joe Crowley, the Democrat she unseated, saying she has a "lot of respect" for him. After criticizing the massacres of Palestinians in Gaza by Israeli Defense Forces earlier this year and earning the ire of imperialists in both parties, she recently clarified in a PBS interview that she still believes in Israel's "right to exist" on stolen Palestinian land and is a proponent of a "two-state solution" between Israelis and Palestinians. This phrase has historically been used to legitimize the existence of Israel as a colonizing state and effectively ignores the continued theft of Palestinian land in the West Bank by Israel and the economic and political subordination of Palestine to Israel's political and business interests.

These statements are not just "stains" on an otherwise good candidate's platform, but reflect the broader consensus among politicians, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, to represent the interests of the ruling class, albeit in different ways.

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner is one particularly striking example of the how these so-called progressives and "socialists" are really compliant with the capitalist, imperialist, and white supremacist interests of the ruling class. Krasner was recently elected to his position with an endorsement from the Democratic Socialists of America (a reformist organization of which Ocasio-Cortez is a member and which endorsed the campaigns of a number of "progressive" Democrats).

In January, during his first week in office, Krasner spoke out against the fact that every police officer involved in a fatal shooting in the city had been cleared of charges since 2010. But in May, in his first case concerning a police shooting, he cleared the pig who fatally shot the unarmed Richard Ferretti. This speaks to the role of DAs and the broader criminal "justice" system in our society, which has little to no interest in prosecuting members of the ruling class and the pigs who protect and serve them. In contrast, this same system continually persecutes poor and working people. As with other positions in the U.S. state, from city mayors all the way up to the presidency, the personal image an individual puts forward is negligible when compared with their actual actions in upholding the ruling class's white supremacist capitalist power structure.

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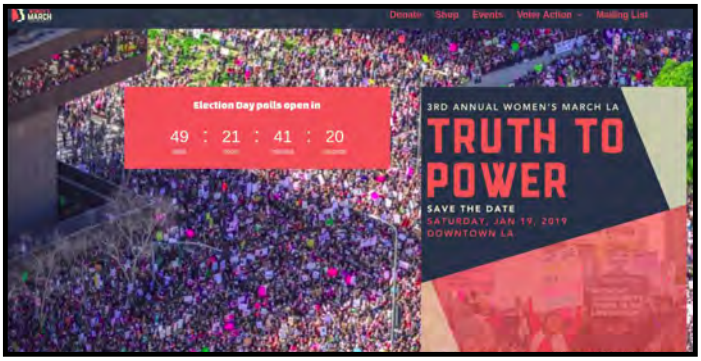
These "progessive" candidates that are vying for state and federal government seats in the November elections are gaining a lot of traction primarily because the Democratic Party is scrambling to overcome the searing embarrassment of its loss to Donald Trump and resolve its own internal contradictions. The differences between Warren, Ocasio-Cortez, and others within the Democratic Party are real differences, and reflect real contradictions within




*The Democratic Party has worked hard to coopt mass movements such as MeToo and BLM and turn them into "get out to vote" drives. In doing so, they hope people will ignore the fact that Democrats are supported by capitalist pigs like Harvey Weinstein.*

the ruling class on how to best "run the country" (that is, how best maintain the U.S.'s domination of people at home and abroad). In order to maintain their rule, the capitalists who run this country need people to "have faith" in the white supremacist capitalist power structure. Once people stop believing in the system, they start to look for revolutionary alternatives which threaten the ruling class's parasitic existence. The fear that working people will do precisely this has been a major factor in the Democratic Party's decision to endorse a number of "progressive" reformist candidates.

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Given this, it's important to remember that the pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist views of Democratic politicians aren't simply personal failings but reflect the broad interests of the capitalist ruling class. The current "divide" within the Democratic Party is reflective of competing views on how to portray the Party as a legitimate opposition to the status quo, and how to best maintain the ruling class's power at home and abroad . Similar internal contradictions have been evident within the GOP between factions like the Tea Party, libertarians, and "never-Trumpers" (Republicans who oppose Trump), and more.

The recent growth in support for the democratic "socialists" candidates was kicked off by a small group aligned with Bernie Sanders within the Party playing off the outrage of the masses towards the failings of our current system.

This is a key way the ruling class maintains its power—stifling the radicalism of many mass movements and pushing them to support the U.S. state through voting drives and campaigning for candidates. A major way in which they do this is by portraying electoral efforts as the only realistic way to address the issues which give rise to social movements and mass rebellion. The spontaneous rebellions against white supremacist police violence in 2014 and the ensuing Black Lives Matter movement is one recent example of this. After the murders of Michael Brown, Freddie Grey, and many others, mass protests against the police and white supremacy swept across the country. This upsurge of rebellion was truly inspiring.

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However, the official leadership of BLM as an organization (and later the "Movement for Black Lives") fractured over the question of whether or not to support the Democratic Party and electoral politics more broadly. Some of the more radical leaders of the movement in Ferguson were killed in mysterious circumstances, likely by the local police and/or FBI. Eventually the more reformist leadership won out and aligned itself with the Democratic Party and the U.S. state. A number of these leaders ran for office, appeared at events at the White House, and generally spoke out in support of the Democratic Party. In doing so, they effectively legitimized the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country, and perpetuated the myth that it can be transformed from within.

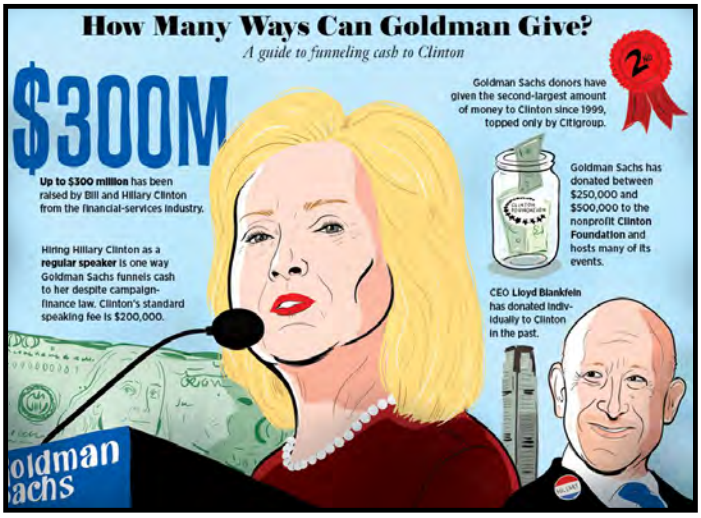
*Some BLM activists like DeRay Mckesson have been eager to run for office as part of the pro-capitalist Democratic Party.*

All the while, families abused by the police and those who had members killed by cops haven't seen any justice, white supremacist violence in this country continues to grow, and oppressive and racist practices in housing, employment, and the criminal "justice" system continue to further disenfranchise Black communities. Part of the ruling class's strategy is to promote various reformists movements which support the Democratic Party and claim to be helping the oppressed people. These groups largely function as a dead-end that pull people away from more radical alternatives and funnel them into the electoral machine and support for the U.S. state. They also help the Democratic Party to maintain its appearance as a progressive force. Instead of these movements and related political candidates transforming the Democratic Party, they are legitimizing it, and legitimizing the oppression of the masses of people by the ruling class of capitalists.

***Part of the ruling class's strategy is to promote various reformists movements which support the Democratic Party and claim to be helping the oppressed people.***

However, people are increasingly recognizing the bankruptcy of the two-party system and the ruling class' complete inability and unwillingness to address the needs of the masses. The ruling class is working hard to prevent people from developing political consciousness on these matters, and they are especially concerned that the masses will become more organized and pose a real threat to their profit and power.

The shifts in the Democratic Party and the promise of a "Blue Wave" is one tactic of the ruling class to prevent the rise of mass rebellion and resistance. Another tactic has been promoting the narrative that the US is a progressive force or at least a "lesser evil" in contrast to its rivals in Russia and China. This is part of a larger effort to drum up support for an inter-imperialist conflict or even world war. While China and Russia are oppressive governments and imperialist powers, this in no way justifies the U.S. state's own oppressive reality. What's more any war between these countries would not be a progressive development, regardless of who wins, but rather would bring untold suffering to hundreds of millions of people the whole world over.




*Democratic Party Candidates like Hillary Clinton rely on "donations" from major corporations like Goldman Sachs to finance their electoral campaigns and pay for their other expenses.*

Revolutionaries must work tirelessly to expose these tactics of the ruling class for what they are, reactionary lies aimed at justifying the oppressive and exploitative rule of a parasitic social class. In addition, we need to build up a revolutionary movement which can serve as a real alternative to the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country.

There has not been revolutionary movement in this country for decades, but the need for revolution continues to exist and becomes more pressing every day. The ruling class who runs the government and the two party system will never allow their system of capitalist exploitation and white supremacist rule come to an end with the election of one or even a number of progressive candidates.

Only a revolution can overthrow them as a class and establish a government run for and by the people. This is not some pie-in-the-sky dream, but a reality which must be built from the ground up. The ruling class of this country has worked hard to promote the lie that there is no alternative to the current status quo, and that therefore the "lesser evil" of the Democratic Party is the best we can hope for. But the history of revolutionary movements in this country and around the world shows that real change is possible and another world can be built. The Democratic Party's "Blue Wave" and other such platforms are nothing but reactionary lies that prey on people's hopelessness and desperation, but the power of the people, when organized as a revolutionary force, is unstoppable and can break all chains.

## The Political Economy of Capitalism

# *Classes and Class Struggle: Adapted From a Publication of the Erstwhile Bay Area Revolutionary Union*

*by Joe Hill*


What do communists stand for? And in particular, what do we mean when we talk about classes, class struggle, and proletarian revolution? The following article is written in answer to these frequently asked questions.

Communism as a philosophy and a social system represents the highest interests of the working class. The rulers and social media activists of this country, just as they distort Communism, also distort the role of the working class in society.

One of their favorite deceptions is to describe the workers as "middle class" and oppose them to the very poor. They try desperately to rob the workers of a real class consciousness, just as they rob them of the material wealth they produce. They obscure the truth that the basic factor in determining class is not income, but relationship to the means of production.

A worker on a construction site, for example, may have the same income as a small shopkeeper. But the construction worker owns nothing with which to earn his or her living, except for brawn and brains. In order to live, such workers must sell their labor power.

**Worker a Wage Slave**

The materials, machines, buildings and the land that they sit on, the means of production—do not belong to the worker. They belong to a capitalist who buys the workers labor power and puts him or her to work doing whatever will make most profit for the capitalist. Under the rule of capital, the worker is a wage-slave.

The small shopkeeper, on the other hand, may do some work in his or her shop. But the shopkeeper also owns the shop, the commodities sold in it, and any equipment used in it. And, in most cases, the shopkeeper will hire a few clerks, or other "help." While such a shopkeeper may not be rich, he or she is master of this little shop.

The construction worker and the small shopkeeper may both be "little people" but they belong to separate classes in society. Society is basically an organized way that a stable community of people produce and distribute the things they need to live. At each stage of the development of society, people enter into definite social relations with each other, in order to carry out production.

**This section of *Red Star* focuses on the political economy of capitalism. In order to overthrow the capitalist power structure in this country, we need to understand how it works and how working people are oppressed and exploited by the ruling class. Only through deepening our understanding of these matters can we chart a course forward to a society free from all oppression and exploitation.**

This establishes the class structure of society. Those who completely control the means of production stand as lord and master of those who own little or none. Whichever group owns the means of production also controls the way in which the wealth produced by all of society will be distributed.

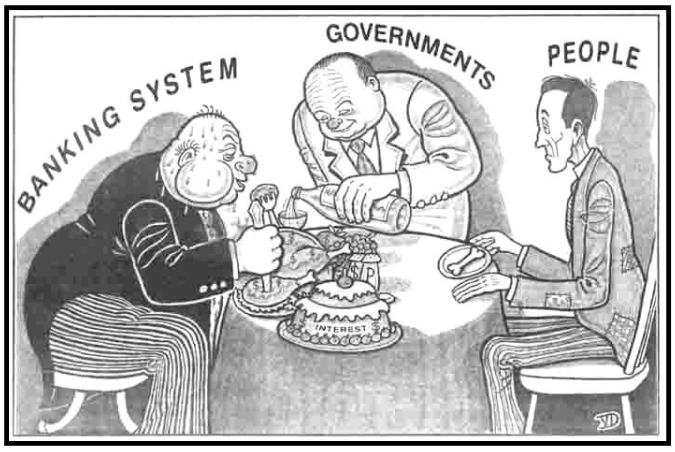
**State Protects Class Interests**

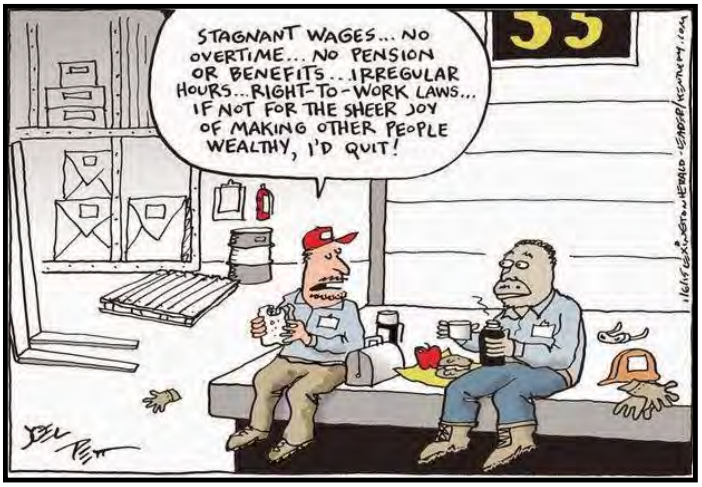
The owning class, as the ruling class, sets up the state—the military and police, bureaucracy and legal system—and other institutions, political, educational, etc. which promotes its rule. And the ruling class promotes the ideas, philosophy, habits and customs—the ideology and culture—which reflects its position in society and re-enforces its rule. To struggle against the ruling class, the oppressed classes also develop institutions, ideology and culture that represent their class interests.

***The ruling class promotes the ideas, philosophy, habits and customs—the ideology and culture—which reflects its position in society and re-enforces its rule.***

To break this down, we only have to look at the way different groups in our society make their living, the role they play in society generally, and the outlook that characterizes each group as a social class.

There are the CEOs, bankers, and other big stockholders who have controlling interests in the large corporations—the monopoly capitalists, or bourgeoisie. (There are different layers in the capitalist class, or bourgeoisie, but generally this term is used to refer to the monopoly capitalists who are clearly the dominant section of this class.) They do no work useful to society, but they monopolize ownership of the means of production and control the government as a tool to oppress the majority of society. They are the ruling class.




*The ruling class ideology promotes the idea that working people should love living in wage slavery and working to make others rich.*

Directly opposed to them are the workers who own no means of production and sell their labor power to capital. As Karl Marx said, they can live only so long as they work, and can work only so long as they enrich the capitalists. This is the working class or proletariat, which makes up the largest single class in our society.

Between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand various other groupings—shop keepers, small factory owners, farmers, and others who own a small share of the means of production. These, together with the professionals, students and intellectuals, lower level managers, etc, form the middle strata of society, the petty bourgeoisie.

***To struggle against the ruling class, the oppressed classes also develops institutions, ideology and culture that represent their class interests.***

Finally, there are those who live by illegal means, the criminals or lumpen-proletariat.

None of these groups is sealed off from all others, in an air-tight bag. They are overlapping, and within each group there are, of course, subgroups and strata. (In our society, the class structure is complicated, because the oppressed nationalities, such as Black Americans, have, to varying degrees, class structures within their own population, concentrations which have their own particular features, even while they fit into and conform to the basic class structure of our society as a whole).

But in general, members of each class in society have a common method of earning their income, based on their common relationship to the means of production.

And each of these groups is characterized by a particular world view, or ideology, also founded on their relationship to the means of production.

**Bourgeois Outlook**

The bourgeoisie, because they make private profit by exploiting labor, promote the ideas of selfishness and "look out for number one." They reduce all relations between people to cold cash. They use the mass media, the educational system, and other institutions, which they own and control, to promote these ideas.

Even their advertisements not only sell their particular products, but their system and their individualist outlook.

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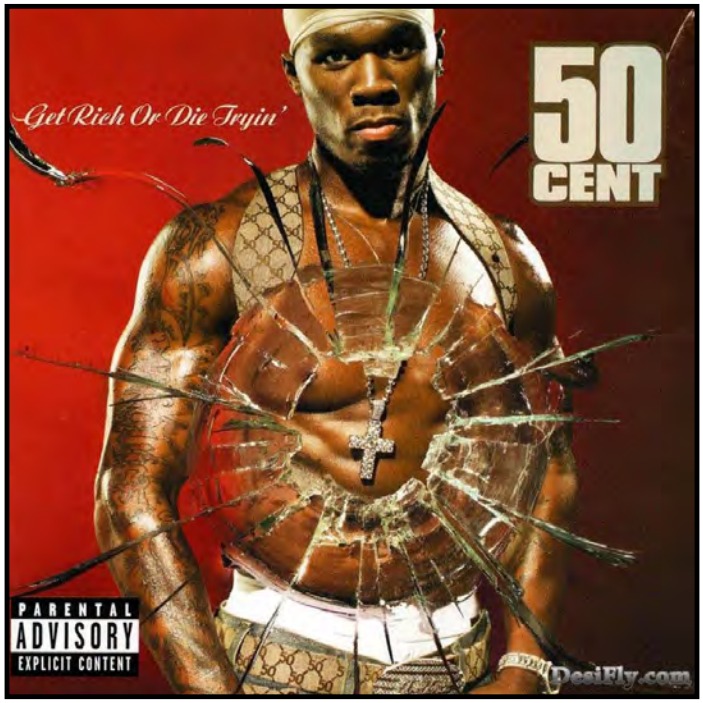
This bourgeois culture is aimed at confusing and dividing the working people to keep them enslaved to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie constantly promote the notion that they are rich and run things because they are smart, they work hard (!) or maybe they just had a spell of good luck, while the workers are at the bottom because they are stupid or lazy, or fate is against them (born under a bad sign, etc).

The small capitalist and other petty bourgeoisie, while they are opposed to the big monopolies, want to break up the power of the monopolies so that they can have a chance to compete and become rich themselves. They look down on the workers and try to maintain their position above them. Because of their basically unstable "in-between" position, they waver between following after the bourgeoisie and uniting with the proletariat in struggle against the bourgeoisie.

***The bourgeoisie, because they make private profit by exploiting labor, promote the ideas of selfishness and "look out for number one."***




*The ruling class promotes their ideology through all different types of media, including music, TV, social media, and more.*

The lumpenproletariat, who are really a kind of "illegal petty bourgeoisie," may lead a very depressed existence. But they live by ripping people off—especially the workers who are most accessible to them. While section of the "lumpen" may be won over by a powerful class conscious workers' movement, as a group the lumpenproletariat is most easily bribed to the serve the monopoly capitalists in attacking the workers' movement.

***Bourgeois culture is aimed at confusing and dividing the working people to keep them enslaved to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie constantly promote the notion that they are rich and run things because they are smart, they work hard (!) or maybe they just had a spell of good luck.***

**Proletarian Ideology**

The working class is characterized by its own world outlook, which differs from that of every other class. Because workers engage in large-scale, socialized labor—thousands and millions of workers cooperating to produce the wealth of society—and because they have this wealth stolen by the capitalists, the outlook that characterizes the working class—proletarian ideology—is based on the principles of


*In contrast to the individualism of ruling class ideology, proletarian ideology promotes the unity of all working people in revolutionary struggle.*

cooperation, equality and deep hatred for the exploitation of man by man.

The class conscious workers see the need and the possibility to take the large-scale means of production out of the hands of the capitalist thieves and make them the common property of society—socialize them—in order to bring them into correspondence with the socialized character of labor, to develop society and distribute the wealth according to the needs of the people.

***Proletarian ideology...is based on the principles of cooperation, equality and deep hatred for the exploitation of man by man.***

Of course, not every member of the working class grasps the outlook of his class at any given time and not even the most class conscious worker is ideologically "100% pure proletarian." No one living in a society divided by classes, and especially one ruled by the bourgeoisie, can escape the influence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology.

This is why the working class must develop its own political party, made up of its most class conscious, dedicated and active members, who, through, struggle, criticism, and self-criticism, can collectively grasp and apply working class ideology — communism — in opposition to the ideology of the bourgeoisie (and other exploiting classes) and, on that basis, can act as the vanguard, or general staff, of the workers' struggle against the bourgeoisie, and all forms of exploitation.

The struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie arises from the basic contradiction of capitalist society—that production is highly socialized while the appropriation of the wealth produced is concentrated in a very few hands.

***This is why the working class must develop its own political party, made up of its most class conscious, dedicated and active members, who, through, struggle, criticism, and self-criticism, can collectively grasp and apply working class ideology—communism—in opposition to the ideology of the bourgeoisie.***

As capitalism develops, the contradiction becomes more and more intense. The road to resolving the contradiction can only be opened through proletarian revolution—the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the seizure of power by the proletariat, the smashing of the bourgeois state, and the establishment of a state ruled by the masses of working people in the interests of society as a whole.

*During the October Revolution in 1917 workers united in the struggle to overthrow their corrupt government and establish socialism.*

The Political Economy of Capitalism

# *Wages and Exploitation Under Capitalism: The Low Down*

*by Vachey Hammer*

Does hard work in our society "pay off?" Generally it does not. A recent study found that 63% of Americans do not have enough savings to cover an unexpected $500 expense. And between 2015 and 2017, the number of homeless Americans without nightly shelter increased by 10% according to the Associated Press.

The reason the majority of Americans are in very tough and tight situations is not because they are lazy. It is because of the way wages and work serve the interests of capitalists and not workers. A primary reason for our suffering is the form of exploitation that is practiced in our capitalist system.

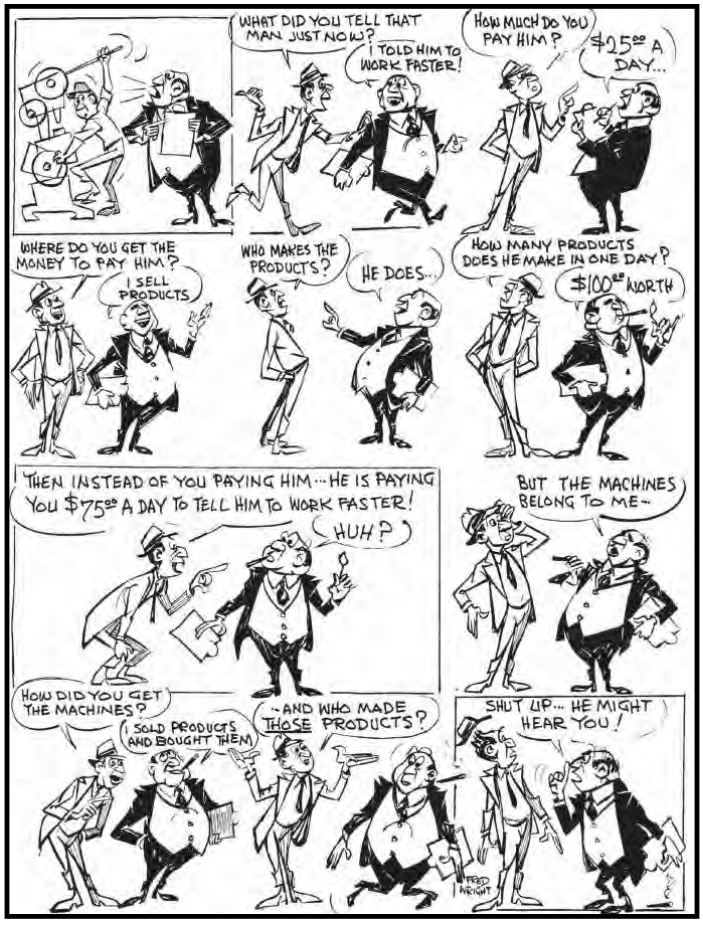
In our society, capitalists who own the vast majority of wealth and machinery exploit workers. But what does exploitation mean? Marxists understand exploitation as the robbing of workers of the value they create. What do workers create? They create the commodities that are used by society—everything from cars to candy. They use their brains and muscles to produce the material that allows the society to function from one day to another. If workers stopped working for just one day, the society would be reduced to a state of chaos.

Capitalists sometimes claim that their basic motivation is to create commodities that can be enjoyed by the people of the world. We know better. They exist so that they can parasitically earn a profit off the people's labor. The goods produced by a worker (called Bob in this article) are sold by capitalists to produce a profit.

Profit indicates that a capitalist is getting more from a finished product than he or she spent on all the inputs—including the machinery, parts, labor costs, and raw materials—that went into the product in the assembly period. What then is the source of this "profit?" Shouldn't the "value" of a good be equal to the cost of its component parts?

Actually, the source of value for capitalists ultimately is their exploitation of workers. The more they can squeeze out of us in a given length of time, the more capital they can possess. This is the hidden source of value behind the money hoarded and redirected by capitalists around the world. This money really represents the millions of past hours of sweat and blood exerted in labor by workers for the sake of the capitalist.

If workers are not paid for their profit they create (which goes to the capitalist) then what are the wages that workers receive? While workers are told that wages are for the value they contribute to a business in a day's work, wages are actually for the purpose of reproducing one's labor power.



Reproducing one's labor power may sound like a task a space alien or future robot may perform. But actually, it is not so glamorous. Reproducing one's labor power means doing what one needs to do to show up to work the next day—by getting food, clothes, and shelter. Bosses also need to give us *just enough* enough to one day reasonably be able to have children, and to produce the next generation of workers. It generally won't do for the capitalists to squeeze us workers out of existence. In that situation, the system would collapse.

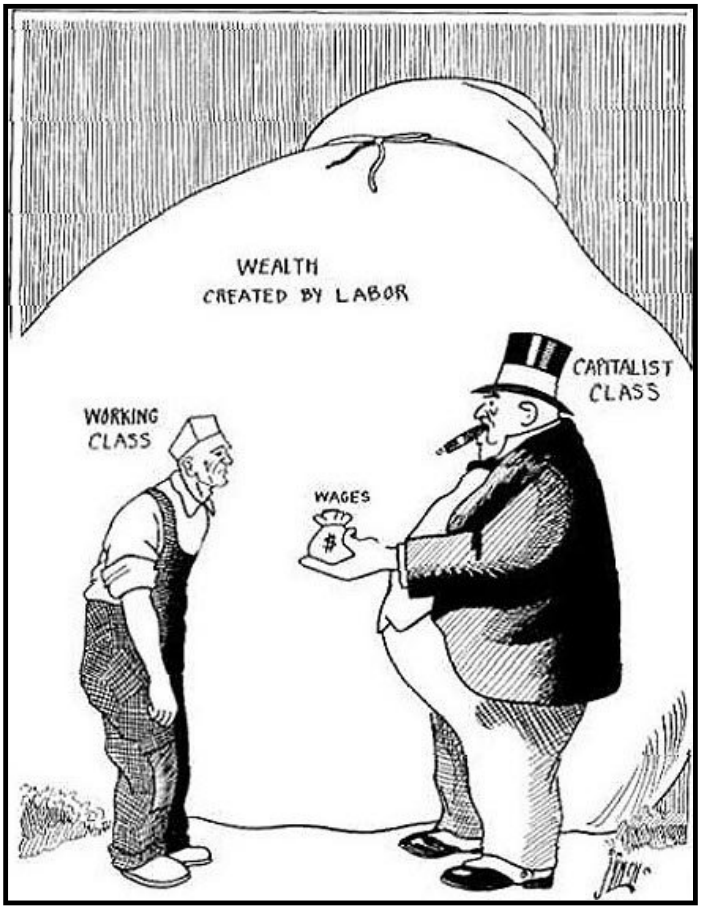
***The reason the majority of Americans are in very tough and tight situations is not because they are lazy. It is because of the way wages and work serve the interests of capitalists and not workers.***

However, capitalists aren't eager to give workers anymore than they have to in order to allow this "cycle of life" to continue. This makes life very hard for workers to say the least. The wages workers receive have nothing to do with the amount of wealth they produce for the capitalist. Under our capitalist mode of production—the basic form of economic organization in a society—capitalists have the legal right and privilege to extract this wealth from workers without punishment.

Over time, Bob will likely produce even more wealth for the capitalist in a day's work than before. This may be because of his increased ability, because of demands from supervisors, or because of improvements in the machinery that Bob works with.

***We are endlessly told that we are being paid for a day's work. In reality, we are being paid simply to have just enough to go to work again.***

However, the increasing productivity of workers like Bob does not result in his boss increasing his wages. In the United States, the productivity for workers has more than doubled since the 1970s, whereas hourly wages have not increased at all, when adjusted for inflation (the amount money is worth and can purchase). There is no connection between what we produce as workers, and what we receive. We are endlessly told that we are being paid for a day's work. In reality, we are being paid simply to have just enough to go to work again. And the entire capitalist system is based on the premise that the fruits of our labor should go to the capitalist.




*Under capitalism, the owners keep to themselves the vast majority of wealth created by labor. Only a revolution can overthrow them and have this wealth serve the people.*

Say that Bob has been working at the same job since the 1990s. Bob's productivity has doubled since the 1990s, while his real wages have remained the same. However, even if Bob's wages had doubled since the 1990s, he still would be being exploited, and exploited badly. On a typical job, workers' wages represent only a small percentage of the wealth that they create. Bob works for $10 an hour and produces $200 worth of goods each hour. If the combined cost of the factory, the raw materials, and other such things comes to $100 per hour, that means that Bob produces $100 in wealth every hour. However, instead of being paid $100 per hour, he only pockets $10 and the capitalist extracts the other $90 for himself.

This extracted wealth is called surplus value. This adds up pretty fast. If Bob works 8 hours per day, his boss is extracting $720 (8 hours x $90 of hourly surplus value) of wealth from Bob every day. Bob is left daily with only $80 ($10 x 8 hours on the job)—again just barely enough for his survival, and for the potential Bob Jr. who may come along down the line.


*Pictured: How capitalists respond when working people just "ask nicely" for a raise.*

In the meantime, Bob's bosses, like all capitalists in our system, have a good deal worked out for themselves. They can rob more and more from Bob by finding ways to get him to use "his" time more efficiently. They can do this by adding extra technology and machines that allow Bob to produce more things each hour. But of course they will not share the extra value produced with Bob. They will pocket it themselves. They can eliminate break times for Bob, thereby increasing the amount of value they are able to extract from him.

***The reality is that the ruling class is willing to share some of its profits if this means gaining a greater stranglehold over workers.***

There are many other tricks capitalists use to further exploit working people. They can ask or force Bob to work overtime. Even if Bob is paid time-and-a-half ($15 per hour) for the extra hours worked, he will not be being paid for the large amount of extra value created during this time for the capitalists. They would still pocket $85 for each hour of overtime. Capitalists see us as cash cows. The more they can keep us working, the better. They justify this by giving us the equivalent of animal feed—enough to get us to show up to be milked at the workplace the following day.

The capitalists can also ask Bob to leave work early without pay if there is not work for him to do. By doing so, they are making use of the misconception that we are being paid for the value we produce. By saying there is no more value to produce, they justify telling Bob to go home early, and paying him less for the day.

However, as we know now, there is no relationship between the value we produce as workers and what we are paid. We are being paid near the bare minimum to get us to show up to work and to recreate the conditions for our survival. So when the boss sends Bob home early, they really are cutting into Bob's ability to survive as a worker. These and other common tactics forced on us by bosses should be resisted and protested by workers as a group.

**Why We Can't Settle for a Hand-Out**

If Bob's wages had "kept track" with productivity and doubled since the 1970s, he would be making $20 an hour. However, his boss would still be taking home the lion share of wealth in that case, still, $1440 of surplus value each day (8 hours x $180 of surplus value), compared to $160 for Bob. From the perspective of revolutionaries, this wage increase could be a step forward, but only if it is a step on the road towards the overthrow of Bob's boss, and the overthrow of all capitalists. Only in this way can the wealth that workers produce be shared by all the working people, and not extracted for the sake of the bloodsucking ruling class.

The reality is that the ruling class is willing to share some of its profits if this means gaining a greater stranglehold over workers. Given this, we need guard against attempts to buy us off with a few crumbs. Isn't sharing contrary to the world view of the ruling class? Won't they fight tooth and nail to not lose hold of any of their capital? On one hand, they will.

However capitalists are even more desperate to maintain their position as capitalists and to keep us workers "in our place." In order to keep this whole system going, this system for exploiting workers must remain the rule of the

**DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN**

land. If workers start to realize they are being exploited, and are only making cents for every dollar of value that they create, the control the capitalists have over us starts to weaken. People will be more likely to rise up, and demand an end to this murderous system.

The best way for the capitalists to prevent this is to keep workers divided. If workers start to organize, management will (and often has) tried to "throw them a bone" or a few crumbs from their pockets. Even if this means a $10 an hour increase, for Bob, this is money well spent by bosses if it keeps Bob and other workers from talking. Talking about what? Talking about the hundreds of dollars of wealth extracted every hour by the capitalist from their hands. Or talking about the similarity of Bob's situation with that of most other workers in the country, and even in the world. When people realize the common nature of their exploitation, they can see the potential and the need to struggle together.

With every measly hand-out used to buy us off in a struggle, capitalists will try their hardest to convince us that the hand-out means that "management is fair" and that there is "nothing to talk about." However, there is no such thing as a fairness under capitalism. In a system built on the sweat and blood of exploitation, the only fair response is struggle to completely overthrow the capitalist class.

We are going to leave the example of working conditions under capitalism now to take a look at where this system could go after a revolution.

***In a system built on the sweat and blood of exploitation, the only fair response is struggle to completely overthrow the capitalist class.***

**How Work Changes in a Revolutionary Society**

After a revolutionary struggle eventually overthrows the U.S. capitalist class, the people will be able to establish a system of socialism—a transitory system between capitalism and the classless society known as communism. Communism is a society where capitalists, capitalist exploitation, and related forms of oppression no longer exist. Under communism there will be no classes, no poor people forced to labor for the profit of the rich; instead people will work together for the common good of all of humanity.

Under socialism, as part of the transition to communism, capitalist forms of exploitation


*Capitalists are well aware that workers thinking at work is very dangerous.*

will be methodically abolished. Instead, workers will democratically decide how to run stores, factories, and society at large. They will be able to decide how the fruit of their collective labor can best be used for the people as opposed to serving an exploiting capitalist class.

With socialism the exploitation of man by man will become prohibited by society, as opposed to capitalism, where it is upheld as the central principle of society. Under capitalism, the massive accumulation of wealth by capitalist tycoons—at the expense of the vast majority of humanity—is often celebrated as the highest goal in life, whereas in socialism the focus is on the development of society to serve the needs of the people, instead of the narrow interests of a handful of capitalists.

At first, under socialism, it is likely that people will receive compensation for the amount of time they work. They will likely receive a share of the wealth they produced during the period of time worked. This is opposed to under capitalism where workers are paid merely enough to return to work the next day, and where capitalists earn income by doing nothing spare being the official "owner" or "managers" of capital.

***Communism is a society where capitalists, capitalist exploitation, and related forms of oppression no longer exists. Under communism there will be no classes, no poor people forced to labor for the profit of the rich; instead people will work together for the common good of all of humanity.***

*During the Cultural Revolution in China workers from a generator factory take time out of the work day to study revolutionary theory and discuss ideas collectively.*

Over time, the society will emphasize a central principle of communism—that people will contribute to the society the abilities that they have, and will receive from the society what they need. This is expressed in the communist slogan "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs."

Aspects of both of these principles—of receiving a share of goods produced based on time worked, and the principle of "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs" were practiced to varying degrees during the revolutionary society in China (from 1949 until 1976), and the Soviet Union (from 1917 until about 1953), before the revolutionary states were overthrown by pro-capitalist counter-revolutionaries.

***Over time, the society will emphasize a central principle of communism—that people will contribute to the society the abilities that they have, and will receive from the society what they need.***

Before being overthrown, the economic transformations in revolutionary societies had enormous implications for how society was organized. Because capitalists were no longer able to squeeze workers at the work place, working people could plan the way they used their time. While in our system, tremendous energy is devoted to keeping working people in line and "on task"—to produce value for capitalists—in a socialist society the working people instead decide what it makes sense to spend time on. They could, and in revolutionary societies did, decide that society has too much of certain commodities, and needs more of something else. In addition, they could decide that rather than producing things, work is needed to help mobilize struggles in society to further wipe out capitalist practices and related capitalist ideas.

These decisions would not be individual decisions made on a whim, but rather the result of collective discussions and debates between groups of people about the best ways to advance the larger struggle. This sort of society can only exist in a true people's democracy, as opposed to our fake democracy, where we only have the "right" to vote for one of a handful of representatives of the rich, known as politicians.

***In our current society, there is more than enough wealth in the world for everyone to eat their fill and to have shelter. However, many go hungry and homeless because the wealth of the society is not owned by the people but by a handful of capitalists.***

Wouldn't such a society suffer from tremendous shortages if people had all this freedom? Actually, in our current society, there is more than enough wealth in the world for everyone to eat their fill and to have shelter. However, many go hungry and homeless because the wealth of the society is not owned by the people but by a handful of capitalists. If working people had control of society, they would work by the principle of cooperation rather than exploitation. A lot more would be produced by and shared with the people than in our capitalist present.

*Miners in revolutionary China take a break from work to study revolutionary theory and history.*

In our society, the principle of competition is dominant even in finding work. Capitalists make us workers compete with one another to get basic jobs. We know if we don't "win" such competitions, we could become unemployed or even homeless. Hence in capitalist society the "privilege" to be employed requires that others be "unemployed"—otherwise being employed wouldn't be a "privilege." Historically, capitalism has always required a large unemployed population to function. This allows bosses to keep wages low, and allows them to start and end businesses without having to worry where new workers will come from, or where their workers will go after being laid off. In a socialist society in contrast, employment for everyone is a basic principle.

***Capitalists make us workers compete with one another to get basic jobs. We know if we don't "win" such competitions, we could become unemployed or even homeless.***

In addition, a socialist and communist system would be far more productive. Have you ever worked at a job where the boss didn't let you do a simple task, not because you did not know how to do it, but because he or she didn't "trust" you to do it? U.S. workplaces are full of such examples.

The way we work is designed to maintain the position of authority of various supervisors on one hand, but ultimately, to maintain the authority of the boss to pocket the profits we produce. Supervisors are generally the loyal administrators for the bosses and work to keep things "in line." They make sure that workers are doing the work in a profitable way, discipline those who step out of line, and are always on the lookout for those who are questioning the status-quo and the injustice of the system of capitalist exploitation.

Our system demands that workers efficiently create commodities. It also demands that the ruling class control and possess the value we create. These two demands often contradict one another. When they do, they system generally always does what is "safer" for ownership, even if this results in less productivity. For instance, it generally would be far more efficient if workplaces allowed workers full freedom to discuss how to work together more efficiently and make changes to the way production is carried out. This could allow the capitalist to earn more profit.

*Amazon factories are typical examples of capitalist workplaces, which are designed to maximize profit and supervision of workers.*

However, capitalists are afraid if workers are given too loose of a leash, that they will also talk about the unfairness of their wages, and of the larger system of exploitation altogether. They would likely start to organize together for their interests. Rather than risking this possibility, capitalists would rather give workers very little control in their businesses. The purpose of the capitalist system is to create capital for capitalists, at the expense of the lives of the workers. In our system, we give capitalists our time. Revolutionaries declare that the people must "seize the time"—all time, not just that at the workplace which we cannot "seize" right away—and make use of it to organize the struggle to create a better world.

***The way we work is designed to maintain the position of authority of various supervisors on one hand, but ultimately, to maintain the authority of the boss to pocket the profits we produce.***

After overthrowing capitalist classes in the past, workers literally "seized the time." In revolutionary China for example, in the 1960s workers stopped "clocking in and out" when arriving and departing factories in Shanghai. Rather than concentrating their efforts on discipline, they decided that people could trust one another on such matters. After-all, people were showing up to work not to produce wealth for capitalists, but instead to contribute to their own society, to the struggle to further eliminate oppression and exploitation, and to support revolutionary struggles internationally.


*A poster from the revolutionary period in China calling for workers of the world to unite. During this period the Chinese people worked tirelessly to support revolutionaries around the world.*

These aims were in the interests of the people themselves, so they could be trusted to do their part at work. So rather than focusing on clocking in—and other forms of supervision which are necessary under capitalism where working people have to be coerced into working to make the capitalists wealthier—they focused on how to improve the operation of the factories themselves. They had mass meetings to decide different ways to organize their factories, and how to cooperate with other factories.

***Even before overthrowing the capitalists, we must seize the time to organize the people, rather than waiting to retire, or waiting forever until the system is ready to "hear us out."***

When administrators misunderstood their conditions, rather than the administrators blaming the workers, the workers criticized the administrators through the use of posters and meetings. They demanded that the administrators work alongside them. The administrators generally agreed. These administrators were not like managers in capitalist society. In socialist society, the economy was run for the interests of the common people. As a result the administrators were expected to serve the people, and they could be criticized or replaced by the people if necessary.

Even before overthrowing the capitalists, we must seize the time to organize the people, rather than waiting to retire, or waiting forever until the system is ready to "hear us out." It is for these reasons that "seize the time" was a popular slogan used by the Black Panthers.

**The History of Exploitation in Class Society**

Capitalist exploitation is not the only form of exploitation that has existed in human society. It is one of several modes of production that has existed in class society. Previously societies existed based around slave and also feudal exploitation. However, importantly, human society existed for thousands and thousands of years before the rise of class society. During this time people lived in small communities where there was no ruling class, and where there was relative equality between all people.

***With the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class, we will be able to forge a society which truly serves the needs of the people rather than the exploiters.***

As Marx's comrade Engels said, since the rise of class society, "every step forward is also relatively a step backward, in which prosperity and development for some is won through the misery and frustration of others." Under capitalism however, workers work closely with one another, and huge surpluses are produced compared to previous periods of human history. As a result, with the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class, we will be able to forge a society which truly serves the needs of the people rather than the exploiters. Exploitation, which has existed since the rise of class society, needs to be thrown out for good. The revolutionary struggle needed to take out this trash will be hard work. However it is work that truly will "pay off."

Internationalism

# *Professor G.N. Saibaba and the Revolutionary Movement in India*

*by Nadia*

**G.N. Saibaba, a progressive intellectual and political activist in India, was arrested on trumped-up charges in 2014 and given a life sentence in 2017. Since then his health has declined rapidly in jail, where he has languished for years without any medical care. Meanwhile, the Indian government has deepened its attacks on progressive and revolutionary voices across India, arresting several comrades and friends of G.N. Saibaba. His life story helps to expose the wider Indian social situation, and his history of activism shows the rich and inspiring history of people's resistance in India. An international movement for the release of G.N. Saibaba has developed, demanding an end to attacks on democratic rights and freedoms in India, and the release of all political prisoners.**

On May 9th, 2014 the police in Dehli, India abducted a wheelchair-bound professor of English literature by the name of G.N. Saibaba. He was taken by the police as he went about his day, and his abduction was so sudden that his wife did not know what happened. She even went to the police station to register a missing persons report when he didn't turn up. Saibaba was brought before a court, and was charged with several violations of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), a draconian law which the Indian government has been using to frame activists, human rights lawyers, poets, and progressive intellectuals like Saibaba as terrorists.

*Professor Saibaba (center, in wheelchair) being arrested by nine Indian police and Army officials.*

Saibaba's arrest has come as part of a broader crackdown by the Indian state on progressive people who speak out against the government. In the years since his arrest many more people have been arrested and charged under the same law, the UAPA. That this law itself exists clarifies how far the Indian government will go to silence progressive voices and lock up those who organize for the people. The law essentially allows the police to arrest anyone and hold them for up to 90 days without charging them with any crime. It also specifies ridiculously small burdens of proof for showing that someone is a member of an illegal organization or group, and mandates harsh jail terms for it.

Often all that is needed to lock someone away for life is the testimony of a few well-coached police officers. In India, where the police are deep in the pockets of mining corporations, big manufacturing firms, and local landlords in

**This section of *Red Star* focuses on contemporary political struggles around the world. As revolutionaries it is our internationalist responsibility to work to understand and support the ongoing revolutionary movements around the world. In doing so we learn valuable lessons and strengthen the ties between the oppressed and exploited masses of all countries.**


*Members of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF) protest for Saibaba's release from prison. Saibaba was the joint-secretary of the RDF before his imprisonment.*

the countryside, UAPA has routinely been used to "deal with" anyone who speaks out against brutal, anti-people development projects and terrible working conditions. Activists who work to unify the people in resistance to their oppressors, or who support the people's struggle through writing and advocacy are frequently targeted. In this context, Saibaba's arrest wasn't in connection with any particular crime or violation of the UAPA, but was instead a form of retaliation for his lifetime of work standing with the people against their oppressors.

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As in the U.S. and in countless other countries around the world, the Indian government reserves some of its very worst treatment for imprisoned progressive activists and revolutionaries. Saibaba's time in prison has been marked by exceptional cruelty on the part of his jailers. Right after his arrest his wheelchair was taken from him and broken by the police, who then housed him on the first floor of a two-story jail. The only bathroom for the whole cell block was on the second floor, and there was no elevator, so he was forced to rely on the help of other inmates to use the bathroom.

Inside his cell, he was forced to crawl around. He has also been denied necessary medical attention for years now. In a particularly sick and twisted episode, a judge finally granted Saibaba bail to seek medical treatment, following a long campaign by his friends and comrades to get him out. Saibaba was finally able to visit a doctor, and scheduled an emergency surgery he needed for his gallbladder. Just before he was to get the surgery, the court declared him guilty and sentenced him to life in prison, yanking away the chance to get the medical care he had been fighting for three years to access.

***Saibaba grew up in a poor peasant family in the countryside in a neighborhood mainly inhabited by manual scavengers. Manual scavengers clean up other people's excrement for a living, usually with their bare hands.***

Saibaba suffers from a variety of medical issues which are currently life-threatening. When he was a child he contracted Polio which left him paralyzed from the waist down, and he has used a wheelchair to get around for his entire adult life. Complications from polio have caused many other health problems for him, including gall bladder and kidney stones, high blood pressure, and a heart condition. Many of these issues have gotten much worse while he has been in prison. In 2017, Saibaba's wife, Vasantha, said that he was also suffering from acute pancreatitis, and that prison authorities were refusing to allow him to have surgery and denying him access to medicines. He has also lost most of the use of his left arm since being locked up.

Professor Saibaba contracted Polio when he was five years old. Saibaba grew up in a poor peasant family in the countryside in a neighborhood mainly inhabited by manual scavengers. Manual scavengers clean up other people's excrement, usually with their bare hands, for a living. This is a relatively common occupation in India, where the government's official statistics recorded over a hundred thousand households engaged in the work for a living in 2011.

The government statistics are most likely a massive underestimate, since the inadequate and poorly maintained sewer systems in several Indian cities are kept running by thousands of manual scavengers. They work in brutal and dangerous conditions, sometimes climbing into sewers to

unclog them or removing human excrement from latrines by hand. The work is also dangerous because of the potential for the transmission of disease. Many diseases, including Polio, are transmitted via contact with the feces of infected people. Manual scavengers often work without any protective equipment, and so they risk infecting themselves as well as their friends and family.

Manual scavenging, like several other dangerous and undesirable jobs in India, is not a job most people choose to work. Manual scavenging is a hereditary job, which is enforced by the caste system in India. In large parts of the country the caste system dictates who people can marry, where they can live, what jobs they can hold, and even things like which side of the street they can walk on. Children inherit the caste of their parents, and intermarriage between people of different castes is violently opposed. Although caste and caste-based discrimination is outlawed in India, it persists to this day, and murders or assaults committed against those who break the rigid confining rules of the caste system are common.

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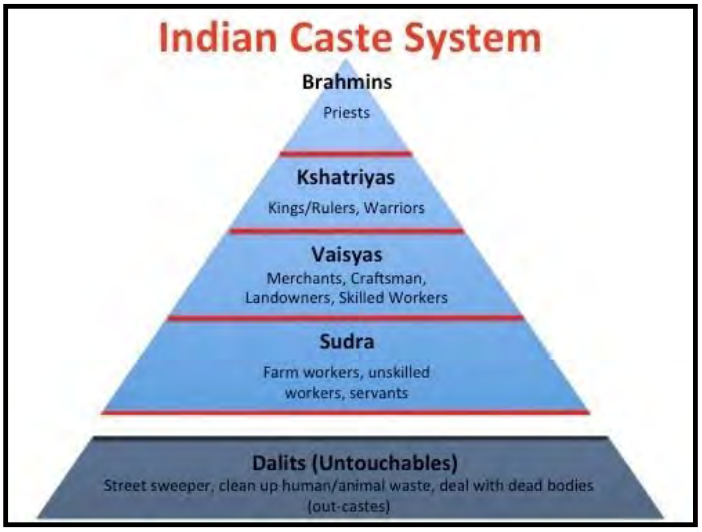
In most places in India the caste system is divided into four tiers called Varnas which are arranged in a hierarchy. The highest Varna is the Brahmin caste which traditionally occupies the role of priests. Next is Kshatriyas, the warrior caste, followed by Vaishyas, the merchant class, and finally Shudras, the servant/peasant class.

There are also people who are not part of the four Varnas, who are called Dalits. Dalits occupy the lowest rung in society and inherit the worst position in the division of labor dictated by the caste system, such as manual scavenging or performing cremations. Discrimination based on these divisions is officially outlawed in India, and a program similar to affirmative action, called reservation, was created in 1950 to provide jobs and educational opportunities for lower-caste people. However, reservation has never truly addressed the roots causes of caste oppression, and much like the half-hearted affirmative action initiatives here in the U.S., it has been continually attacked and weakened since its inception.




*The caste system in India assigns people their profession based on the caste of their parents and is used to justify segregation and the horrendous oppression of Dalits.*

For centuries Brahmins and others at the top of the caste pyramid have enjoyed massive privileges because of their position, and they have defended their caste-privileges with a reign of terror whenever lower-caste people have stood up and demanded equal treatment. It is common for those who marry into another caste, whether higher or lower, to be attacked and even killed. Dalits are commonly lynched all across India for offenses as trivial as walking on a path designated for Brahmin use only or drinking from a Brahmin-only well.

This violence is often carried out by mobs of right-wing supporters of several Hindu-fascist organizations in India which are commonly referred to as Hindutva groups.

***[The BJP] is the electoral party of a larger Hindu-fascist organization called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which was founded in the 1920's and explicitly modeled itself on the Nazi party.***

The current ruling party in India is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It is the electoral party of a larger Hindu-fascist organization called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which was founded in the 1920's and explicitly modeled itself on the Nazi party. M.S. Golwalker was a leading member of the RSS for many years. He once said that the genocide carried out by the Nazis in Europe during World War II was "a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by,"

*During the 2002 Gujarat Massacre, the BJP sponsored Hindu-fascist groups who attacked Muslims and Dalits thoroughout the Indian state of Gujarat.*

and he supported violently expelling or exterminating all Muslims and non-Hindus from India. The BJP has a long history of inciting mob violence against Dalits and Muslims as a part of bolstering its fascist narrative that outside "invaders" are the cause of all problems in contemporary India.

Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India, is a member of the BJP. He was the chief minister of the state of Gujarat in 2002 when a huge brutal anti-Muslim pogrom took place across the state. More than 2,000 people were killed by mobs of right-wing Hindutva thugs. Many women were raped, Muslim homes and businesses were torched, and more than 150,000 people were displaced. In several cases women were gang raped by dozens of men before being cut into pieces and burned beyond recognition. Narendra Modi encouraged and helped to spark the violence, and the police in many areas helped the Hindutva forces by providing them with names and addresses of Muslims. After the pogrom was over, Modi, the police, and the courts in Gujarat worked to keep the people responsible for the violence from being convicted.

Episodes of extreme fascist violence like this are disturbingly common in India. Ruling parties like the BJP have been very successful at promoting fascist ideas among a section of the disaffected urban petty-bourgeoisie, whose career and economic realities have often not lived up to their expectations. The reasons for this are complicated, but a big part of it is that a huge section of the profits made in India are owned by foreign corporations, and so they leave the country and are deposited in the bank accounts of British and American capitalists.

This reduces the share of the profits which would go to the ruling class in India, and to petty-bourgeois functionaries, engineers, doctors, and so on. The BJP is actually actively working to exacerbate this situation by making it easier for foreign capital to enter the country. They have also undermined Indian industries and agriculture in order to make way for foreign imports from countries like the U.S. and Canada.

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However, to maintain their electoral power they have blamed India's economic problems on Muslims and stoked up right-wing Hindu-chauvinist tendencies. They hope that doing so will convince a large section of the Indian population that their enemies are the Muslims, Dalits, revolutionaries, and progressive intellectuals. This is part of their larger effort to keep the Indian people from realizing that their true enemies are the Indian ruling class and foreign imperialists.

For the ruling class in India, any form of criticism is a liability if it clearly states the causes of poverty and misery in the country. If the masses of people have clarity about the real roots of their problems they will rise up and destroy the ruling class which chains them down under the twin oppressive forces of feudalism and imperialist domination. Because of this danger, the government in India has maintained a strict intolerance for criticism and dissent for decades. Laws like the previously-mentioned UAPA have

*Members of the BJP hold up daggers during a rally.*

been used for decades to stifle dissent and criticism and to ban organizations and publications which speak out about the need for the people to come together and rebel against their oppressors.

Although suppression of democratic rights and dissent has always been a feature of the Indian state, the BJP government has broadened and deepened its attacks on democratic rights even further than previous regimes. Recent waves of arrests have even included poets, professors, and human rights lawyers.

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The author and political figure Arundhati Roy faced a contempt of court case for simply publishing an article calling for bail for G.N. Saibaba before he was convicted. Many progressive and revolutionary publications are outright banned in India, and police have brutally attacked people who publish information that speaks favorably of the revolutionary movement. Although India bills itself as the "world's largest democracy," it is in fact a very repressive country and has been since its "independence" from the British in 1947.

In this kind of environment, Saibaba spoke out frequently, published articles, gave speeches, and traveled internationally to raise support for people's struggles in India. In a repressive and undemocratic country like India, Saibaba and

*Arundhati Roy (left) meets with Maoist revolutionaries in India to discuss their movement. Her travels with them were published in her book "Walking With the Comrades." Most of the Maoists are advisasis.*


*The cover of a 2015 edition of Outlook India with a photo depicting Saibaba's arrest.*

many others have taken on this work knowing full well that they will likely face time in prison, or worse, for their activism. In her article about Saibaba, *Professor P.O.W.*, Arundhati Roy said that it was a matter of common knowledge in their circle that Saibaba would be arrested in the months leading up to his arrest. For Saibaba, the struggle of the Indian people for democracy, for an end to subjugation to the interests of foreign capitalists, and against oppression was more important than his own personal safety. So, although he had a chance to try to flee the country he stayed put and kept working for the people.

Saibaba ended up in the cross-hairs of the Indian government because the work he was doing sought to bring the most oppressed and exploited people in the country together to struggle in common. He was a joint-secretary of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), an all-India organization which aims to unify the people in the struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation in India. This means Dalit struggles against upper-caste oppressors, workers struggles in the cities of India, peasant struggles against oppressive landlords, struggles for democratic rights and freedoms, and more.

*Thousands of members of Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh (CMAS) (Association of Peasants, Bonded Labours and the Tribal) protest in Odisha against displacement.*

The ruling class in India is very afraid of people linking together different struggles, precisely because if people remain divided it is easier for the ruling class to maintain their rule. One struggle in particular which the RDF seeks to unite with and support is the struggle of the Adivasis, indigenous people who live in the jungles of India. They have been struggling for generations to maintain control over their land, their resources, and to resist attempts to exterminate them and their way of life.

The Adivasis are a large group of tribes and peoples, who speak many different languages. Across all of India there are over a hundred million Adivasis. They live in large numbers in the jungles of eastern India, where for the most part, they live a very meager existence. They are some of the very poorest people in the whole of India, and in some areas they engage in hunter-gatherer type foraging to get most of their food.

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The Adivasis often live in small villages and the areas where they live receive little to no investment from the government in terms of schools, roads, or electricity. The lack of investment and the low level of production in the Adivasi communities, means that people do not live very long lives, and health problems are very common. Often people have difficulties getting access to basic medicines, and many sanitary and public health resources—which we take for granted in the U.S.—are absent. But in addition to these serious difficulties, the Adivasi communities have a long tradition of both egalitarian communal living and strong resistance against efforts to conquer and subjugate them.

***The Adivasis carried out many revolts and rebellions against British rule, and for that reason some Adivasi areas never fell under the control of the British when they were colonizing India.***

The Adivasis carried out many revolts and rebellions against British rule, and for that reason some Adivasi areas never fell under the control of the British when they were colonizing India. One of the largest Adivasi rebellions was the Bhumkal (literally "when the earth shook") rebellion in 1910, which shook the foundations of British rule in the Bastar region of the state of Chhattisgarh.

Adivasis revolted after the British decided to revoke their access to the forest, turning it from the communal property of the tribes into the private property of the British colonial state. This change made the forest produce and timber the exclusive private property of a handful of contractors, thus depriving the Adivasis of their lands and livelihood.

*Many Adivasis defend their villages from the police and army raids with bows and arrows and other such weapons.*

For the Adivasis, the forest was their source of food, their living area, the location of their community, and their land. They mounted a massive resistance to the British plans to drive them from the forest. A big reason for the success of their rebellion was that they started off by targeting the traitors in their community and other Indian-born officials in the British government. This helped them to unify and oppose those within their community who would have sold the movement out and spied for the British colonists. Eventually, the rebellion was defeated, and many of the leadership were arrested and tortured by the British colonialists. Although the Bhumkal rebellion was defeated, many Adivasis still celebrate its legacy today, as a symbol of their enduring resistance against those who would steal their land and render them homeless beggars.

Today the British have officially left India, but the Adivasis are still under attack. Today the enemy is not primarily after the wood and other resources of the forests, but the rich mineral deposits which lie underneath them. Many of the forests of eastern India have some of the richest untapped mineral reserves in the world, with billions of dollars worth of bauxite, uranium, nickel, and more lying underneath the jungles where the Adivasis live.

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The Indian government and big mining corporations desperately want to get access to these minerals, and they will stop at nothing to make it happen. Officially, the Indian constitution specifies that the Adivasis have the sole right to decide what happens on their land, and any mining on Adivasi land would need to be done with their full agreement and on their terms. In reality, the treaties and agreements that the government has made with the Adivasis are almost never respected, except in the most token of gestures.

In many areas the mineral rights for deposits of bauxite, uranium, and iron are sold to foreign mining conglomerates without even consulting or informing the Adivasi populations who live on the land. The police and the Indian Army then work with the corporations to kick the Adivasis out, so that the company can get to work


*Operation Green Hunt is the code name of the Indian State's war on its people, in particular the Adivasis who live on mineral rich land.*

clear-cutting the jungle and ripping minerals from the ground. In areas where this has happened it has been a complete disaster for the people. The police terrorize the people to force them from the land. People are beaten with sticks, women are raped and harassed, people have their houses burned down, and, frequently, those who dare to resist are "made into an example" and executed.

Once they have been kicked off the land, the only option people have is to move and live in the slums of one of India's huge cities. Around Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Hyderabad there are huge slums with very few jobs available. There is a lot of unemployment, and many people who live in deep poverty, trying to just scrape by through informal work here and there. The Indian government has made it a goal to move as much of the population to the cities as possible, as part of their efforts to remove Adivasis and other rural populations from their land. The former Home Minister of India, P. Chidambaram, once said that "My vision is to get 85% of India into cities." Currently around 70% of the population lives in the countryside. Given the ongoing efforts to displace people and the desperate conditions of life in India's cities, this amounts to a genocidal plan.

When the government, the police, and big corporations come to the jungles to attack the Adivasis, the people know exactly what they will have to endure if they are displaced from their land. While they are by no means rich in their


*Adviasis of the Kondh people protest against the scheme by the Vedanta company and the Indian governemnt to mine the Niyamgiri hills.*

current situation—living in poverty off the produce of the jungle and basic agricultural production—their situation would be much worse if they were displaced to the slums. For these and other reasons the Adivasis have mounted strong resistance to efforts by the government and corporations to displace them from the land.

In the state of Odisha, in the Niyamgiri hills, many Adivasis came together to resist a plan by the Indian mining giant Vedanta, who wanted to mine the rich bauxite which lay beneath their land. The state supported the plan initially, and the policemen began to attack and harass the Adivasis to try and get them to accept the plan.

***The police and other goons of the Vedanta corporation doubled down on their attacks of the people, but because of the strength of the people's resistance the Indian supreme court was ultimately forced to rule against the mining project.***

But they refused, and they struggled against the plan both in the courts and through protests and demonstrations. The police and other goons of the Vedanta corporation doubled down on their attacks of the people, but because of the strength of the people's resistance the Indian supreme court was ultimately forced to rule against the mining project. The people of Niyamgiri are still living on their land, and the success of their struggle is celebrated throughout India.

Saibaba, along with other members of the Revolutionary Democratic Front, saw the incredible importance of the Adivasi struggles against displacement and against anti-people, capitalist development projects. He traveled extensively in the Adivasi areas, meeting and talking with the people. He said once in an interview, "I have been to almost every Adivasi district. It wasn't that difficult for a physically challenged person like me. The Adivasis took me on their shoulders and walked me up to the hilly forests."

Saibaba and the RDF coordinated work to expose the government's attacks on Adivasis, and the stop-at-nothing campaign to kick them off of their land and steal their resources. This campaign accelerated in 2009, when the government launched "Operation Green Hunt," which sent over 100,000 troops into the jungles of Bastar to attack the people's resistance. Saibaba and the RDF worked tirelessly to oppose this outrageous attack on the people.

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Operation Green Hunt began in 2009, and although at times it has been known by other names, it is still ongoing. Today, the government has sent even more soldiers, with over 300,000 troops deployed to the jungles. They use helicopters, drones, high-powered rifles, and sophisticated surveillance equipment to attack the people. The Indian government isn't just launching these kinds of blatant, brutal attacks on the people because Adivasis are opposed to mining projects. They also want to snuff out the revolutionary movement, which has been growing in strength for decades in the jungles, and which has the possibility of spreading all over the whole of India.

This represents a huge threat for the Indian ruling class, because the reality is that the masses of India are brutally oppressed and have been for generations. If the revolutionary movement spreads across the whole country, it will inspire Dalits, Adivasis, oppressed nationalities, women, Muslims, and all the poor and oppressed people of India to come together. The ruling-class oppressors will be swept away and overcome, and the people of India will decide their destiny instead.

The revolutionary movement has been developing in India, through a series of advances and setbacks, for the past 50 years. It began in 1967, with a revolt in the village of Naxalbari, in the state of West Bengal. Peasants formed armed bands, seized land from a landlord, and began to work the land themselves. The revolt quickly spread to nearby areas, and peasant committees were formed to carry out seizures of grain and land from landlords.

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From this rebellion a larger movement developed. Several members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), CPI(M), supported the peasants for their revolutionary actions and heroic struggle against the landlords. That party, however, had long since given up the revolutionary struggle, and resigned itself to just competing in elections. Those who disagreed with this path, and supported the new way forward charted in Naxalbari, were expelled from CPI(M). They went on to carry forward the revolutionary path blazed by the revolt in Naxalbari, and worked to rouse the peasant masses.

Since Naxalbari, many different groups of revolutionaries have carried on armed struggle in the countryside. Many of these groups were able to make substantial gains, but the revolutionary movement was somewhat limited because it was fragmented into a number of different organizations. These limitations meant that there was not an organization capable of coordinating and organizing revolutionary activity across a large part of the country. However, in 2004 this changed when the two largest Maoist groups merged to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The organization has continued to grow since its founding, and it is now carrying on the revolutionary struggle against the Indian government in a large part of India, sometimes referred to as the "Red Corridor."

*Members of the People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) celebrate the 2004 founding of the Communist Party of India (Maoist).*

*Charu Mazumdar, one of the revolutionaries who led the Naxalbari uprising in 1967. He was killed by the Indian police while in jail in 1972.*

The revolution in India is rural and agrarian, a reflection of the conditions of life for most of the population. In many rural areas the Indian government has relatively little presence or influence. This is especially true in the Adivasi areas, where there is often no development or state presence at all. The weakness of the government in the countryside means that it is possible to set up independent forms of political power, outside of the control of the Indian state.

*The Naxals hold large-scale celebrations and meetings in which they perform plays, skits, dances, and songs about the revolutionary movement.*

In many of the Adivasi areas People's governments, called Janatana Sarkars, have been formed. They set up services for the people, like medical care and education, work to coordinate village militias to defend against attacks by the police and army, and they plan public works projects to increase the people's standard of living.

In addition to leading the formation of the People's Governments, the CPI (Maoist) has also led an armed resistance against the reactionary attacks launched by the Indian state. The political activities going on in the jungles of India have put the Adivasis and their supporters in the cross-hairs of the Indian government. The government has launched Operation Green Hunt and similar operations to attempt to destroy the example which shows to the masses all across India that it is possible not only to resist, but to win.

The People's Liberation Guerilla Army, led by the CPI (Maoist), has not only weathered the onslaught of Operation Green Hunt, but has often won major victories against the reactionary forces. For the ruling class in India this is a very dangerous thing. The revolutionary movement has forcibly stopped some of their plans for mining and other development, which enrages them. But the primary danger for them is not lost profits, but being overthrown and dragged from power. If the masses all over India start to see that they too can come together, struggle against their oppressors, and win, the ruling class in India will be in for a rude wake-up call.

The strength and size of the revolutionary movement in India can be difficult for us in the U.S. to appreciate. It has been growing for fifty years, and there is a rich history of revolutionary struggle going back for at least a hundred years before that. The movement is primarily based in the Adivasi areas, among the poorest sections of the Indian population, but the echoes of the revolutionary struggle there are being felt all throughout India. In Dalit struggles against caste-based oppression and prejudice, in Muslim struggles against Hindu-fascism, and in workers' struggles in the cities of India, the revolutionary movement brewing in the countryside is making itself heard.

The reactionary rulers of India, the capitalists and swindlers, are terrified at the possibility of what is developing under their noses. So they have doubled, and then tripled, their attacks on the people, on basic democratic rights, and on dissent. In this sense, G.N. Saibaba's arrest for protesting against Operation Green Hunt and Operation Green Hunt itself are part of the same reactionary program.

***The People's Liberation Guerilla Army, led by the CPI (Maoist), has not only weathered the onslaught of Operation Green Hunt, but has often won major victories against the reactionary forces.***

Here in the U.S. it is our internationalist responsibility to support the revolutionary movement in India, and to oppose the Indian government's attacks on basic democratic rights and freedoms. This is especially true given the support that the U.S. government provides to the Indian government. The U.S. sells India surveillance drones and other military hardware that the Indian government uses to attack its our people. The U.S. has also provided counterintelligence training to the Indian police and armed forces. Many U.S. corporations also do business in India, and brutally exploit the impoverished Indian masses. The Indian masses are fighting the same fight that we too are fighting: for a world free from exploitation and oppression. Their struggle should also inspire us here to develop ways to resist oppression and exploitation, and to fight back and win. We should extend our solidarity and our support to their struggle, just as they surely would to ours.

**Long live the Indian Revolution!**
**Free G.N. Saibaba!**
**Stop attacks on democratic rights and political dissent in India!**

Letter to the Editor

# *Conversation and Routine: On Workplace Organizing*

*by C.R.*

I live and work in an ocean side town that used to once be a vibrant fishing and industrial center. Now most of that is gone, and a majority of the economy caters to visiting tourists who want to stroll down the boardwalk and visit small food, gift, and entertainment shops. That is where I work, and where I'm trying to organize. Most of these shops here are service oriented and have fewer than 30 employees. When trying to unite the people in struggle, it is essential to have a large number of people "in the loop." In previous generations, more people worked in large factories. With workers now more dispersed in service sector jobs, we still have to find a way to unite people. I have tried to develop an approach to organizing that addresses the particular nature of the situation around me. It is probably relevant to other situations in the United States. This approach centers on a conversation and a routine.

What do I mean by conversation? Well to me, a good conversation has its base in three main aspects—listening, questioning, and responding.

Listening requires actively focusing on someone's speech and body language. Doing this is not only a sign of respect. It is also the foundation of making good conversation. Through listening you can begin to understand what it is someone wants to say. And this can be better helped by the second aspect of asking good organizing questions. Sometimes questions change the initial topic you were discussing, and that's fine. However it is important to reorient the speaker back to the main point eventually. You can direct the conversation with questions to get back to the initial point.

The last aspect of the conversation—the response—comes after listening and understanding. The response is a great time to introduce a pro-worker idea or solution to the conversation. These ideas show the basis to not just face problems as individuals, but to bring people together to discuss their common experiences on similar jobs, and helps to demonstrate their common interest in fighting for change. It also shows that just even when there are hardships along the way, we can support each other in these necessary struggles and overcome the hardships as a group. By centering your response on the original topic, your understanding of their opinion, and your pro-worker views, you can create a gateway to talk about other issues that you don't already know about or couldn't observe without help.

Developing a routine is also vital to continuing the organizing effort. As much as you want to talk to everyone, or as much as you'd like to avoid talking to anyone, mass organizing needs you to become stable and consistent. Nobody likes a flake, so make sure you aren't over-extending yourself in a way that can come back to bite you. But also don't be afraid to push yourself outside of your "comfort-zone." The struggle is real and there are a lot of powerful social norms which push us to "stay in our place." Ultimately these norms serve the ruling class and function as a way to divide and conquer the poor and oppressed people. So, while it may feel awkward at first to go out of your way to talk with other people about the struggle and getting organized, with time it will feel more comfortable and you will even develop better ways of communicating ideas.

For many of us service workers, we are forced into uncomfortable interactions with strangers daily. So try to go beyond the typical confines of a customer service interaction and engage with workers in a friendly way. Make an observation or talk about a common thing, and don't be afraid. I recommend using your breaks to make a circuit of the same shops every single day, or every day that you work. In a typical day I tend to go to the same candy shop and Indian café and talk to the same people. It's important for me to talk them about organizing not just because these folks are my friends, but also because I know that we can work together to improve all our lives in a revolutionary way.

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