

Issue #4:
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RED STAR



A Publication of
The Revolutionary
United Front

Fascism is on the Rise in India...

GO India GO BACK

**STOP
HINDU
TERRORISM
JUSTICE FOR
ASIFA**

**MODI
STOP
KILLING
MINORITIES**

**8 Yrs old
ASIFA BANO
Raped & Killed
Under MODI'S
Regime**

THE PEOPLE FIGHT BACK!



About the Cover

Under the rule of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (top left) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), fascism is on the rise in India. The government has sponsored pogroms against Muslims, put Kashmir under seige, and launched an all-out assault against the people aimed at making all forms of dissent illegal. In the face of this onslaught people across India are rising up and fighting back in an unprecedented fashion. Fascism in India is only possible with the military and political support of the U.S. government, so we in the U.S. also have a big role to play in the resistance.

Red Star is a revolutionary magazine published by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The magazine covers history and theory from political struggles past and present. *Red Star* also provides revolutionary analysis of current events around the world. It is part of an effort to spread revolutionary theory among the masses of this country and cut through the lies spread by the capitalist ruling class and their media. The people of this country and of the world have the power to make history, to move mountains, to topple oppressive governments, and to change the world.

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Workers of the World Awaken!

Adapted from Joe Hill's *Union Song*

**Workers of the world, awaken!
Break your chains. demand your rights.
All the wealth you make is taken
By exploiting parasites.
Shall you kneel in deep submission
From your cradles to your graves?
Is the height of your ambition
To be good and willing slaves?**

**Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!
Fight for your own emancipation;
Arise, ye slaves of every nation,
It's time to take a stand.
Our little ones for bread are crying,
And millions are from hunger dying;
The end the means is justifying,
To liberate this land.**

**If the workers take a notion,
They can stop all speeding trains;
Every ship upon the ocean
They can tie with mighty chains.
Every wheel in the creation,
Every mine and every mill,
Fleets and armies of the nation,
Will at their command stand still.**

**Join the struggle, fellow workers,
Men and women, side by side;
We will crush the capitalists,
Like a sweeping, surging tide;
For united we are standing,
But divided we will fall;
Let this be our understanding —
“All for one and one for all.”**

**Workers of the world, awaken!
Rise in all your splendid might;
Take the wealth that you are making,
It belongs to you by right.
No one will for bread be crying,
We'll have freedom, love and health.
When the grand red flag is flying
In the Workers' Commonwealth.**

2019 Indian Elections and Hindu-Fascism



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RUF Member Arrested at Protest

by Zumbi



Dayton (left) and Max (right) were both arrested by the San Francisco police and framed on phony charges. Dayton is a member of RUF.

Dayton, an RUF Member was recently arrested at a protest against gentrification in San Francisco. His arrest was a clear instance of racial profiling in which the police apprehended him and one other activist on the word of a drunk counter-demonstrator. After the arrest they were hit with a series of absurd charges including numerous felonies. These charges were eventually dropped, but the arrest and charges reveal how the police and the court system operate to protect the interests of powerful developers and businesses.

Dayton, an RUF activist, was recently arrested on a series of trumped up charges and held for almost seventeen hours. The SFPD used the testimony of a single person to slap Dayton and another activist with 5 charges (4 of them felonies) and held them on \$75,000 bail each.

But what were they doing?

The Bay Area RUF Branch has been actively opposing gentrification and the related displacement and criminalization of working people in the cities in the Bay Area. **A large part of this struggle has been clarifying how city governments help businesses and capitalists push poor people out of the city,** and how they are constantly developing more draconian methods to harass homeless people who are forced to live in their vehicles or on the streets.

In West Oakland, activists have worked with local residents to resist evictions of homeless people, mobilizing to confront the police and expose the policies of the local administration. This has included rallying in front of City Halls, tow yards which tow the vehicles that people live in, and local police stations to demand that they return property

—such as important documents like green cards and clothes—that the city steals from the homeless during legal and illegal evictions. **RUF members have also worked to form picket lines with local residents, refusing to allow police to evict folks from their informal settlements.** Part of building this resistance has been working to link local struggle in different cities surrounding the Bay Area. It's all too easy for individuals and groups to get caught up in a form of localism that see problems in San Francisco as unrelated from those in Oakland and vice versa. However, the reality is that the capitalist pigs who profit off of homelessness and gentrification are working together to “develop” the whole area. Therefore, we need to build a movement that unites anti-displacement struggles across the Bay Area, and ultimately around the whole country.

In San Francisco, RUF has been clear in our critiques of City Hall and its departments tasked with “solving homelessness.” We have worked to expose how the city government works hand-in-glove with capitalists and real estate developers to cause gentrification. This is important because the city puts on a progressive facade and has a series of departments that claim

The city can claim that it helped to open a new “social justice space,” when really it stole low income housing from the people and gave it to a wealthy developer to make a bar. This sort of outrage helps to clarify how little the city governments in the Bay Area care about poor and working class people. With over 55,000 homeless in the Bay Area, the city of San Francisco is giving handouts to the wealthy while they simultaneously send the police out to harass, beat, and arrest the homeless.



A typical event at Manny's where state-sponsored “activists” schmooze and socialize with politicians and capitalists while drinking expensive wine.

The Night of the Rally and the Arrest

On the night of the rally, Manny’s was hosting Keff Kositsky, the Executive Director of the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH). A new department created in 2016 (with a staff of over 120 people) to manage the city of San Francisco’s system of shelters and supportive housing units. **This department was presented by the city as “the key” to “solving homelessness,” but the reality is that homelessness in San Francisco has grown by over 27% since the department was founded.** Additionally while this department claims to provide almost 150 “exits from homelessness” into housing every week, they hide the fact that almost half of those ‘exits’ are in the form of bus tickets out of the city. These tickets are part of a larger policy that cities across the country adopt. This is in line with a long-standing policy in San Francisco. Between 2006 and 2017, the city bused 10,570 homeless people out of the city.¹

Other than busing people out of the city, the bulk of what HSH does is coordinate with the Department of Public Works and SFPD to harass the homeless people and evict them from their encampments and shelters when they become a public “nuisance.” With at least 24,000 homeless in the city of San Francisco alone, and over 1,000 waiting every night to

access the shelter system, HSH really operates as a front for the city's actual goal, to cater to businesses and abuse poor people who have become a speed-bump to fast-paced transformation of the city into a playground for the rich.

Between 2006 and 2017, the city bused 10,570 homeless people out of the city.

This is why businesses like Manny’s are so important to the city of San Francisco. They allow the city to associate their policies with progressive buzzwords and images, by claiming that this business is a “community space.” **Manny’s also provides a ‘trendy’ location for the city to promote this progressive image and white wash its actual policies of harassing the homeless and gentrifying the poor neighborhoods.**

The city government supports Manny’s because the business directly aids the city in its gentrification efforts. **Manny’s also helps to create a platform normalizing a particular brand of activism that the government and developers want.** This sort of activism sees cozying up to power and elected officials as the main or even only task that activists should pursue. So, instead of working to build solidarity among working people, activists are encouraged to get drunk with local politicians and developers at ‘trendy’ bars that present

1) <https://bit.ly/2za6wK2>





Protests against Manny's have been going on for months, and focus on gentrification as well as the owner's Zionist politics.

themselves as “social justice space.” So, in protesting this bar, the RUF chapter hoped to expose all of this hypocrisy and highlight that the power of the people is not built by rubbing elbows with the city’s hypocritical elite at a trendy gentrification bar. **Instead, this power is built through protests, revolutionary education, and organizing.**

The rally was largely without incident until a drunk patron exited Manny’s and started to attack the demonstrators. With a camera in hand, the man tried to film the demonstrators and strike at the crowd. A fight broke out as demonstrators defended themselves. **The man circled around the crowd for almost an hour, trying to antagonize people before finally calling the police on the protesters.**

When the cops showed up they moved in and arrested Dayton and another activist, without questioning the narrative of this counter-protester. Dayton and the other activist who was arrested were not even near the man when he was attacking the crowd, but the police did not even bother to investigate the situation. Instead they adopted the “arrest first, ask questions later” approach. This is typical of the police, they often identify with right wing counter-demonstrators, and treat

progressive activists as potential criminals and terrorists. So it’s really no surprise that they would arrest Dayton and the other activists even though they were not involved in any altercation with the drunk patron.

After being detained at the local station for over three hours, the two activists were informed that they were not only being moved to the county jail, but that they were to be slapped with five charges. **Upon being processed at the County Jail, their bail was set at \$75,000 each.** Fortunately other RUF members and activists sprang into action and managed to gather enough money to post their bond, a “mere” \$5,000 a piece.

These arrests serve as an important reminder that the police serve the interests of the rich. Even by their own standards, this response was incredibly excessive, police didn’t even check the demonstrators for any signs of a fight (a standard procedure when being charged with a violent offense), yet both Dayton and Max were charged with Felony Assault and Misdemeanor Battery.

In protesting this bar, the RUF chapter hoped to expose all of this hypocrisy and highlight that the power of the people is not built by rubbing elbows with the city’s hypocritical elite at a trendy gentrification bar.

RED STAR



Protesters confronted the police and chanted “Free Palestine!” as Dayton and Max were arrested.

Statute	Charge Description
182(a)(1) PC/F	CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT A CRIME
236 PC/F	FALSE IMPRISONMENT
242 PC/M	BATTERY
211 PC/F/2	SECOND DEGREE ROBBERY
245(a)(4) PC/F	ASSAULT WITH FORCE LIKELY TO COMMIT GREAT BODILY INJURY

The absurd list of charges that the police tried to frame Dayton and Max with.

This is likely part of a national trend as Senator Ted Cruz recently introduced Senate Resolution 279, which would label activists or groups associated with ‘antifa’ as domestic terrorist organizations. In short, those who organize against fascism may soon be labeled as terrorists in this country. While the resolution has not yet been signed into law, local police departments could very easily take this as a signal that excessive methods against activists should become the norm. Additionally, of all the protestors in the crowd, the police selected one of two Black people for arrest. We see that without any evidence, police resort to age old tactics such as racial profiling.

In short, those who organize against fascism may soon be labeled as terrorists in this country.

These arrests are likely an attempt to intimidate activists and keep them from being involved in any militant protests and organizing. In this case the activists in question were lucky that the charges were dropped, but in many other

cases people have been encouraged to take terrible plea deals that keep them out of jail, but place numerous restrictions on them. Many of these “deals” include provisions that can reinstate all the charges if the defendants get arrested for something as minor as jaywalking. So they effectively function as a means to keep people from protesting by having potential jail time hanging over their heads for the duration of the deal, which can be years. **In this case, although the charges were dropped, the District Attorney used an arcane legal concept known as “Code 27” which admits that the state does not have enough evidence to convict the defendants, but allows the DA to refile the charges anytime within the statute of limitation, in this case three years.**

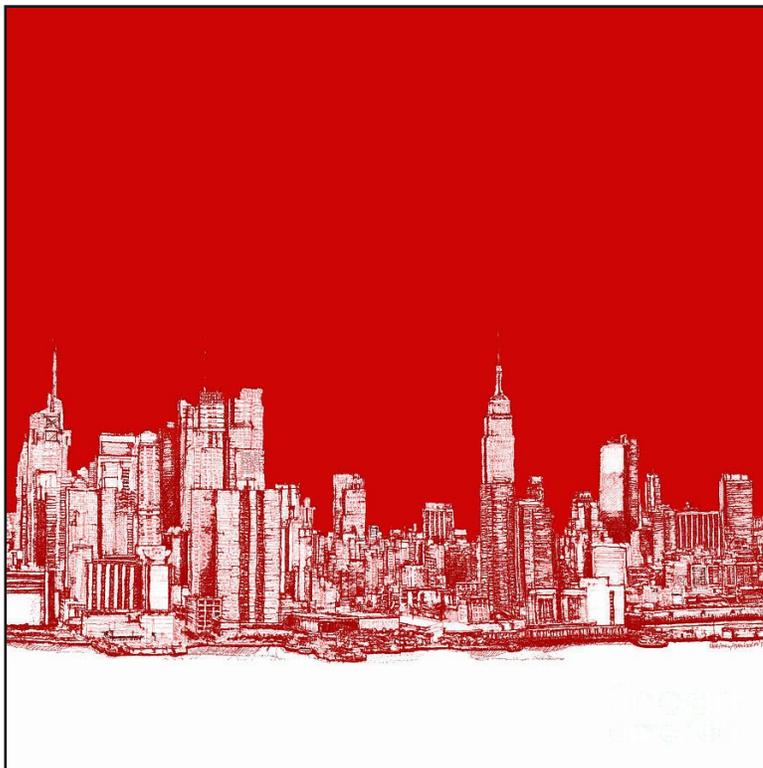
There is a real need for revolutionaries and activists to stay out of jail; however, as this case shows, even attending a basic demonstration can lead to arrest and phony charges by the state.

As popular struggle deepens in this country, these attacks on activists and revolutionaries will only intensify. There is a real need for revolutionaries and activists to stay out of jail; however, as this case shows, even attending a basic demonstration can lead to arrest and phony charges by the state. Ultimately, our efforts must build a revolutionary movement and organizations capable of withstanding attacks from the police including harassment, arrests, and even worse. We know that these attacks are just the beginning and we will likely face more in the future.

So, in order to be prepared for these eventual attacks, we need to develop well organized and disciplined chapters of RUF across the country. Comrades need to study and learn from the successes and failures of past revolutionary movements in combatting state repression. We can then apply these lessons to our particular situation to avoid repression as much as possible, and handle it well when we do face it. Through these efforts we can out maneuver state attempts to destroy or work through one for of repression or another.

The Founding of the New York City RUF Chapter

by RUF-NYC



Through the tireless efforts of numerous comrades around the country an RUF chapter has been formed in New York City. This represents a big advance for RUF as an organization and the revolutionary movement in this country as a whole. We now have chapters in three major cities across the country and can coordinate our organizing efforts accordingly. RUF has already begun planning joint demonstrations to be held simultaneously in Boston, the Bay Area, and New York City. This article is a statement by the NYC Chapter on their founding and some lessons they have learned from their work so far.

This summer RUF founded a new chapter in New York City. Our chapter has focused on internal study and organizing with ongoing struggles in the New York City area. In particular we have been motivated by struggles in solidarity with anti-imperialist movements around the world. These efforts have also included movements against the rising tide of far-right and fascist forces such as the Duterte government in the Philippines and the Hindu-fascist Modi government in India. At these protests we have spoken out against imperialist plunder and worked to provide important political education about the nature of capitalist imperialism.

New York City has unique features that make it an important place for political work. It has a bunch of diverse populations that often have relatively high awareness of global issues. Multiple protests on different important issues often happen on the same day in the city, only blocks apart. **This sort of situation makes it possible to forge a strong support network of activists who are linked up to a wide variety**

of struggles.

There are many working class neighborhoods throughout New York that are all affected by common issues such as gentrification and workplace exploitation and oppression. Many people are very aware of their interests in these struggles. Though most do not see themselves as activists or revolutionaries, people are often very interested in discussing political issues, their personal experiences, and possible future action. **Concerted and ongoing work with such people can lead to real progress in a number of different but related struggles.**

We have also been engaged in an important struggle against the post-modern politics of “identity representation.” These politics tend to reduce everything to a question of one’s identity categories, and often this is a pretext to silence important discussion and debate of political issues. Instead of dealing with key political questions, identity politics tends to reduce everything to the question of getting the right demographic representation and composition within a group.



We have also advanced our own organizational abilities through hosting events and meetings. We have also collaborated with other groups to prepare pamphlets and fliers for the various struggles that they have been involved in. As part of our work, we prepared a series of printed articles and pamphlets detailing political oppression in India, including information about the imprisonment of Professor G.N. Saibaba. **At outreach events in a working-class South Asian neighborhood we did public sign-making, set out poster boards, brushes, and bright oil-paints, and invited people to join in creating art and posters about the situation in India.** This strategy proved to be effective for starting conversations and getting people involved, and the plan is to utilize it more in the future.

These first outreach sessions were also quite timely, and because of them, we were prepared to play an active role in protests in the days following India's crackdown, siege, and total communications blackout in Kashmir. After these protests, we also conducted public outreach to support the mobilization against the Indian state's actions. **These outreach efforts focused on the need to support the struggles of the people in Kashmir and also exposed the role of the U.S. ruling class in the situation in Kashmir.** This was all linked up to struggles in NYC and the U.S. at large.

One major obstacle that we faces is the immense nature of the tasks in the city and the region. However, we are confident that through collective conversation and organization, we can continue to make solid and continuous strides forward. The formation of a NYC chapter is a great advance for the Revolutionary United Front, the people of New York City, and all progressive forces and classes in this country. While the revolutionary movement in this country remains



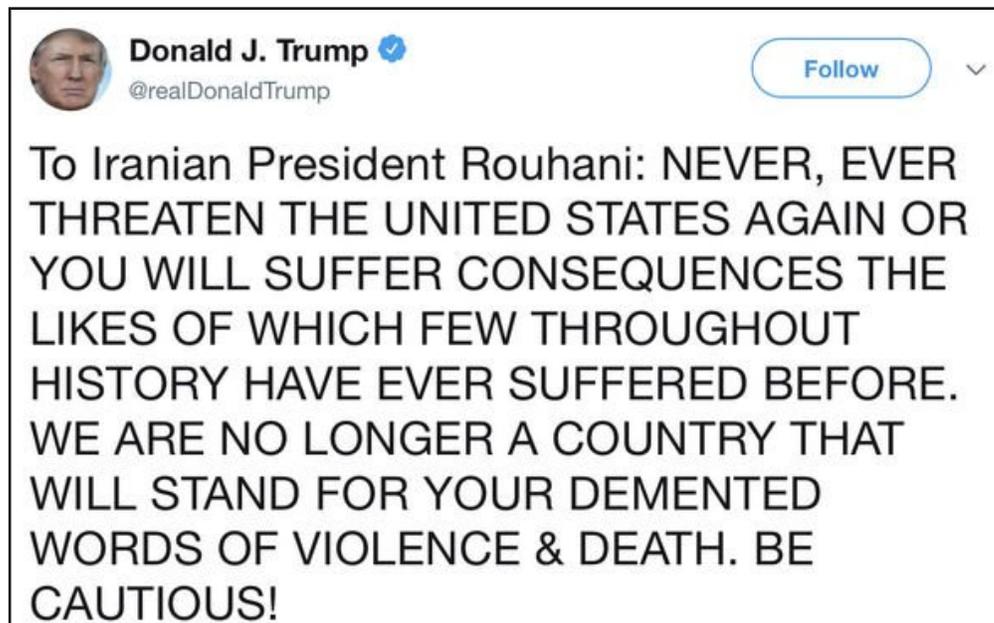
The RUF NYC Chapter recently attended large-scale mobilizations in New York supporting the struggle for self-determination for Kashmir.

relatively small, the creation of new chapters of a genuinely revolutionary organization represent a significant advance in the struggle. Small steps like this lay the basis for large advances on the road to revolution.

The formation of a NYC chapter is a great advance for the Revolutionary United Front, the people of New York City, and all progressive forces and classes in this country.

The U.S.-Iran Conflict

by Altan D., Katya, and Smith



Donald Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani have exchanged a series of threats and inflammatory remarks over the past few years as tensions have escalated.

Recent months have seen a dramatic escalation of the U.S.-Iran Conflict with a whole series of military standoffs and seizures of oil tankers. In light of this it is important to learn about the history of Iran as well as its present expansionist efforts across the region. It's equally important to grasp the continuity of U.S. aggression and imperialist policy towards Iran.

In recent months political and military tensions have been on the rise between the U.S. and Iran. There have been a series of military escalations, including shooting down each other's drones and seizing control of oil tankers. **These tensions are part of a broader build up to a potential war as the U.S. tries to subjugate the Iranian ruling elite, and the Iranian elite work to expand their influence around the region at the expense of the U.S. and its allies.**

As part of the growing tensions Trump withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. This was a significant decision which laid the ground for further escalations and allowed the U.S. to reimpose crippling economic sanctions on Iran aimed at starving the Iranian people and creating unrest in the country by grinding its economy to a halt. **It's important to understand that this withdrawal is a continuation of a long-standing policy of U.S. economic and military aggression against Iran.** However, it's also important to see that the JCPOA itself was not a progressive deal, but rather an effort by the U.S. ruling class and their

allies to co-opt the Iranian elite and subordinate them to U.S. imperialism. In the eyes of the more hawkish members of the U.S. elite, this effort had failed and more aggressive measures were needed for Iran, including war and regime change. These hawks were particularly concerned by growing Iranian influence throughout the Middle East, and the Iranian military's expansion into Iraq and Syria. **All this led the Trump administration to pursue a policy of open aggression against Iran.**

Recently escalations have pushed the countries to the brink of war, and if this conflict continues to escalate it could engulf the entire region in a major war. Iran is not simply another Iraq; it has a much stronger military and could not be easily defeated by the U.S. military. What's more, numerous countries in the region and around the world are lining up on one side or another of the conflict. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are waging a genocidal war against the people of Yemen and the Iranian-aligned Houthis. Israel and Iran are fighting a low-level conflict in Syria. The U.K. has seized an Iranian oil tanker and Iran has seized two U.K. tankers.

The U.S.-Iran conflict - major factors



future of the Iranian regime



concerns about energy supply from the Middle East



conflict: Israel vs Iran



conflict: Iran vs Saudi Arabia & its allies



conflict: Israel vs the Palestinians



dispute between the U.S. & the EU on the future of the Iran nuclear deal



future role of China & Russia in the Middle East

Chinese vessels help Iran evade U.S. sanctions, and Russia has been in discussions about stationing their troops in Iran. Meanwhile the U.S. and Iran have shot down each other's drones. All of this shows how unstable the situation is, with open warfare possible in the near future. Regardless of which side wins, the people of the region will suffer immensely. However, in order to understand the present situation in Iran it is first necessary to go into some history about Iran and imperialist efforts to dominate the country.

Some History

After the discovery of oil in Iran, the British created the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) in 1909, and just prior to World War I, the company secured backing from Winston Churchill. The British elite were looking to modernize their coal-powered navy and to avoid dependence on the American oil trust Standard Oil and Dutch trust Royal Dutch Shell. **The backing of the military allowed Britain to secure dominance over the Iranian oil industry and much of the country.**

The next few decades saw a great heightening of contradictions between the British imperialists and the more independent section of the Iranian elites. The latter resented the humiliation and plunder of foreign domination and therefore aimed to find ways to get a greater share of the profits for themselves. Throughout

the 30s and 40s the Iranian capitalists tried unsuccessfully to reach a compromise where both parties would share control of the oil fields and in the process grew more and more frustrated with the British.

In 1949, an agreement was reached that gave the Iranian capitalists a few token concessions, including a minor increase in royalty payments and control of the least productive oil fields in Iran.

This agreement as the last straw for the bourgeois

nationalists in the Majlis (Iran's Parliament), led by Mohammed Mosaddegh and his National Front. They were determined to control the oil fields whether or not Britain approved of their actions.

Though progressive insofar as they opposed the foreign domination of Iran, it is important to see that Mosaddegh and his ilk merely wanted control of the oil fields for themselves, not the workers who produced the oil with their sweat and blood. **So while bourgeois nationalists can play a progressive role in the struggle against the imperialist domination of an oppressed country, as a class they ultimately are interested in becoming imperialists themselves.**

Though progressive insofar as they opposed the foreign domination of Iran, it is important to see that Mosaddegh and his ilk merely wanted control of the oil fields for themselves, not the workers who produced the oil with their sweat and blood.

In oppressed countries dominated by imperialism, revolutionaries can and should work with these people if they are really opposed to imperialist domination of their country. **However, bourgeois nationalists can't be allowed to lead these struggles or they will either lead the movement into various pitfalls, or kick out the imperialists only to themselves become the new ruling elite.** We can see how this played out in Iran.

In 1950, news reached Iran that the Arabian-American Oil Company (now known as Saudi Aramco, American-owned at the time) had agreed to split its profits with the Saudis 50-50. It became clear that a similar agreement between Iran and APOC was not on the table and Mosaddegh began pushing to nationalize the oil fields. In 1951, these efforts succeeded, and the National Front formed a new government with Mosaddegh as Prime Minister. Soon after, APOC was evicted from the southern Iranian oil fields.

Fearing the loss of Iranian oil, as well as the growing militancy of anti-colonial and communist movements around the world, Britain cut a deal with the U.S. **The CIA would provide the muscle to oust Mosaddegh and retake the oil fields; in exchange, the British would now share their drilling rights with American Oil trusts.** This signaled a major change in the balance of power globally, in which the U.S. would increasingly step in to safeguard imperialist interests, brutally crushing movements that make even minor threats to the rule of capitalist imperialism.

In exchange, imperialist powers like Britain would give up some control and profits to the American companies. These sort of arrangements were set up in part because the old European colonial powers were devastated by World War II, while the U.S. was relatively unharmed. However equally important was the rising tide of anti-colonial and communist revolutionary movements that threatened the imperialists.

After the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the imperialists feared that similar movements would spread over the world like wildfire.

In 1953, the CIA successfully orchestrated a brutal and ruthless coup that installed a fascist U.S. puppet regime under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, commonly known as the Shah ("King" in Persian). This new regime outlawed all pro-



After the CIA backed coup in 1953, supporters of the Shah and American plunder of Iran celebrated in the street with the military. While this coup was not in the interests of the vast majority of Iranians, a small section benefited immensely by becoming U.S. puppets.

democratic and socialist parties, and virtually all dissent was violently suppressed by the Shah's secret police. Over the next few decades the misery of life under the Shah only increased. Over 100,000 people were killed under his rule, and likely many more—but the official records are not accurate as they were maintained by the Shah's regime. One particularly bloody massacre happened in 1963 in which a number of people were massacred after mass protests against the Shah broke out in Tehran.

This signaled a major change in the balance of power globally, in which the U.S. would increasingly step in to safeguard imperialist interests, brutally crushing movements that make even minor threats to the rule of capitalist imperialism.

The people of Iran, fed up with the brutality and corruption of the Shah's fascist rule, became increasingly radicalized and drawn into the anti-imperialist movement against the government and its foreign sponsors, the U.S. and the U.K. Some people gravitated towards the budding nominally anti-Western Islamist movement under the leadership of Ruhollah Khomeini.





In 1979 over a million people rallied in Tehran after the Shah fled the country.

Khomeini's movement had certain progressive tendencies in its opposition to the western imperialist powers and their brutal rule in Iran. However, the clergy also promoted a series of backwards religious ideas about how society should be organized including their aims to impose a series of feudal morality laws that forced women to veil themselves and men to dress in certain ways. **These ideas that society should be run in a religious fashion and that people should be compelled to follow religious laws were quite reactionary, despite the movement's opposition to the western imperialist powers.**

These more radical trends aimed to upend not only the Shah's government but also to destroy capitalist and feudal aspects of Iranian society.

A theocratic state is a very reactionary thing as it compels people to follow religious practices even if they don't follow the state religion. It's a big victory for the people to win freedom of religion and freedom from persecution for their religious beliefs or lack thereof. **Related to some of these backwards ideas, the clergy was for a long time supportive of the Shah, and as a result Khomeini was, for a time, allowed to operate openly where other more radical forces were not.**

Some of these other forces included the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran), who called not just for the overthrow of the Shah, but the destruction of the whole bourgeois state and its replacement with a revolutionary worker's state. These more radical trends aimed to upend not only the Shah's government but also to destroy capitalist and feudal aspects of Iranian society.

When an inflation crisis rocked Iran in the mid 1970s, society was rapidly politicized. In 1978 student protests erupted calling for the end of the Shah's regime, and the Iranian revolution began. Though Khomeini's Islamists had strength in numbers, Khomeini was actually living in exile during this period. He had fled the country after openly breaking with the Shah when the latter passed some minor reforms including providing women the right to vote. While these reforms were minor—what good is the right to vote in a dictatorship run by the Shah?—Khomeini and his Islamist forces saw even these minor advances for women as a threat to the religious order. **So while many did support Khomeini's opposition to the Shah, the more radical and revolutionary elements were unwilling to support his movement because of its backwards social views.**

In fact, pro-democratic and especially communist forces played a leading role in this revolution. For example, in December of 1978, class-conscious oil workers in the southern fields led major political strikes. **These were strikes aimed not just at securing better economic compensation and working conditions, but actually strikes that primarily aimed at toppling the Shah.** These mobilizations ground the Iranian economy to a halt and inspired people throughout the country to rise up against the Shah.

With the economy in ruins and entire cities in revolt, by early 1979 the Shah was forced to flee the country, and shortly thereafter, the revolutionaries waged a successful armed insurrection to seize state power from the remnants of the regime. At this time Khomeini returned from exile to rally the moderate and capitalist forces. In April 1979 a coalition of

bourgeois religious factions proclaimed the Islamic Republic.

Though the revolution had seen widespread politicization of society and inspiring demonstrations of people's power, the bourgeoisie have no interest in this sort of thing. It was overall a big success that the Iranian people were able to throw the brutal U.S.-backed dictator out of their country, but unfortunately the proletarian and internationalist forces were not able to defeat the bourgeois nationalist forces.

Ultimately these bourgeois forces, grouped behind Khomeini, proclaimed the Islamic Republic and started a campaign of political repression against leftist and secularist forces. **While this state was nominally a democratic country, it was founded on the bloodshed of thousands of revolutionaries and others who opposed the imposition of religious rule.** They saw clearly that true democracy for the people is impossible when the country is governed by religious laws and religious elite. **In order to consolidate this "republic" Khomeini and his allies brutally executed at least 15,000 opponents of the regime.**¹ In particular they targeted communists and other radicals who were carrying on the spirit of the revolution by protesting new, oppressive religious laws and waging armed struggle against the regime in the countryside.

Unfortunately, though the revolutionaries were many in number, they had internal issues and were not sufficiently organized to carry forward the revolution. So, the counter-revolutionary attacks of the Islamic regime eventually defeated them and led to their massacre.

In 1980, Iraq invaded Iran, hoping to seize on the chaos. The U.S. and the USSR initially tried playing both sides of the conflict against each other. For example, the U.S. was caught red-handed selling arms to Iran and using the profits to fund anticommunist contras in Nicaragua (as part of their efforts to maintain imperial domination in Latin America and their global



Members of the Union of Iranian Communists before they were massacred in the early 1980s.

crusade against anti-colonial and communist movements). **The U.S. feared that if the Islamic Republic was defeated, a working class revolution would follow in Iran.** However, as the war turned in Iran's favor, the imperialists fell in line behind Iraq, fearing that Iran would seize control of the oil industry in the region. The U.S. realized that the expansionist aims of the newly independent Iranian capitalists posed a real threat to their own influence in the region and shifted to a policy of containment. Since then the U.S. has only grown more hostile to the Islamic republic,

Ultimately these bourgeois forces, grouped behind Khomeini, proclaimed the Islamic Republic and started a campaign of political repression against leftist and secularist forces.

issuing a series of crippling sanctions starting in the 80s and in 1984 adding Iran to its official list of state sponsors of terrorism.

However, in their campaign to consolidate control over the Middle East, the U.S. made a series of key blunders. First, after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the deposition of Saddam Hussein, occupying forces backed Shia militias (despite the warnings of U.S. intelligence) with deep links to Iran, giving the latter huge influence in the new regime.

1) Revolutionary Worker, Vol. 4, No. 27, p. 9, <https://bit.ly/30N67vQ>



Then, in a bid to oust Russian lackey Bashar al-Assad, the U.S. funded ultra-reactionary Sunni Islamists in the Syrian civil war, who were eventually crushed by Assad's forces with direct assistance from the Iranian military, again greatly increasing Iranian influence in the region. **Elsewhere, the Islamic Republic has pursued an expansionist agenda, backing Shia militant groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen.** All of this has also led Iran into a proxy conflict for dominance in the region with Saudi Arabia, which sponsors its own Islamist groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq and Tahrir al-Sham in Syria.



Imperialist powers all over the world came together to sign the Iran Nuclear Deal, a temporary treaty which did not resolve their underlying competition.

The Iran Nuclear Deal and Trump's Withdrawal

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the “Iran nuclear deal,” was reached between the European Union, the United States, and Iran on July 14th of 2015. The deal primarily compels Iran to make a number of significant concessions in exchange for the U.S. lifting economic sanctions against the country. Under the deal, Iran had to significantly roll back developments in its existing nuclear program and grant International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors a great deal of access to Iranian facilities. The JCPOA also demanded that Iran drastically reduce its stockpiles of uranium. **This deal was signed by the U.S. and their allies as part of a concerted effort to win over a section of the Iranian elite politically and economically.** The Obama administration and its allies hoped to use the deal as a way to deepen the U.S. and EU's economic ties with Iran, and thereby isolate the hardline anti-western members of the Iranian elite.

However, it is important to also understand that the U.S. signed this deal from a position of weakness and because of its declining power globally, and not out of the kindness of Obama's heart. In the Middle East specifically the U.S.'s power was weakened by the Arab Spring—which saw the toppling of many U.S. client governments such as Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt and Ben Ali's in Tunisia

—as well as the political destabilization of Iraq and Syria caused primarily by U.S. political and military mistakes which led to mass unrest and ultimately the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

In the Middle East specifically the U.S.'s power was weakened by the Arab Spring.

In the face of these failures, the Obama administration—and the U.S. elite who supported them—decided that a direct military confrontation with Iran was not feasible and that it would better for the U.S. billionaires if they won Iran over to their side. **This plan was also aimed at courting the Iranian elites away from the China and Russia, by encouraging U.S. and European tourism and having the young, wealthy section of the Iranian elite attend U.S. universities.** The hope was that these maneuvers would eventually develop a section of the Iranian elite loyal to U.S. interests and in the short-term would help to preserve U.S. interests in Iraq and Syria, where Iran has a significant foothold. The deal slowed the pace of Iran's nuclear program, thus appeasing Israeli concerns that Iran would develop the bomb.

The JCPOA was also aimed at appeasing the wealthy, largely pro-Iranian elite in Qatar where the Al Udeid Air Base—which is the



During his presidential campaign Trump railed against the Iran Nuclear Deal and promised to tear it up if he got elected.

largest U.S. military base in the region and a critical command base for U.S. drone warfare and other military operations—is located.

In an interview with New York Times reporter Thomas Friedman, then-President Obama made it abundantly clear that the United States could withdraw from the deal at any moment, even if Iran was not violating the terms of the deal. This was a thinly veiled threat to reinstate sanctions against Iran and restart the U.S. campaign of economic warfare on Iran, and eventually even military intervention. Obama was making it clear that he had signed the deal with Iran because it was convenient for the U.S. Empire at the moment, but that if things changed, he could just as easily quit the deal, regardless of what Iran did. This is clear because past opportunities to enter into a similar deal were shot down by the Bush Administration and the Obama Administration itself. For example, in 2010 the governments of Brazil and Turkey suggested a deal to hold 80% of Iran's enriched uranium stockpiles outside of Iran. Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton rejected the deal and instead imposed further sanctions on Iran.

Obama was making it clear that he had signed the deal with Iran because it was convenient for the U.S. Empire at the moment, but that if things changed, he could just as easily quit the deal, regardless of what Iran did.

Developments like this show the real U.S. agenda with Iran and the sanctions – not to “promote peace” but to keep the Iranian government in check and continue to exert economic domination over the Iranian people. **This pressure was and is part of the U.S. efforts to create the conditions for regime change in Iran.** When it became apparent to the Obama Administration that such a policy was no longer feasible, the U.S. state pivoted to a policy of collaboration with Iranian elites as a means of exerting control of the country and preserving U.S. interests in the region.

However, this policy wasn't universally accepted by the U.S. elite. There were some among the elite who

were more in favor of continuing economic sanctions and moving towards direct military intervention as a means of regime change. **This hawkish approach towards Iran is closely aligned with the interests of the fascist elite in Israel, especially Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,** who openly voiced his disdain for Obama's policies in the Middle East, including the signing of the JCPOA, and has long advocated for direct military action against Iran.

The EU had its own interests in Iran as well; European capitalists had their eye on Iranian markets and had sought “investment” opportunities to expand their business interests into Iran. Furthermore, wealthy Iranian elites were spending billions on properties and developments in Western Europe and in Dubai. **In particular, European companies were heavily drawn to the prospect of exploiting cheap labor from Afghan refugees in Iran.** These companies used the JCPOA to set up factories and plants in Iran and take advantage of the cheap labor available there. For example, Mercedes Benz had many car engines manufactured in Iran and Total, the largest French oil and gas company, invested billions of dollars in Iran to gain access to the North Dome-South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf.

Then when Donald Trump was elected president of the U.S., the various reactionary war hawks within the American and Israeli elite rejoiced. Through the course of the presidential campaign Trump became one of the key voices in favor of terminating the JCPOA, returning to sanctions against Iran, and pushing for regime change.





The crude oil tanker Front Altair burning in the Gulf of Oman. Saudi Arabia and the U.S. claimed the attack was carried out by Iran, but there was no real evidence to support this claim.

After winning the election, Trump wasted no time in openly drumming up conflict with Iran. He immediately claimed that Iran had violated the nuclear deal, despite the lack of any evidence to support these claims. He appointed John Bolton—an open proponent for regime change in Iran and key architect in the invasion of Iraq in 2003—as his National Security Advisor in March of 2018. **Two months later, the Trump Administration formally withdrew from the JCPOA, despite the fact that the Iranian government had largely honored the terms of the deal.** Israel was also supportive of the decision to withdraw from the JCPOA. Netanyahu in particular personally pressured the U.S. to withdraw. Since then, the US has imposed new sanctions on Iran to strangle the Iranian economy and people, while escalating direct threats of force, including troop deployments to the region in June of 2019.

The Current Situation

The present situation in the U.S.-Iran conflict is extremely unstable. **Recently, a section of the U.S. ruling elite, and their allies in the U.K., Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the U.A.E. have made a concerted effort to spark a war with Iran.** The most recent escalation began this past May when Saudi Arabia and the UAE claimed that their oil tankers were attacked by Iran while traveling through the Persian Gulf. While the evidence was scant—and even the U.S. Maritime Administration urged caution and warned that the reported attacks had not been confirmed—U.S.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was quick to parrot the Saudis' and Emiratis' claim that Iran was responsible for the attack.² While no immediate military action was taken against Iran, tensions were on the rise.

The next month, there was another attack on oil tankers in the region. This time one vessel was operated by the Japanese company Kokuka Sangyo, and the attacks happened to coincide with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's trip to Tehran. Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih was quick to call for a "swift and decisive" response

to the attacks, and the U.S. released grainy footage which they claimed showed that Iran was responsible for the attacks.

It seemed likely that these incidents would serve as justification for a U.S. attack on Iran. However, Yutaka Katada, the President of Kokuka Sangyo, made a public statement that the ship's crew had reported "that the ship was attacked by a flying object." **This cast doubt on the official story that Iran had placed mines on the ship, and seemed to indicate that the attack was in fact a "false-flag" operation by the U.S. and its allies to justify war with Iran.** The timing of the attack was suspicious, because the Iranians were hoping that their meeting with Shinzo Abe would lead to better relations with Japan and the West. This whole situation is reminiscent of the infamous "Gulf of Tonkin" incident in which the U.S. faked an attack on its own ships to justify the start of the Vietnam War.

A week later, a U.S. spy drone was shot down while in Iranian airspace. **This was seen as a warning to the U.S. military as they did not believe that the Iranian military was capable of shooting down a drone flying at such a high altitude.** This brought the two countries to the brink of war, and various reports said that Trump called off a military attack on Iran with minutes to spare. While Trump claimed that he called off the attack because he did not want to kill Iranians over the downing of an unmanned drone, his policies—including the concentration camps at

2) <https://reut.rs/2LDuLf8>

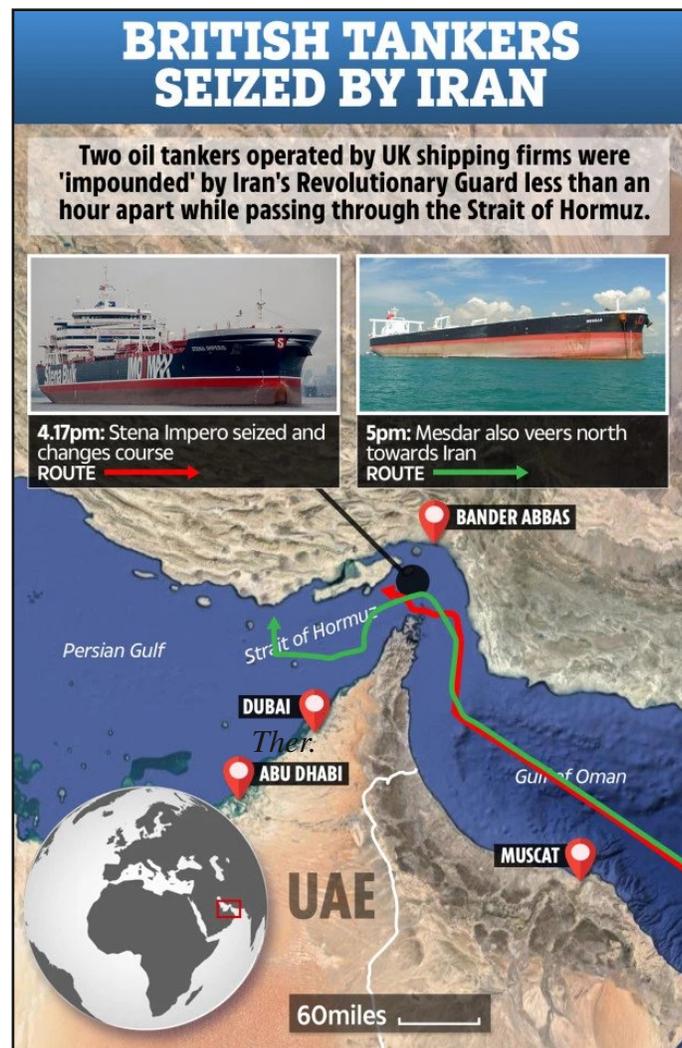
the border—show how little he values human life. For example, Trump was willing to kill thousands of civilians in the bombing of Mosul, Iraq and other military campaigns in Iraq and Syria; additionally he is sponsoring the Saudi-UAE led genocidal war in Yemen that has pushed 20,000,000 people to the brink of starvation.

So, it seems possible that the strike was called off because of military concerns, including fears about the Iranian military's capabilities. **This whole incident was also likely aimed at sending a message to Iran that the U.S. can mobilize its military to attack Iran at any time.** However, even by itself the Iranian military is a powerful force, and with the aid of its allies and proxies across the region, Iranian forces are well positioned to fight against the U.S. and its allies.

Two weeks after this standoff, the U.K. seized an Iranian oil tanker on the grounds that the tanker might be shipping oil to Syria, an Iranian ally. After negotiations for the return of the tanker failed, Iran seized a Panamanian oil tanker in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. responded by shooting down an Iranian drone. The Iranians then seized two more oil tankers, this time both British. Since this point there have not been any major escalations, but things remain balanced on a knife's edge. **All of these escalations have left many around the world concerned that war could break out at any moment.**

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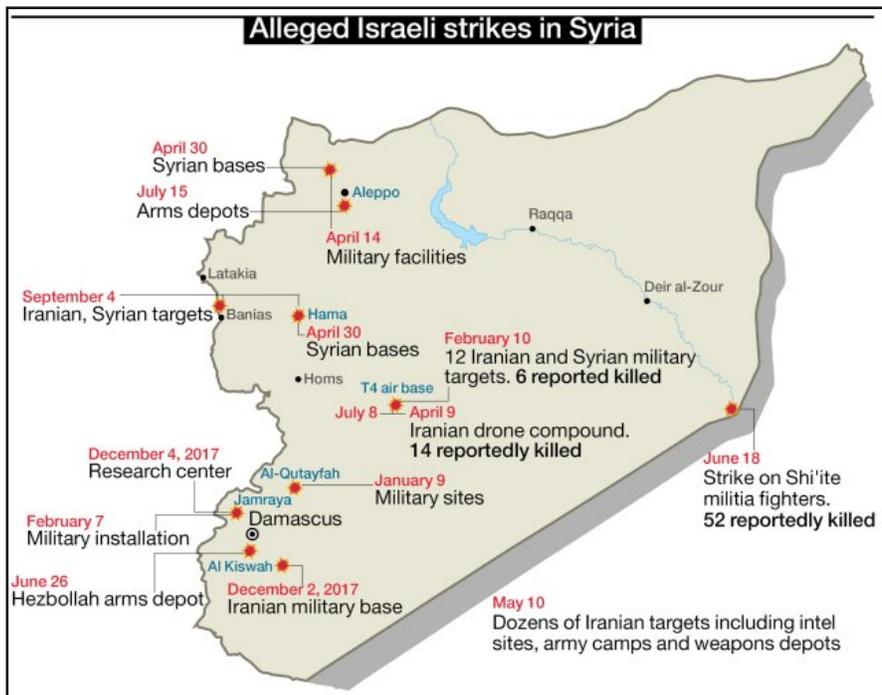
While the news cycle has—at least for the moment—shifted away from the U.S.-Iran conflict, the situation remains dangerously unstable. The U.S. has imposed serious economic sanctions on Iran, and Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel—the U.S.'s closest Middle Eastern allies—are all pushing for war with Iran. In fact, Israel is already in a low-level war with Iran in Syria. During the Syrian War, Assad's government asked Iran for military and economic assistance. The Iranian government, as part of their expansionist efforts, sent a large



number of troops to Syria and invested tens of billions of dollars in setting up Iranian military bases throughout the country and buying up a large stake in the Syrian economy. They also mobilized Iranian-allied militias and paramilitary organizations in Iraq and Lebanon—such as Hezbollah—to fight alongside Iranian troops in Syria. These efforts are part of the Iranian ruling class's overall plan to become a major regional power and to stake out a powerful military position against Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S.

Over the past several years, Israel has carried out a huge number of airstrikes on Iranian bases and forces in Syria, and Iran has retaliated in various ways. If Iran launched a significant attack against Israel, or even just managed to shoot down some Israeli planes, this could lead to a major escalation in the U.S.-Iran conflict. **While Donald Trump previously called off the attack on Iran at the last minute, it seems likely that he would not think twice about attacking Iran if they shot down an Israeli fighter jet.**

Alleged Israeli strikes in Syria



Israeli airstrikes in Syria from December, 2017 to September 2018. Since then airstrikes have continued and intensified in number.

However, given Iran's influence in Lebanon, with Hezbollah in particular, their military bases in Syria, and their militias in Iraq, any conflict with Israel would likely spread across the entire region. **Israel is not the only U.S. ally engaged in an ongoing conflict with Iran and Iranian-aligned forces.** Saudi Arabia and the UAE are waging a genocidal war against the people of Yemen which has pushed 20,000,000 Yemenis to the brink of famine. This war is primarily about crushing the Yemeni Revolution which began in the Arab Spring in 2011 when the people of Yemen toppled the U.S. and Saudi backed dictator, "President" Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled the country with an iron fist for over 30 years. However, the revolution also created an opening for the growth of the Houthis as a political and military force. They maintain relatively close ties with Iran, and have received some military, political, and economic support from the Iranian government in their war against the Saudis and UAE.

In any war with the U.S., Iran would increase its support for the Houthis and likely would also help them mine and blockade the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea, through which around ten percent of the world's seaborne oil travels. **This, in conjunction with a similar blockade of the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf—through which one third of the**

world's liquefied natural gas and one quarter of the world's oil pass each day—would lead to a massive disruption in the world economy. While these mines and blockades could eventually be cleared, mine sweeping is a time-consuming task, and all of this would happen during a war, making it even more dangerous and complicated.

All of this shows that this conflict with Iran is not just a repeat of the Iraq War; it is something far more dangerous. Any military conflict between these two reactionary powers would quickly spiral into a larger regional conflict that would put the lives of tens of millions of people at risk. However, this is really just the tip of the iceberg.

Over the past few years both China and Russia have been strengthening their ties with Iran, including by conducting joint military drills. Recently Russia and Iran conducted a series of joint military drills in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. China has also been a key partner to Iran and has worked closely with them to ensure that Iran can continue to sell its oil despite U.S. sanctions. **This means any future conflict between the U.S. and Iran could also involve Russia and China, and thus quickly escalate into World War III.**

All of this shows that this conflict with Iran is not just a repeat of the Iraq War; it is something far more dangerous.

However, even in a direct military confrontation between Iran and the U.S. it would not be a cakewalk for the U.S. military. In 2002 the Navy carried out a simulation of war with Iran known as the Millennium Challenge. During this simulation, Marine Corps Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper was tasked with leading the simulated Iranian forces and deploying a variety of "asymmetrical" tactics which a weaker military force would use against a stronger one. In short, instead of going toe-to-toe with the U.S. military in the simulation, he used a variety of tactics to out maneuver and overwhelm





Even though the U.S. has a large number of bases surrounding the country, Iran's military could still do a lot of damage to U.S. forces in a war.

the U.S. forces. In the opening maneuvers of the simulation General Van Riper was able to “sink” nineteen U.S. ships in the first battle, including an aircraft carrier. Had this been a real war it would have led to over 20,000 U.S. casualties in the first day of fighting alone.³

If [the Iranian military was] able to sink an aircraft carrier and inflict tens of thousands of losses on U.S. forces, public opinion in the U.S. would quickly turn against the war.

After these embarrassing defeats, the Navy paused the simulation and changed the rules, preventing General Van Riper from using asymmetrical tactics, and putting other unrealistic conditions in place to ensure a U.S. victory. He promptly quit the simulation, and publicly critiqued it as “rigged” to confirm a predetermined conclusion: that the U.S. would

defeat Iran in a war. It would have been very embarrassing for the U.S. military if the most expensive military drills ever conducted showed how a relatively weak country like Iran could decimate U.S. forces.

This drill was held over a decade ago, and since then Iran’s military has only grown in strength. They have developed advanced drones, high altitude anti-aircraft missiles, new submarines, electronic warfare capabilities, thousands of cruise missiles and speed boats, and much more. In the event of a war, they could mine the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, launch long-range artillery and cruise missiles to destroy oil infrastructure and cities in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, mobilize their militias in Iraq against the U.S., launch a variety of attacks against Israel through Hezbollah, have the Houthis shoot a number of missiles at Saudi Arabia, and deploy a variety of other asymmetrical tactics against the U.S. navy.

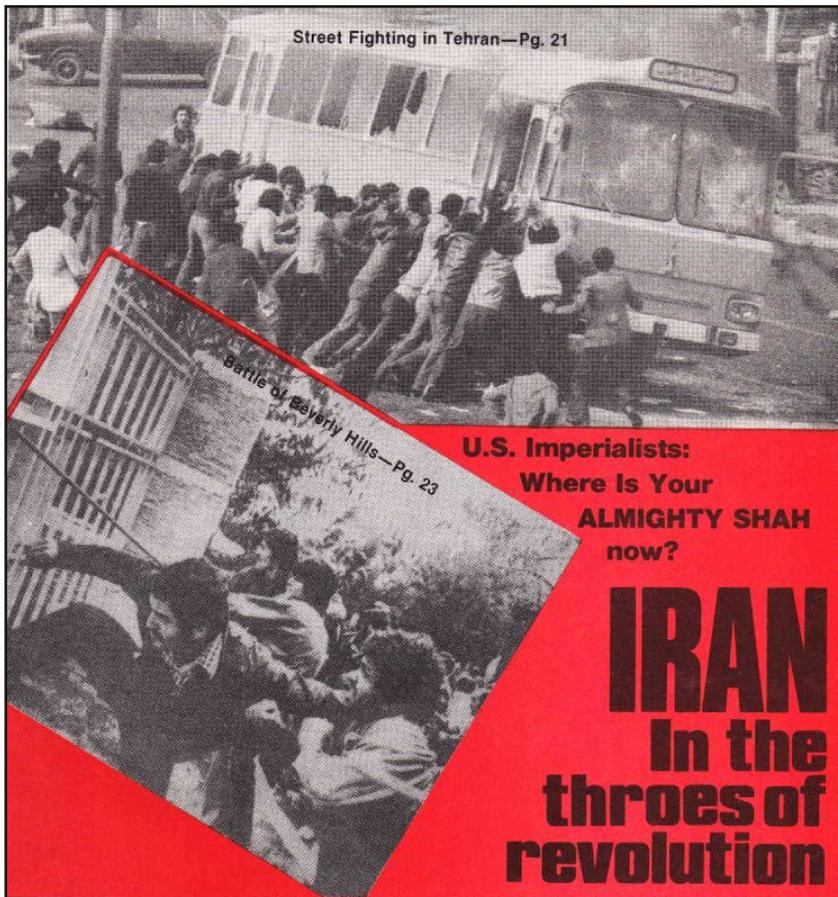
It is very likely that the Iranian military would be able to replicate General Van Riper’s success against the U.S. Navy. If they were able to sink an aircraft carrier and inflict tens of thousands of losses on U.S. forces, public opinion in the U.S. would quickly turn against the war. Between 1965 and 1972 the U.S. forces suffered around 57,000 casualties in Vietnam. If the U.S. military lost tens of thousands of lives in the first days of fighting with Iran, the U.S. public would be outraged and would likely take to the streets *en masse*.

All of this raises the question of what revolutionaries should do at the present moment. Some people argue that it makes sense to support the U.S. because at least this country is a democracy and Iran is a theocratic regime. However, the U.S. is not a truly democratic country because its policies and decisions are determined by the wealthy elite, and not the people.



3) <https://bit.ly/2Huu6HT>





During the Iranian Revolution, U.S.-based revolutionaries organized to support the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah. Today we have to learn from this spirit of internationalism.

What's more, U.S. invasions always make the situation worse, even when the U.S. is invading a reactionary government. **For example, the U.S. invasion of Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein led to a complete disintegration of Iraqi society, with disastrous consequences for the Iraqi people.** This U.S. "pro-democracy" war ultimately created the conditions which gave birth to ISIS, the reactionary Muslim-fascist force that briefly controlled a chunk of territory in Syria and Iraq. The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan also ultimately strengthened the Taliban and turned Afghanistan into a narco-state run by various regional warlords and the U.S. military. Any invasion of Iran, if the U.S. were successful militarily in defeating the Iranian armed forces, would have similar results, and would similarly be a disaster for the Iranian people.

Others argue that because the U.S. is the aggressor, it makes sense to support Iran. **However, even when the U.S. is an aggressor, it does not make sense to actively support a reactionary government.** During the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, it did not make sense to

support Saddam Hussein or the Taliban. And this is all the more true in the case of Iran, which is an imperialist power—although a relatively weak one—expanding its economic, political, and military influence across the region and the world.

However, there is another option. **It is not only possible, but necessary to support the people of the United States and the people of Iran in their respective struggles against the repressive governments in their countries, while also opposing the reactionary and imperialistic maneuvers of both the U.S. and Iranian governments.** Much like the people of this country are struggling for liberation from white supremacy and wage-slavery, the people of Iran are struggling against the reactionary theocratic regime that bleeds them dry and tries to keep them in chains with feudal values and social norms.

It is important to understand that we do not have to settle for the logic of lesser-evilism when two imperialist powers compete with each other. This is a logic that the ruling class of this country sells us all the time.

When it comes to presidential elections, they tell us to pick the least-bad of two oppressive corporate-sponsored war mongers. And when it comes to reactionary governments around the world they try to sell us on the same logic. Ultimately these ideas are based on nihilism, the belief that nothing can change and that a better world is not possible.

Instead of accepting these lies, revolutionaries and progressive people must support the people of Iran in their struggle to topple a corrupt theocratic capitalist regime, while also struggling against the U.S. government, and in particular building domestic opposition to imperialist war, attacks, and sanctions on Iran. We live in a powerful imperialist country that is constantly scheming and maneuvering to subjugate other countries and peoples. So it is on us to get organized, develop the anti-war movement, and fight back. **We cannot sit by idly while the ruling class of this country and their government instigate new conflicts and use the people as pawns in their games of nuclear brinkmanship with rival imperialist powers.**

Organizing Against a U.S. War with Iran

by Lena C.



An antiwar rally marches through downtown. RUF has played a leading role in organizing these demonstrations.

The Boston chapter of RUF has been organizing for a number of months against a U.S. war with Iran. These efforts have included a series of protests, community outreach events and rallies, and educational events at campuses around the area. We have also worked to bring together a number of progressive and anti-war groups in a larger unified effort against the war. **These efforts are an important part of our revolutionary internationalist work in support of the people of Iran and the Middle East.** The people of Iran face a dire situation as a result of U.S. aggression in the form of economic sanctions and the corruption of the Iranian elite.

Our organizing efforts are also part of a larger effort to struggle against the American chauvinism and imperialist ideology promoted by the U.S. ruling class. This ideology is best captured in Donald Trump's slogan "America First." However, many sections of the American population who oppose Trump still have some chauvinist ideas that inevitably result from growing up in a powerful imperialist country and being educated a school-system that white-washes the

As the U.S. imperialists have been ramping up their pressure on Iran and preparing for a war, RUF has been mobilizing the people and building up popular opposition to a war with Iran. We have organized a series of protests and educational events as part of a larger effort to revitalize the anti-war movement in this country. As revolutionaries in an imperialist country we have a duty to the people of the world to organize against imperialist wars of aggression.

history of this country. The imperialist government of this country promotes the lie that it is working to "spread democracy" through its military aggression and invasions. They criticize the oppressive actions of the Iranian government to justify U.S. intervention. However, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan show, even when there is an oppressive government in place, U.S. invasions do not "spread democracy," they cause death, destruction, and misery for the people.

In addition to struggling against such chauvinist and imperialist ideologies, we continue to struggle against liberal politics in our anti-war organizing efforts and particularly in organizing against a U.S. war with Iran. Liberal groups and individuals put forward the notion that we can change the course of U.S. imperialism simply by electing the right candidate. While these politics are middle-class in nature, we are still able to pursue United Front work with these individuals and organizations to organize educational events, rallies, and outreach. Often when collaborating with these groups for rallies, they distribute flyers that ask people to "call their congressman."





Imperialists like Trump, Bolton, and Pompeo have been drooling over Iran, as the plot to carve up the country and plunder its resources.

To combat these liberal politics, we have gotten into the practice of crafting our own flyers that put forward a more revolutionary line. Simultaneously, we have also intensely struggled against those who advocate “tankie” politics. These individuals and organizations frequently support all governments and organizations in opposition to the U.S., such as the Iranian government. They ignore that the Iranian government is highly repressive and is itself an aspiring imperialist power. **Our ability to work with such individuals and organizations is limited, as their politics are directly in support of imperialist forces, like China and Russia, and in opposition to RUF's politics of pushing for a socialist revolution.**

Through these efforts we have made new comrades, both in the anti-war struggle and in the broader struggle for revolution.

In addition to producing our own flyers in contrast to what the liberals and tankies put forward, we also assume a leading role in the planning we do in collaboration with these groups. For example, while organizing a protest against a U.S. war with Iran, we were successful

in having multiple RUF comrades speak and put forward revolutionary politics. Similarly, in planning an educational event with some more liberal group, we were able to push back on the suggestion of having Jim Walsh, a former Obama administration official, as a panelist. **Through our work on campuses throughout the Boston area, we have seen that students are in search of progressive and radical politics and would be turned off by just another Democrat Party establishment spokesperson.**

Exposing the U.S. ruling class' imperialist schemes against Iran is an important task for revolutionaries in this country, as is participating in United Front work with liberal and tankie organizations, where possible. Internally, we are vigilant in constantly reassessing whether or not it makes sense to continue such work. Presently, we are able to take

a leading position in such anti-war efforts, which has led to a substantial advancement in our organizing efforts generally. **These united front efforts have also helped us to reach a much larger audience and mobilize larger number than would otherwise be possible.** Through these efforts we have made new comrades, both in the anti-war struggle and in the broader struggle for revolution. This internationalist work in opposition to imperialists aggression is an essential part of our work as revolutionaries.

**All power to the people!
Death to Imperialism!**



A 1969 protest against the Shah's visit to the United States. The people of this country have a long history of protesting against the government's meddling in Iran and other countries around the world.

Struggles in the Homeless Encampments in the Bay Area

by Zumbi



A community cookout in a West Oakland encampment. These cookouts have been a key way to rally the people to resist evictions and displacement.

As city governments in the Bay Area work hand-in-glove with wealthy capitalist "developers" to gentrify the area and evict the homeless, RUF has been organizing resistance in the encampments. Residents in several West Oakland encampments are once again facing displacement after defeating prior eviction attempts. The city government has been trying to force people into "Tuff Sheds," but the homeless have described these as concentration camps and said "Hell No! We Won't Go!"

The Bay Area Branch of RUF has been working for over a year to build popular resistance in some West Oakland Homeless encampments. This work has required building relationships with the local residents; regularly visiting the area, talking to the homeless about the situation, and asking people what they genuinely think can be done to improve their situation.

The overall situation is very dire. **In Oakland alone, there are almost 10,000 people sleeping on the streets every night. The majority of residents were once renting a home somewhere in Oakland.** People lose their housing from a large range of factors; layoffs, medical bills, incarceration, substance abuse, or domestic violence. As the situation for working people becomes more harsh in this country, the average person is less and less able to recover from any kind of financial instability. The soaring cost of housing means that once most people lose their housing, it's unlikely they will find another unit that they can afford. First and last month's rent, plus a security deposit adds up to thousands

of dollars, and is more than most people have saved up.

After losing their housing, many often try to live in their cars or live with friends or extended family. But all too often this isn't sustainable. All too often, parking tickets pile up and the vehicle (the last bit of shelter) gets towed and all they have left is living on the street.

People's troubles only increase when they become homeless. Local law enforcement, eager to keep the streets "clean" for the wealthy newcomers and private businesses, threaten people with arrest and property confiscation. **This action of sweeping homeless people out of public view is what causes the formation of encampments.** In West Oakland, these encampments sit on vacant lots near the edge of the bay. Conditions in encampments can often be very poor, while people come together in small ways to support one another, there is a limited ability to maintain sanitary conditions. Homeless encampments are even targets of serious illegal dumping by surrounding businesses or housed residents.





A sign made during one of the cookouts in an encampment. Homeless residents in the area are outraged at being pushed into the Tuff Sheds.

These settlements are in contradiction with the long term plans of the city and business interests; which sees the “underutilized” land as a real estate development opportunity, a way to make a quick profit. Ultimately, the city of Oakland will move to evict everyone living there, so that developers can begin construction on those properties.

As the city moves to try and evict the residents again, RUF is making efforts to bring activists from other struggles into this resistance.

Last October, six Oakland police officers attempted to evict the residents of a lot on Wood street. **RUF and local residents worked to form a picket line and the police temporarily held off its eviction plan. While this victory proves the power of even a small amount of resistance, many issues remain.** It has been an ongoing struggle to summarize the lessons of the last struggle and mount a sustained defense against future evictions. Additionally, the RUF Bay Area Branch is small and there are related limitations

on its ability to educate and work amongst the masses. As the city moves to try and evict the residents again, RUF is making efforts to bring activists from other struggles into this resistance. The residents must prepare for the coming evictions but there is a great need for people from other struggles to come together in resistance.

As the threat against the settlements develops, RUF is working to bring residents together to create a plan of action. Comrades put money together to plan dinners in the area and visit to speak with residents weekly.

Many of the West Oakland encampments sit on over 120 acres of vacant and abandoned lots on the cities western waterfront. Much of

this land was formerly used by local industry and shipping companies that have since left the East Bay. The City of Oakland has spent the last few years rezoning this land so that it may be used for residential and commercial purposes. **Many real estate developers have since purchased these vacant lots in the hope of developing luxury apartments for the wealthy.**

As these developers attempt to build on these lots, the city exerts immense pressure to kick out the homeless people already living there. **One major component of the cities strategy to remove poor people is the hasty creation of temporary “housing” near homeless encampments.** This temporary housing serve as little more than concentration camps, where poor people have to surrender their rights as tenants, live in cramped tool sheds, with a roommate (most often a total stranger), with rules similar to a halfway-house. Residents must sign in and out when entering and exiting, and the facilities are monitored by armed guards and surrounded by a high fence.

Residents are subject to strict rules, with limited ability to have guests and with most infractions leading to immediate eviction from the “tuff sheds” with little to no grievance process. Additionally, the residents can only live in these sheds for a maximum of 90 days, if they are not connected to a different housing program

or find their own housing, they are ejected back onto the street. While these shelters may seem like a temporary reprieve from the streets, people have less freedom, they lack the personal networks that people rely on on the streets, and the institution itself often increases the instability in a person's life rather than solves any of their long term issues.

The city is working to convince people to live in these concentration camps, claiming they are in the best interests of poor people on the street. In truth, these hastily created camps are only there so that the city can appease real estate development. **These facilities serve as places to warehouse poor people, so that the city can allow certain sites to be built upon.** Once a camp is cleared, a barricade is put in place and officers are assigned to watch the site to ensure that no one returns to the site after their stay in the tuff sheds is over.

The city is working to convince people to live in these concentration camps, claiming they are in the best interests of poor people on the street.

RUF is working closely with three encampments; one group pushed behind a public park, and two encampments sitting on privately owned vacant lots. Our conclusion is that the City hopes that by relocating the encampments closer to community members, they plan to use resident and neighborhood complaints about the encampments as an excuse to displace people. **The city has also issued several false eviction dates in the hopes of scaring people off. While these false alarms are very stressful for residents, they have no where else to go.**

Due to RUF's previous work to expose the activities of the city of Oakland, the city



Police recently relocated a West Oakland encampment onto a busy shipping road right next to a soccer field. Residents had to set up barriers to protect themselves from traffic.

knows it has to be careful to avoid further embarrassment. Officials have come to try and hold meetings, claiming they are honestly looking for residents feedback about how to proceed but the only thing they offer is a temporary bed and no guarantee of permanent housing. **Recently, residents of the encampment called out officials at these meetings, refused to enter the cities concentration camps, and demanding real assistance.**

After these incidents the city has not held further meetings, after claiming they would be a regular occurrence and have since taken to trying to form relationships with individual residents, to convince them to move. RUF has been clear with residents what these sheds represent and the city is already behind its goals for moving people out of the area.

However, there is too much profit to be made for them to simply give up. **The City of Oakland will come to try to clear people out again and residents have to be ready.** We do not know where they will strike first but regardless, residents from surrounding camps and outside activists must come together and defend the people.



The 2019 Indian Elections and the Rise of Hindu-Fascism

by Nadia



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center left) and fellow Hindu-fascists in Nazi inspired garb doing a Nazi-inspired salute.

In recent months the U.S. public has become increasingly aware of the rise of Hindu fascism in India. However, with this awareness has come a good deal of confusion. U.S. media outlets have described Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the "Trump of India." However, his organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has been organizing for a "Hindu Rashtra" for over 100 years. In order to better understand the nature of Hindu fascism and the Modi government, it is important to learn the history of fascism in India.

In the recent 2019 parliamentary election in India the ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was re-elected with a larger majority than they held before. The BJP is a Hindu fascist party which has carried out and encouraged atrocities against religious and national minorities, including mob beatings, lynchings, and rapes. During the BJP's last term, they launched a widespread attack on democratic rights and freedoms, and in the recent few months since the 2019 elections they have intensified these attacks and launched a major assault on the people of Kashmir.

The BJP's fascism is a screen for its pro-imperialist policies which have opened the door even wider for the corporate plunder and destruction of India's people and resources. To get a section of poor and working people to support these policies the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has drummed up nationalism and religious tensions, blaming the economic problems in India on Muslims and starting border confrontations with India's nuclear-armed neighbor Pakistan. For the people of India, the situation is increasingly desperate, as India becomes more and more of a fascist country under the direction of the BJP. This situation has

drawn larger and larger sections of Indian society into the struggle against fascism, as the Hindu fascists increasingly forbid forms of dissent or criticism. To beat back the growing tide of fascism, the people of India will have to wage a determined and relentless struggle, uniting all anti-fascist sections of society in struggle.

The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party, Hindi for Indian People's Party) is a Hindu-fascist party which is the electoral wing of a larger Hindu fascist organization called the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh). The RSS is a very large and well-funded fascist organization which has the backing of a large section of the Indian ruling class. **It propagates an ideology called Hindutva, which calls for the expulsion or assimilation of all non-Hindus in India in order to establish an explicitly Hindu state, a "Hindu Rashtra."**

Similar to the German Nazi party, the RSS propagates an absurd and ridiculous view of history to justify their plans. The RSS says that before Muslims came to the Indian subcontinent there was a thriving and advanced Hindu society which the Muslims destroyed. They make absurd claims about this society, like saying that there were fighter jets 5,000 years ago and that Lord



RSS members practice in their uniforms. The sticks they're holding (lathis) are often used to assault Muslims, Christians, Dalits (untouchables) and others during RSS street demonstrations.

Ganesh, the Hindu god who has an elephant head, is proof that ancient Hindu societies had advanced plastic surgery. **In the Hindutva view of history, Muslims are foreign invaders who are generally responsible for the problems that India faces. This serves as the justification for all kinds of violence and persecution against Muslims.** The RSS has long propagated their view of history in their own network of Hindutva schools, but since the BJP was elected as the ruling party in 2014 they have been able to make changes in school textbooks and generally use the electoral platform to propagate their ideology on a mass scale.

This ideology is promoted widely by the Indian ruling class because it helps to fool the masses of people about the fundamental source of their problems. The situation for most people in India today is pretty desperate. Most people are very poor, there is very high unemployment, and for many people the only jobs they can find are in unsafe conditions for incredibly low pay.

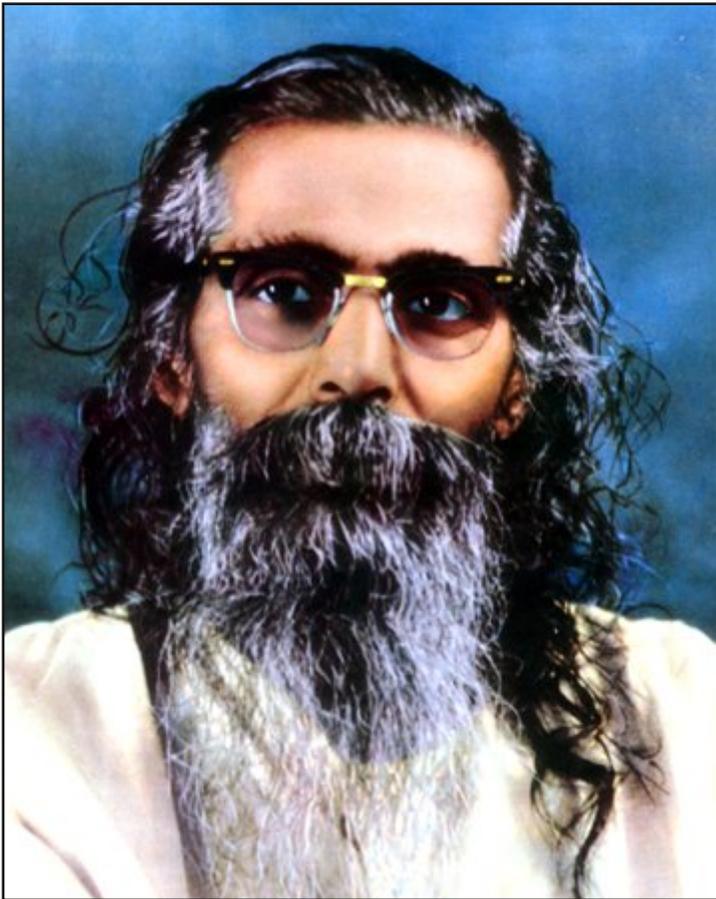
The fundamental source of these problems is the imperialist exploitation of India by capitalists from the U.S., Japan, France, and other imperialist countries. The imperialists, with the cooperation of the Indian ruling class, constantly extract wealth and resources from India

and exploit the labor of Indian workers, which keeps India overall impoverished and underdeveloped. Hindutva ideology exists to convince Indians who are being screwed over by imperialism, including the working class, peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and small capitalists, that the source of their problems is Muslims and other minorities and not the imperialist domination of their country. It is in this sense that the Hindu fascist ideology of the RSS and the BJP is in fact a screen for the imperialist plunder of India.

The RSS has a long history of conciliation and outright cooperation with imperialism, despite the rhetoric they put out about national strength and pride. Before British India was partitioned into the independent countries of India and Pakistan in 1947 there was a very long struggle—which had various ebbs and flows—to free the Indian subcontinent from colonial domination.

This included all sorts of different struggles against British rule, including armed struggle, boycotts, strikes, and more. **As long as the British colonialists continued to occupy India, the struggle to kick them out and free India from colonial domination and exploitation was the most important struggle in India.**





MS Golwalkar, an important ideologue of the RSS and its second “supreme leader.” In addition to advocating subordination to British imperialism, he said that the Nazis’ Holocaust provided “a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by.”

Because anti-colonial struggle was such a central and pressing problem a wide variety of different patriotic and nationalist forces were involved in it. The RSS, however, took a different approach. Although they claimed to support an independent and powerful India, they in fact worked with the British colonialists to spy on and inform on the Independence movement, and they used the platforms they had to advocate against independence. **In 1940, when Gandhi and others launched the Quit India movement against the British, the leadership of the RSS met with the British colonial government and promised to support them. They even promised to encourage their members to join a pro-British guard force.**

In June 1942 M.S. Golwalkar, a major figure in the RSS, criticized those who were pushing for an independent India, saying that “[the] Sangh does not want to blame anybody else for the present degraded state of the society. When the people start blaming others, then there

is basically weakness in them. It is futile to blame the strong for the injustice done to the weak... Sangh does not want to waste its invaluable time in abusing or criticising others. If we know that large fish eat the smaller ones, it is outright madness to blame the big fish. Law of nature whether good or bad is true all the time. This rule does not change by terming it unjust.” **A short time after he said these words the British engineered a man-made famine in Bengal which killed at least 3 million people.** In the twisted and fascist logic of the RSS this brutal slaughter of millions of Indians wasn’t something to resist or stand up to but instead an expression of the natural order of things: the “strong” exerting their will on the “weak.”

The RSS’ line of cooperation with the colonial rulers widely discredited them during India’s independence struggle. People correctly viewed their positions as traitorous, because they sided with the hated and very brutal British colonial rulers against the Indian people, and advocated for national humiliation and subjugation instead of independence. In the present day the RSS works to minimize its pro-British history and claims that it always supported an independent India. They try to claim some of the heroes and martyrs of the Indian independence movement as their own, such as the young revolutionary socialist Bhagat Singh, who was hanged by the British in 1929. The reality of their positions, though, is that they were always resolutely pro-British when the British ruled India.

[The RSS] in fact worked with the British colonialists to spy on and inform on the Independence movement.

Like many other oppressors, a key way that the British, were able to maintain their rule in India was by using divide-and-rule tactics. They exploited existing divisions in Indian society, primarily along religious lines, and specifically sought to favor one group over another. This created a group who owed their better position in society to the British, and who would side with the British colonists against other Indians. The British could then play the different groups off of each other and get the more downtrodden to view the more privileged group as the source of their problems, instead of



Bhagat Singh, a martyr of the Indian independence struggle. He was a revolutionary socialist and an internationalist who was hanged by the British for taking up armed struggle against the colonizers.

focusing their anger on the British and the colonial occupation of India.

This divide-and-rule strategy by the British is the origin of what's called communalism in Indian politics. Communalism is a series of ideologies that divide the people into separate communities along religious lines, under the leadership of groups which propagate the idea that the source of problems is the existence of the other group. **These leaders promote communal violence against other groups and stoke tensions with exaggerated stories of harm against their community by the other group.**

For example, the RSS blames Muslims for all problems in India. They claim that the Mughals, the Muslim rulers of much of the Indian subcontinent before the British arrived, carried out a "Hindu genocide" and systematically persecuted Hindus and attacked Hindu culture. Based on these claims, they say that to create a new Hindu society the Muslims in India have to be either expelled, converted to Hinduism, or

killed, as revenge for the wrongs committed by the Mughals.

While the Mughals were feudal rulers who lived by exploiting the vast majority of the people, there is no historical evidence that they ever carried out any significant, wide-scale attempts to eradicate Hindus. **And more importantly, Muslims in India today are overwhelmingly poor peasants and workers who have nothing to do with the old rulers.** However, for the Indian ruling class one of the key ways they have maintained their rule since independence has been by stoking communal tensions to keep people's anger and frustration directed at other poor people rather than at the imperialists and the politicians who serve them.

The RSS has presided over terrible episodes of violence against Muslims numerous times. **One of the most infamous is the 2002 riots in the state of Gujarat, when during three days of carnage more than 2,000 Muslims were killed by Hindu-fascist goons and hundreds of thousands displaced.** Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat at the time (roughly the equivalent of a state governor in the U.S.) and he made sure that the people committing the violence were not brought to justice. The police in many places cooperated with the Hindu-fascists, providing them with addresses for Muslim-owned businesses and the addresses of Muslim residents.

One of the few people to be convicted for his role in the violence was Babu Bajrangji, who was the leader of the Gujarat branch of Bajrang Dal, a paramilitary Hindu-fascist group. **He bragged openly and proudly in a television interview about his participation in the particularly brutal Naroda Patiya massacre, in which 97 Muslims were murdered, and said that if he could he would like to kill 25,000 to 50,000 more Muslims.** Due to the video recording the court was forced to sentence him to life in prison.

However, in a sign of how the Indian authorities view this type of bloodthirsty behavior, he was released from jail in March 2019 for health reasons and remains out of jail today. In India, progressive political prisoners, including the professor and activist G.N. Saibaba and the poet Varavara Rao, are routinely denied release from jail for health reasons, but Hindu-fascist goons who openly admitted to committing atrocities against people and enjoying it are given leniency.





Members of Bajrang Dal, a Hindu-fascist organizations which routinely distributes knives and other weapons to its members at protests.

This way of governing, by promoting communal hatred and violence, is not unique to the RSS, although at present they represent the most extreme form of it. **Other Indian political parties, in particular the Congress party, have used similarly brutal tactics as well in the past.** In 1984 there was a separatist movement in Sikh-majority Punjab, and a major standoff developed between separatist forces and the Indian army at the Golden Temple, the holiest site in the Sikh religion. Indira Gandhi, who was then the Prime Minister of India, decided to send the army in to the temple to crush the separatists. Much of the temple was destroyed and many people were killed in the subsequent fighting, and there was widespread repression and attacks on Sikhs across the Punjab. This brutal attack on Sikhs caused much anger across the country. Two of Indira's bodyguards at the time happened to be Sikhs, and they assassinated her in response to what she had done. **In response to this, the Congress party orchestrated a pogrom against Sikhs which swept across the country, leaving as many as 17,000 people dead.**

The divide-and-rule tactics which Congress party used to rule India for 51 of the 72 years since independence and which the BJP uses today are a continuation of the tactics that the British pioneered to keep India in their grasp. Although the policies of the BJP represent the most extreme form of divide-and-rule-tactics, this is something that the Indian ruling classes fundamentally agree on. **And ultimately, they need to use these policies for the same reasons**

that the British did, to distract people and keep them from resisting the imperialist exploitation of their country.

Now, more than 70 years after India became an independent country, the RSS and the BJP continue their long legacy of betraying the Indian people to foreign powers. **Although India has become a formally independent country, Indian politicians like Modi have worked since independence to fool the Indian people and open up the country for exploitation by foreign imperialists.** Since taking power in 2014, the BJP has carried out a number of policies which opened the country up for further

exploitation by imperialists, from allowing wholly-foreign-owned companies to set up shop in India to leading brutal attacks on the people aimed at displacing them from their land in order to open it up for mining operations. These types of policies are welcomed by people like Donald Trump Jr, who has repeatedly praised Modi's reforms and called India an "easy place to do business." The fact that Modi's policies are being praised by a reactionary imperialist pig like Don Jr shows how thoroughly the BJP and RSS have sold out and betrayed the Indian people.

Since taking power in 2014, the BJP has carried out a number of policies which opened the country up for further exploitation by imperialists.

The attacks on democratic rights and dissent in Indian society go hand-in-hand with brutal attacks on people's livelihood at multiple levels. The situation for most people in India is quite desperate economically, and the Modi government has, since it initially came to power in 2014, generally made the situation worse for people. For the people to accept these types of policies, the government has to deal with the people's resistance. The government can try to crush such resistance by force, by locking up anyone who disagrees with or speaks out against



Huge lines formed outside of banks all across India as a result of the demonetisation scheme.

their policies. They can also try to convince people that resistance isn't worth it, by brutally attacking anyone who speaks out. They can stoke nationalist and communalist ideas to try to get poor people to blame other poor people for the problems created by the Indian ruling class and by the imperialists. But the basic problem for the ruling class in India is that their policies of turning India over to the imperialists require brutal attacks on the people, which the people have a real interest in uniting to resist.

One particularly disastrous policy was demonetization, a scheme carried out in the fall of 2016 in which all the 500 and 1,000 rupee bills were taken out of circulation (500 rupees is around \$7). **In order to justify withdrawing these widely used bills from circulation, the government said that they needed to combat the "black market" and that these bills were being used for drug-related activities and terrorism.** Although rumors swirled for months beforehand, the government did not confirm their plans until Modi made a surprise special announcement on November 8, 2016 that, effective immediately, the 500 and 1,000 rupee bills in circulation could no longer legally be used, and that people had 50 days to exchange any that they had for new currency.

This announcement set off a disastrous scramble as everyone tried to exchange their notes. **At many bank branches the supply of the new notes was insufficient, so people had to wait in long lines and many of the banks ran out, leaving people in the lurch.** In some places people went hungry because they weren't able to change their money in order to buy food, and a few people were even denied medical care

because the hospitals wouldn't accept their old money. This change hit poor people hardest – for middle-class and wealthy Indians it wasn't much of a problem, since a lot of their money was already deposited in bank accounts. And if they were holding large amounts of cash, they could just hire others to go change the currency for them.

Essentially, the Modi government overnight decreed that the money that millions of Indians had in their pockets was useless, and everyone had

to scramble to deal with it. **For the people it was a disastrous policy, but for Indian banks it was overall a win, albeit a poorly managed and messy one.** The demonetization was never really about combating black market activity, but instead was focused on getting people to use cashless and electronic payment methods instead. This is a big win for the banks, both because they can collect fees from processing those transactions but also because if they can get more Indians to deposit their money in bank accounts then the banks can make more money by lending out those deposits for mortgages and car loans. The government also wants the same thing, both because they can more easily tax people's purchases but also because payment records make it easier for them to track people's whereabouts and surveil them.

To follow-up the disastrous anti-people demonetization policy the government came up with a new scheme, called the Goods and Services Tax (GST). **The GST, which was implemented in 2017, is a new unified tax system which applies to a whole range of products, from food to clothing, in the same way across the whole country.** Previously many of these items were taxed by each state, with different rules and regulations in each state. The GST was advertised as a reform to make India a better place to do business and to get rid of needlessly complex regulations. What the GST was really about, however, was collecting taxes from a whole set of informal transactions which were previously untaxed. People used to be able to buy all kinds of goods, from inexpensive food to clothing, from informal sellers without paying any taxes.

GST made taxation on a wide range of these types of goods mandatory, so the prices that poor people paid for all kinds of everyday goods increased, often by quite a lot. In its first term, the Modi government also pushed through a whole series of policies which opened India up to further exploitation by foreign imperialists. One change that made it much easier for foreign capitalists to do business in India was a change in the regulations around foreign direct investment (FDI).

FDI refers to investment from outside the country in things like factories, infrastructure, real estate, and so on. FDI is an innocuous-sounding name for a method of imperialist control and exploitation. It's part of what Lenin, in his 1917 work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* called capital export. When capitalists from countries like the U.S., Japan, Israel, or China invest in countries like India they set up factories, infrastructure, and so on in those countries which are under their control. **In the factories they set up the foreign capitalists have the final say about how factories are run, and they own the profits which are produced in those factories through the blood and sweat of the workers.** These profits are constantly pulled out of the country by the foreign capitalists, continually impoverishing India.

Now factories and operations set up by foreign capitalists will be 100% under their control, and the profits made in those factories will flow out of India at a greater rate.

Previously, in most sectors of the economy there were formal limits on the percentage of FDI that was allowed in a given project –usually limited to 49%, so 51% of any given project had to be owned by an Indian, and only 49% would be owned by the foreign capitalist. Modi changed the regulations to allow for 100% FDI in a whole series of different important sectors of the economy, from retail operations, pharmaceuticals, and civil aviation to defense. Previously, projects were allowed to go



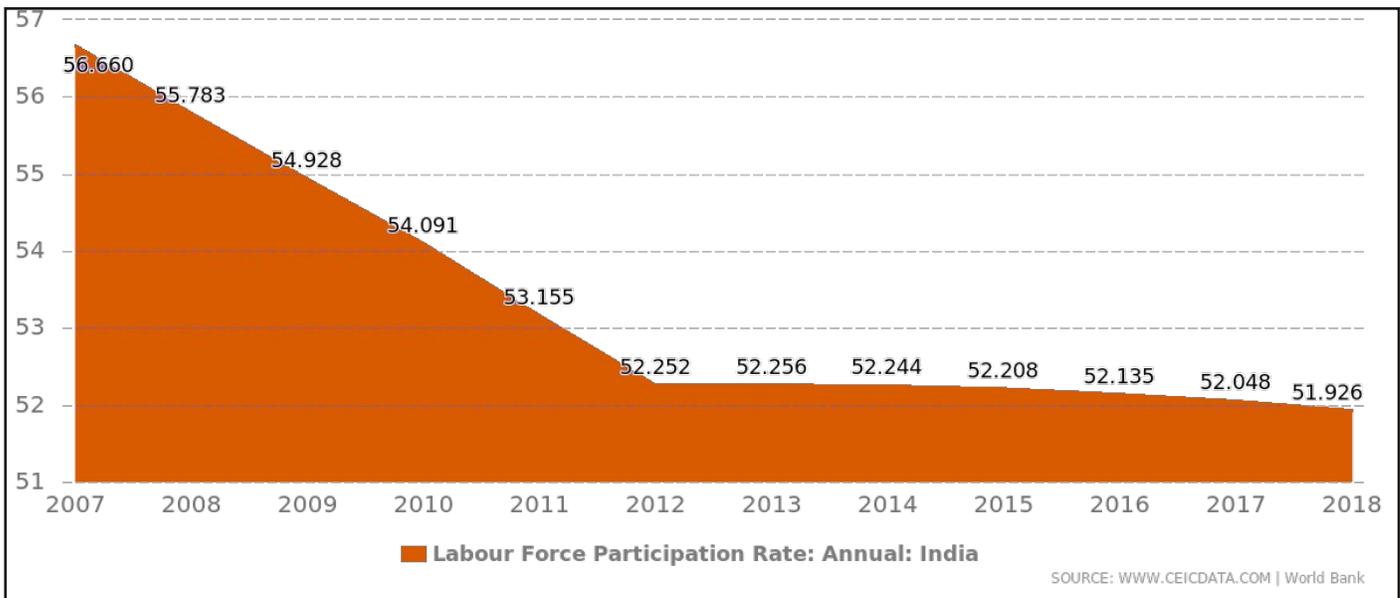
An anti-GST protest in Punjab. The imposition of the GST led to a number of protests across India.

beyond 49% FDI only after being specifically approved, so these changes didn't lead to the first 100% FDI projects in India, but it does represent a shift to make this the norm. These changes will deepen the imperialist exploitation of India. Now factories and operations set up by foreign capitalists will be 100% under their control, and the profits made in those factories will flow out of India at a greater rate.

For big multinational corporations like Apple this is great news. **With the U.S.-China trade war threatening their manufacturing in China, they are looking to relocate their operations.** Foxconn, the subcontractor that produces iPhones and other goods for Apple, started opening factories in India in 2015, and announced this year that they were ready to start producing iPhones in India. The Foxconn factories in China have become notorious for unsafe and exploitative working conditions. Workers are forced to work extremely long shifts with few breaks, and the repetitive, high-speed work and intense management pressure drove many to commit suicide.

The number of suicides increased so much that the factories installed suicide nets to prevent people from jumping. For the BJP and the Modi government this is exactly the kind of "development" they want to bring to India. By allowing 100% FDI in wide sections of the Indian economy, they have opened the country up almost completely for the free reign of the imperialists.

The Modi government's pro-imperialist and poorly managed reforms have created a real economic crisis for people. In the wake of



demonetization and the imposition of GST, and the related economic turmoil, there have been big increases in the number of jobless people. The government's official unemployment figures say that India has around 6% unemployment, but this is a very misleading figure. **This is contradicted by absurd stories, like several thousand people with PhDs applying for a single entry-level police job.** It is also contradicted by the massive numbers of people who are living in slums around big cities like Delhi and Mumbai, barely scraping by on odd jobs or the income of a family member.

A better estimate comes from the labor force participation rate, which describes the percentage of people capable of working who are doing at least some work. In 2018, the labor force participation rate for India was only 49%, meaning that fewer than half of all people eligible and able to work are working. This number has actually gone down during the BJP's time in office, despite Modi's claims that India has no joblessness problem at all. This means that huge sections of the Indian population are barely able to survive, depending on temporary work here or there or on the income earned by a family member. **In many Indian cities these sections of the population form huge slums where millions of people live in unsafe conditions, without access to clean water, medical care, or sufficient food.**

At the same time that this major joblessness crisis grips India, some of those who do have work are also dealing with very desperate situations. Farmers, and particularly small farmers, have been driven further and further into debt, with the result being that huge numbers are committing suicide. This is the result of being forced to purchase expensive GMO seeds and fertilizers to

In 2018, the labor force participation rate for India was only 49%, meaning that fewer than half of all people eligible and able to work are working.

remain competitive with larger farms. In order to finance these purchases, the farmers have to take out crushing amounts of debt, which can put them in a situation where one crop failure or bad year leaves them unable to pay their debts. **In a grim twist, a lot of farmers have killed themselves by drinking these same pesticides.**

In this overall situation, where vast sections of the population are in desperate economic situations, a lot of people have serious contradictions with the system. As the economic conditions for people get worse people are pushed more and more to rebel against the conditions that they are living in. **To deal with this, the BJP government has launched wide and deep assaults on democratic rights and dissent.** Of course, even before the BJP came to power India brutally attacked people who dared to seriously raise their voices and stand with those most oppressed and exploited by the brutal development policies of the Indian elite. G.N. Saibaba, the progressive scholar, activist, and political prisoner whose story has inspired activism world-wide to agitate for his release, was actually arrested under the previous Congress government. However, the policies of the BJP represent a dangerous escalation in these types of attacks and are a real danger for the people of India.



Many people have come out to protest against the existence of fascist laws like the UAPA and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

India is quickly becoming a fascist country. During the first term of their rule, the BJP took drastic steps to curb basic democratic rights and retaliate against their critics. Now any disagreement with or criticism of the government and its policies can be grounds for imprisonment, torture, or worse. Many progressive lawyers, activists, scholars, and artists have an imprisoned under draconian anti-terrorism and anti-sedition laws, which can carry huge jail sentences. The government has broken its own laws and dispensed with parts of the normal legal proceedings which it finds inconvenient. Many of those accused have been implicated or arrested on the flimsiest of pretexts, with next to no evidence of the crimes they have supposedly committed.

Since the 2019 election this trend has accelerated rapidly. The BJP government, emboldened by their re-election, has passed a series of new fascist laws which deepen their attacks on democratic rights and dissent. The most serious of these laws amends an existing law, the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) to make it easier to designate someone a terrorist. This law, the UAPA, is the same law which was used to send G.N. Saibaba and thousands of other brave activists and revolutionaries to prison. **It allows for harsh penalties, including life imprisonment, for involvement in “illegal activities,” which typically means any activity aimed at really threatening the ability of the ruling class in India to exploit India’s natural resources and the labor of its people.** In the past, in order to convict someone under this law it was at least

formally necessary for the government to prove that the person was involved in something “unlawful.” Of course, the government often made up evidence, policemen often lied, and so on, so even this legal requirement could be skirted by the state when necessary.

Now, the UAPA has been amended to allow the government to designate any person a terrorist or designate any organization a terrorist organization without any evidence at all. This change removes any real legal requirement for the government to prove that a person has done anything illegal before they can be charged under the

UAPA. It means that anyone who criticizes the government or dissents at all can be labeled a terrorist and subject to harsh punishment and incarceration. It remains to be seen exactly how this law will be used by the government to attack dissidents and stifle criticism, but it is clearly part of an overall trend towards increasing the repressive power of the state and towards an openly fascist form of government.

The government has broken its own laws and dispensed with parts of the normal legal proceedings which it finds inconvenient.

In addition to changes to the UAPA, in the few months since the 2019 election the BJP government has also been able to pass several other big pieces of its legislative agenda. One is an amendment to the Right to Information law (RTI), a law that is similar to the Freedom of Information Act in the U.S. Previously under the RTI there was an independent office to which people could submit requests for government documents and information. This office was supposed to coordinate the release of any materials which weren’t state secrets. In practice, of course, things were often delayed or requests denied without any reason, simply because the material would be inconvenient for the State to deal with if it got out. Now, though, the RTI has been changed so that the office is no longer even



A map of Kashmir, showing the Indian and Pakistan-occupied sections of the nation.

nominally independent, and the government has authority over its operations. The RTI itself was a victory that people won, and documents and pieces of information released under the RTI exposed major scandals and outrages by the Indian government. By amending it the BJP has completely hollowed it out and rolled back this gain by the people.

The Indian government has also, in just the past month, taken extraordinary steps to attack the people of Kashmir. Kashmir is a region in the Himalayas to the north of India which is culturally and linguistically distinct. It is also rich in mineral resources, and is a very beautiful place, making it a highly desirable location for tourism. Part of it is occupied by Pakistan, part by India, and a small part by China. When the Indian subcontinent was partitioned by the British, Kashmir, which is majority Muslim, was ruled by a Hindu Maharaja called Hari Singh who was a much-despised figure.

He initially wanted Kashmir to remain a separate country, and not join either India or Pakistan, but his onerous taxation led to large protests breaking out, and some forces from Pakistan came to join the protests against the Maharaja. The Maharaja, worried that events on the ground were going to take Kashmir into Pakistan whether he wanted it or not, asked for assistance from India. India agreed to help him out, but only if he agreed to join with India. Indian forces invaded and occupied part of

Kashmir, while Pakistani forces invaded and occupied the rest. This laid the ground for the present situation, where there is a cease-fire line between the part of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan and the part occupied by India.

The Kashmiri people were never consulted about any of this. In 1948 a U.N. resolution decreed that in order to resolve the situation there should be a vote in Kashmir to see what the Kashmiri people want. It would have two options: join with Pakistan or join with India. The only really democratic solution to this problem is to ask the people what they want and abide by the will of the majority. This should include the option for Kashmir to become an independent country. To this day this has not happened, and the Kashmiri people live under a brutal military

occupation. **Currently there are around 1,000,000 Indian soldiers stationed in Kashmir, making it the most militarized place in the world, with one Indian soldier for roughly every 7 Kashmiris.**

For years the Indian army has employed secret torture centers, mass killings, arbitrary lockdowns and curfews, and more, to try to beat the Kashmiri people into submission. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris have been killed in this brutal occupation. The Indian troops often open fire on protests with pellet guns, indiscriminately blinding people in the crowd.

The Kashmir valley is filled with thousands of unmarked graves, holding the bodies of Kashmiris killed for fighting back or simply for being too defiant during a humiliating search operation. The violence has taken a tremendous toll on people for generations, but the Kashmiri people have waged a very long and brave struggle for freedom, and the brutal methods of the Indian army have not broken the Kashmiri people's spirit and drive to fight for freedom from national oppression.

The recent changes by the BJP government have changed the situation considerably. The Indian central government has unilaterally revoked the small measure of autonomy that Kashmir had to determine its own affairs, and to keep control of the situation they have imposed a complete siege on Kashmir.





The recent attacks on Kashmir have sparked large protests, despite fascist restrictions put in place by the Indian army. Kashmiris have also organized a general strike throughout the nation.

They've cut off access to phone, internet, and television networks, instituted a curfew, and placed checkpoints all over the territory. People are often unable to go in or out, and Kashmiris are unable to access basic medicines. **There is a widespread belief that this is the preamble to a vicious all-out assault on Kashmir that would turn the resources over to Indian corporations and turn part of Kashmir into an open-air prison for the Kashmiris, similar to the conditions for the Palestinians living in Gaza.**

Narendra Modi has said constantly that this move is "good for Kashmir" and that the previous differences in the legal code in Kashmir were a major "obstacle to development." **But the basic question on the table is, if this is good for Kashmir and Kashmiris, why were they not allowed to have any input on these changes?** Why was the whole area put under a military siege while the changes took place? Clearly if the changes were in the interest of Kashmir these measures wouldn't be necessary because people would support them. **The reality is that these measures by the BJP go entirely against the will of the people of Kashmir, who have been fighting for independence for generations.** After more than 70 years of oppression at the hands of the Indian state Kashmiris do not want to

be part of India, and they want Azadi (freedom in Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, and several other South Asian languages).

Previously the Indian-occupied portion of Kashmir was governed as a state within India, called Jammu and Kashmir. There was also a special article in India's constitution, Article 370, which granted some special status to Jammu and Kashmir, including prohibiting people from elsewhere in India from buying land there. This offered the territory a small measure of autonomy, but in the grand scheme of things it wasn't all that much. For instance, under this Article the people of Kashmir did not have the power to expel the Indian army or to hold a plebiscite on independence, but the prohibition on non-Kashmiris owning land in Kashmir did put a brake on the total loot and plunder of the land by Indian corporations. **Now after imposing the blockade and changing the territory's status, the government has signaled they plan to open the territory for wholesale loot and plunder by Indian and multinational corporations.**

This fascist move to unilaterally change the situation for Kashmir has big implications elsewhere in India. In the northeast part of India, which is linguistically, culturally, and even geographically distinct from the rest of India,



India's northeast, which is culturally, linguistically, and geographically distinct from the rest of the country. There are several ongoing national liberation struggles being fought there.

there are multiple ongoing struggles for national liberation in Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram. **The people in these areas do not want to be part of India, and they have been fighting for national liberation for a long time.** Now the BJP government has shown it is willing to go to extreme lengths to attack national liberation movements and to forcibly retain peoples who want to separate from India. This has been the policy of the Indian government for a long time, but the BJP has shown that it is willing to “take the gloves off” more than previous administrations.

The BJP has been able to rapidly make these changes because it currently has a sizable majority in the lower house of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha. The BJP actually increased the size of this majority in the 2019 election, so to pass their legislation they don't need the support of any opposition parties. Right now, the BJP itself holds 303 of the 545 seats in the Lok Sabha. The BJP is also the leading party in an alliance called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which holds 356 seats altogether. In the upper house of the parliament, the Rajya Sabha, the NDA does not have a majority, holding 116 out of 245 seats, but they

have thus far been able to effectively split or neutralize the opposition parties in order to pass their legislation. This situation overall has made it so that the BJP is more or less able to simply introduce the legislation it wants to pass and pass it as-is, with very little in the way of any debate.

All of this has created a very dangerous situation for the people of India. Many members of the BJP and RSS have openly stated their intentions to launch attacks on minorities, to clamp down on dissent, to stifle democratic rights, to open the country up for further domination and exploitation by imperialism, and, in short, to create the fascist Hindu Rashtra (Hindu state) that they've been talking about for almost 100 years. They now have state power, and this goal is within their grasp. **They can change just about any law that they want to, and the only check on their power is opposition from the people.**

All of this is possible because there are significant sections of the Indian population which currently support the BJP. However, the base of support for the BJP is somewhat unstable, because their own policies negatively affect sections of their base. For instance, the reactionary section of the Indian petty bourgeoisie is one part of the support for the BJP. These people, whether they are small shopkeepers or office workers, are squeezed by the imperialist domination of India, and were also negatively affected by policies like demonetization and the imposition of GST.

Now the BJP government has shown it is willing to go to extreme lengths to attack national liberation movements and to forcibly retain peoples who want to separate from India.

If the BJP can keep up the narrative that the economic problems these people face are due to Muslims and other “enemies of the Hindu nation” they will be able to retain the support of these people. On the other hand, if large sections of the petty bourgeoisie realize that it is actually the Indian ruling class and the imperialists who are screwing them over, then the BJP and RSS will have big problems on their hands.

This is a core problem for the BJP and the RSS. **Unlike the fascist movements that developed in Germany and Italy leading up to World War II, the RSS is not able to buy off a large section of the population due to the fact that imperialists dominate India.** The Nazis and the Italian fascists were based in imperialist countries, where the profits made by exploiting other countries gave the ruling class the ability to buy the loyalty of big sections of the working class by giving them a relatively higher standard of living. These fascist movements were fundamentally imperialistic, and represented the open dictatorship of the most reactionary, most expansionist, and most imperialistic sections of the bourgeoisie. They sought to expand their access to markets, territory, and resources by outright, naked force, ultimately leading to an inter-imperialist World War fought against rival imperialist powers (the United Kingdom, the U.S., etc).

Fascism in India is different because India is not an imperialist country. India does have expansionist ambitions, and given its large area and very large population it is often able to act as a bully in relations with its neighbors, like Nepal and Sri Lanka. But outside of its immediate region India is not able to exert the same type of influence that the U.S., France, China, or even weaker imperialist powers like Israel and South Korea are able to exert. India is a poor country, and a big chunk of the profits produced by the labor of the Indian people belong to the imperialists. These profits constantly leave the country, so the Indian ruling class has less wealth at their disposal.

Recently, a major RSS-run trade union, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Indian Workers Organization), called a big strike in the munitions sector. They criticized the “pro-corporate” policies of the government, and advanced demands against a privatization of the munitions factories. **In any capitalist country the section of workers who produce arms are one of the most important groups for the ruling class to buy off.** In the U.S. they are one of the best-paid, most reactionary, and pro-U.S. sections of the working class. This is important for the ruling class because the “defense” industry isn’t just about making money but serves an underlying strategic need as well. In short, they need to be able to count on the loyalty of the people who produce their weapons in order to be ready to confront rival powers, and they are willing to cut into their profits a little bit in order to do so. The fact that in India big sections of defense workers in an RSS-controlled union are going on strike

shows that the Indian ruling class is not able to buy the loyalty of these workers in the same way that the U.S. ruling class is.

Fascism in India serves to both disguise the imperialist plunder of the country and get a section of the people to support all-out crackdowns against those who resist. **This means that in order to really oppose fascism the people of India will also need to strongly oppose the imperialist domination of their country.** The current state in India, founded in 1947 and engineered by the British, is inadequate for doing this, as are the current electoral opposition parties. This includes the main opposition party, the Congress Party. This is because the current Indian state is a state set up to serve imperialism, so just participating in the elections and really trying to get elected within that system necessarily involves making compromises with imperialism.

AIDF Zindabad ! Mazdoor Ekta Zindabad ! Lal Zanda Zindabad ! Inqulab Zindabad !

ALL INDIA DEFENCE EMPLOYEES FEDERATION

NATIONWIDE ONE MONTH STRIKE BY

AIDF, INDWF, BPMS & CDRA



**TO DEFEAT THE EVIL DESIGN OF
THE GOVERNMENT TO DESTROY
ORDNANCE FACTORIES**

ONE MONTH STRIKE

FROM 20.08.2019 TO 19.09.2019

**against corporatization of Ordnance Factories
arbitrarily by the Government in violation
of the agreement and assurances.**

- **The workforce of Ordnance Factories reject the decision of the Government to corporatize the Ordnance Factories.**
- **Corporatization is the first step for Privatization**
- **Save Ordnance Factories ! Save Nation**



AIDF Zindabad ! Mazdoor Ekta Zindabad ! Lal Zanda Zindabad ! Inqulab Zindabad !

Poster calling for defense workers to go on strike. The call was issued by a union controlled by the RSS.



Sikh protesters demand justice for the brutal pogroms that were organized by the Congress Party in 1984. The Congress Party is not an alternative to the BJP and RSS, and in fact has more in common with them than not.

Congress Party and some of the other electoral opposition parties do oppose some of the more extreme policies by the BJP and RSS. But their opposition is quite halfhearted, and the Indian people cannot count on them to provide a different way forward. For one, they showed in the most recent election that they cannot even defeat the BJP electorally – the BJP’s “get out the vote” machinery for voter intimidating, vote-buying, election fraud, etc. is simply stronger than the Congress’.

Recently the extent of the BJP’s organizational machinery has come out, when some investigative work revealed that it’s quite common for BJP organizers to manage 1,500-2,000 chat groups on WhatsApp. Some of these groups have hundreds of thousands of members, and are an incredibly powerful and widespread mechanism for rapidly distributing propaganda. This is just one example of how, during their time in power so far, the BJP and RSS have been able to cement their position in society and build infrastructure that will let them strongly shape Indian society. Congress, despite its very long history in India, cannot rival this level of organization at present.

More importantly, though, Congress Party is not fundamentally opposed to the politics of the BJP. If BJP is the party of hardline Hindutva, then Congress represents “soft” Hindutva. The Congress party presided over some of the worst massacres in the history of the Indian state, including the 1984 massacre of Sikhs and the declaration of Emergency from

1975-1977. The Congress party is also not an anti-imperialist party, they are a pro-imperialist party which worked hand-in-hand with the British to set up the current Indian state in 1947. Given that the fundamental basis for the existence of the BJP and its electoral success is the imperialist domination of India, any party which is not really opposed to imperialism cannot really oppose this.

A large section of Indian society is oppressed by the BJP and by the imperialist domination of Indian farmers, workers, progressive petty bourgeoisie, national minorities, religious minorities, etc. This force must be unified into a large, united front against imperialism and fascism. For this, it’s necessary for

the proletariat to play a leading role, since the other classes do not have the same interest in totally opposing imperialism, and could be liable to compromise at the last minute. There have been unfortunate examples of this in the last few years. In Egypt and in Sudan the working class wasn’t organized and prepared to play the leading role in mass struggles that developed to overthrow imperialist-backed repressive governments. **As a result, in both cases, the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leadership of the movements compromised with a section of the existing power structure.** In Egypt this led to the establishment of a brutal military dictatorship. In Sudan the protest movement, led by the petty-bourgeois Sudanese Professionals Association, recently accepted a compromise, joining a coalition government made up of civilians and members of the armed forces, who are backed by various imperialist powers.

These failures to really throw out the imperialists are not personal failures by these individuals, but an expression of their class position. Even under a military dictatorship the petty-bourgeoisie will enjoy a position of comfort relative to the working class, and so members of this class will tend to be open to compromises with the power structure. At the same time, though, the active participation of all classes who have an interest in opposing imperialism is necessary, because this struggle is not just a working class struggle, and although other classes do have a tendency to waver they all have an interest in opposing imperialism.





A protest in London during Modi's visit there. People in India and around the world are increasingly coming forward to protest the rise of fascism in India.

Ultimately, a new form of the state will be needed. The current Indian state is a decadent, bloated bureaucracy built to serve imperialism. It has a huge military and police force designed for oppressing the people, and vast sections of the country are totally unserved by schools, hospitals, transportation, and other important infrastructure. The Indian state has also presided over wide-scale environmental destruction, including the destruction of jungles to clear the way for mining and the pollution of India's rivers.

A new form of the state is needed which can address the needs of the people and the needs of all the democratic and anti-imperialist classes and sectors of society. **The Indian people will have to lead a revolution to overthrow the current decadent and oppressive state to build a new one in its place.** Most importantly, this state must be actually anti-imperialist to the core, and it will have to kick all foreign imperialists out of India immediately. India is a large country with a very large population and abundant natural resources, so there is a strong basis for the Indian economy to be developed towards self-sufficiency. This has to be pursued so that the economy is not dependent on goods imported from foreign countries, since this is a form of power that the imperialists wield over others to control them.

This new state must also adopt a progressive policy towards the oppressed nations in India. The people of Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, and other minority nations within India have to be given the right to self-determination as nations, ultimately including the

right to form a separate country if they so desire. However, at the same time, the state and the people of India must struggle to address the national oppression that the people of those areas have faced, including struggling to eliminate prejudices, addressing disparities in quality of life and access to services and infrastructure, returning funds gained through the plunder of natural resources, etc. If these issues are handled correctly there can be a basis for the oppressed nations to remain part of a new revolutionary and anti-imperialist India, but this can only be done on the basis of a conscious and voluntary association. The oppressed nations can't be forced to remain part of India at gunpoint, as they are currently.

For the Indian people the rise of the BJP to state power and the increasingly fascist nature of the Indian state is a big challenge. The BJP and the RSS continue their long legacy of selling out the country to foreign imperialists, sponsoring mob violence and lynchings against religious and national minorities to distract the Hindu majority from the imperialist plunder of India. **This is creating a disastrous situation for the majority of people in India, who are dealing with rising unemployment, inflation, displacement, and deprivation.**

Many people in India are also struggling to live under an onslaught of fascist violence, from the police and security forces, as well as from mobs of Hindu fanatics. This is the method of rule that the Indian ruling class has settled on, and in order to defeat it the Indian people will have to wage an all-out struggle against the fascist forces and against the imperialist domination of their country. Many different sections of society which can oppose fascism will have to be brought together into a strong united front, to defeat Hindu fascism and put a new, pro-people and anti-imperialist government into place. People here in the U.S. and internationally should do everything they can to support this struggle, since it is part of the international working-class struggle, and it is our internationalist duty to support the people of the world in the struggle against the forces of reaction.

Death to Fascism and Imperialism!

The Siege of Kashmir and the International Protest Movement

by Nadia

Kashmir has long suffered under foreign occupation. Recently, there has been a massive crackdown on Kashmiris by India's fascist government. This has sparked huge demonstrations in support of Kashmiri independence not just in Kashmir itself but also abroad, including the U.S. RUF sees this as a key front in building international solidarity with people's struggles around the world, and is working hard to create deep links with this movement.



Large-scale protests have broken out in Kashmir despite the lockdown by the Indian Army.

Since August 5th, 2019 the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir have been living under a virtual siege. The Indian government imposed a communications blackout, cutting off phone, internet, and television access. The government also stepped up military patrols and put restrictions on travel. Kashmiris living outside of the valley have been unable to contact their relatives, and the few reports which have made their way out speak of medicine shortages, brutal repression of protests, and a total disruption of everyday life.

These measures were put in place by the Indian government just before they announced drastic changes to the legal status of Indian-occupied Kashmir. These changes destroy a few token measures of autonomy that Kashmir had in India, and are part of a very long history of brutal attacks on the Kashmiri people by the Indian government. **These latest changes to Kashmir's status within India threaten to lead to large scale ethnic cleansing and genocide.** Because of this, the situation demands that people around the world raise their voices in opposition to the actions of the fascist Indian government.

Kashmir is a linguistically, geographically, and culturally distinct region located in the Himalayas which is currently divided between Pakistan, India, and China. It is rich in mineral resources, and possesses incredible natural beauty. This makes the control of Kashmir a priority for the Indian ruling class, who want to set up mining operations and build hotels and ski resorts to turn Kashmir into a tourist site. But the Kashmiri people have long been oppressed by the Indian state, and also have a long history of resistance. **The brutal attacks they've suffered, the military occupation they have lived under, and the economic deprivation they've endured have created a strong movement in Kashmir in favor of independence.** In order to loot the resources of Kashmir the Indian ruling class will have to destroy or defeat the Kashmiri people.

Kashmir has a long history of oppressive rulers. At the time of Partition, when British India was divided into separate, formally independent countries, Kashmir was a separate country ruled by a Maharaja. Before Partition there were several similar countries in South Asia that were called princely states, which were ruled by a British-backed puppet rulers.



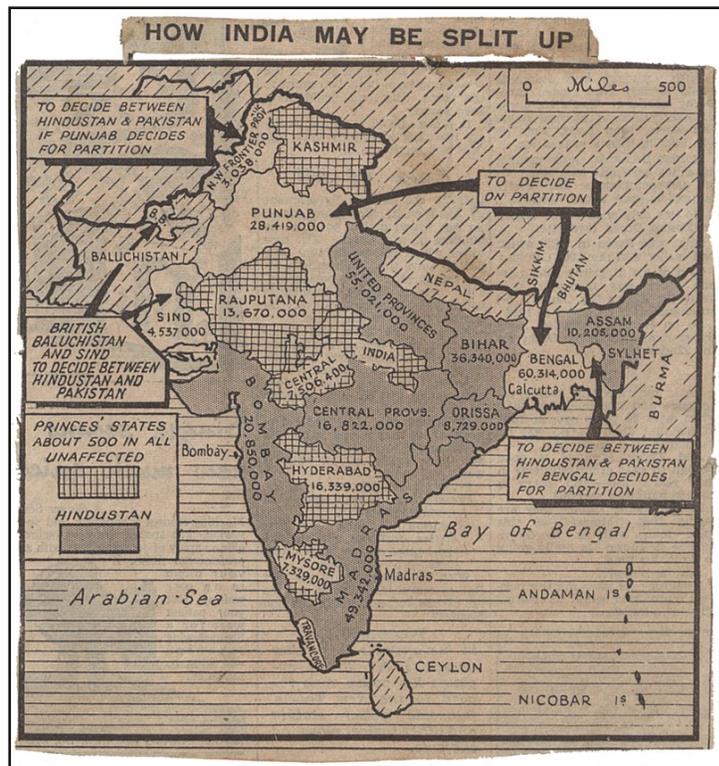
The Maharajas in these countries were appointed by the British and ruled in the British interest, brutally taxing the people and helping to maintain British colonial rule. At the time of Partition, in 1947, the princely states were offered the choice of joining Pakistan, joining India, or becoming independent countries. The Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, initially elected to remain independent. He was the Hindu ruler of an overwhelmingly Muslim country, and his harsh taxation and repression policies were widely despised by the Kashmiri people.

The Indian army has stationed around 1,000,000 troops in Kashmir, about one soldier for every 7 Kashmiris, making it the most militarized place in the world.

In 1947 a protest movement developed against his rule, opposing his onerous taxation and oppression of the people. Pakistan, which had just been formed, seized on this opportunity to try to gain control of Kashmir. This sent the Maharaja into a panic, and he appealed to India for assistance. There was a relatively brief military confrontation between India and Pakistan, and in 1948 a ceasefire was declared in Kashmir. This is when the current ceasefire line, which divides the Pakistan-occupied and Indian-occupied sections of Kashmir, was set.

Since 1948 a portion of Kashmir has been ruled by India and another portion by Pakistan. **In both portions there have been independence movements in favor of a unified Kashmir, and in both portions the people's will has never been respected.** After the 1948 cease-fire, which was managed by the U.N., a U.N. resolution said that a vote should be held in Kashmir to see what the people of Kashmir want for their future. They were supposed to have two options: join with Pakistan, or two join with India. Both India and Pakistan have refused to carry out this vote. For them it is not important what the Kashmiri people want or what they think.

This latest attack on the people of Kashmir by the government of India is simply the latest in a long history of brutal oppression. The Indian army has stationed around 1,000,000 troops in Kashmir, about one soldier for every 7 Kashmiris, making it the most militarized place



A map of British plans to partition the subcontinent. The colonial overlords devised various schemes to divide-and-rule the region even after transferring power to local elites.

in the world. These troops have maintained control of Kashmir through a brutal reign of terror. **They maintain secret torture centers, and Kashmiris endure arbitrary killings, random lockdowns, curfews, rapes, and more.** The Indian soldiers have killed tens of thousands of Kashmiris, whose bodies are deposited in unmarked graves throughout the valley. They routinely open fire on protests with pellet guns, which have blinded thousands of Kashmiri youth. Despite all of this brutal oppression, the Kashmiri people continue to resist, and they continue to organize and fight for freedom.

The Indian soldiers have killed tens of thousands of Kashmiris, whose bodies are deposited in unmarked graves throughout the valley.

Here in the U.S. the attacks on Kashmir have launched a series of protests and demonstrations in solidarity with the people of Kashmir. It's important that we show solidarity with people's struggles around the world, but our role in the U.S. is also more specific than that.





A protest in Boston against the ongoing Indian occupation of Kashmir. Protesters wore red in solidarity with Kashmir. This was one of a series of coordinated protests across the world.

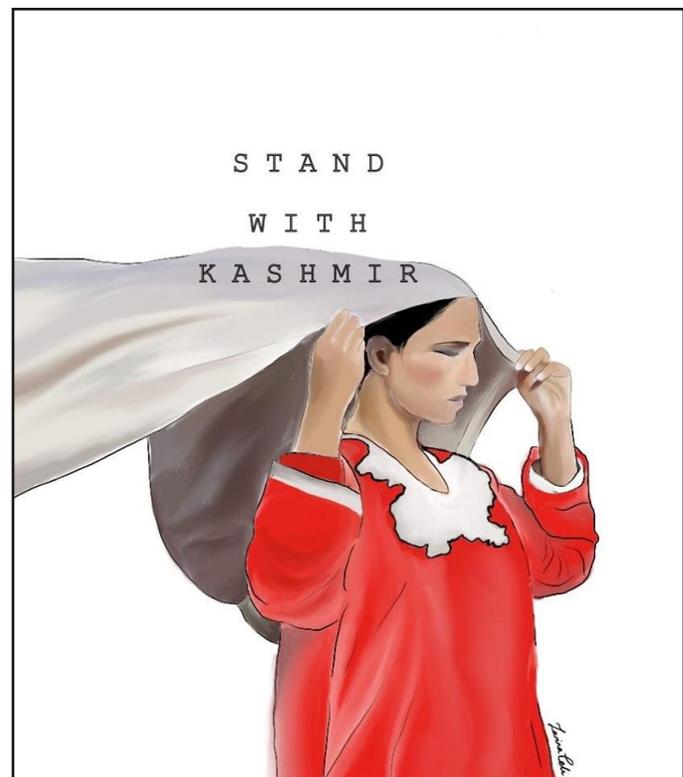
This is because the U.S. government supports the siege on Kashmir, so our role is both to support the people of Kashmir and to oppose U.S. support for the fascist Indian government.

U.S. support for India's actions in Kashmir is both direct and indirect. After a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Trump said publicly that he would be happy to "mediate" between India and Pakistan about Kashmir. This statement, which was made before the announcement of the siege, caused a minor diplomatic panic in India. **It also revealed that India consulted with the U.S. and Pakistan before launching the siege of Kashmir.** The U.S. also sells arms to the Indian army, and last year the two countries signed an agreement called COMCASA allowing for closer military and intelligence cooperation. This support really does make it easier for the Indian state to do what it's doing in Kashmir, so people here in the U.S. have a real duty to oppose it.

The U.S. based movement in solidarity with the people of Kashmir is still fairly new, but already there have been several large protests in cities around the country, including New York, Boston, Washington, and Seattle. Members of RUF have been actively supporting these protests. It's important that people stand up to oppose the growing tide of fascism in India, and expressing solidarity with the people of Kashmir is a very important part of that. The situation in Kashmir can also expose to a wider audience what Narendra Modi and the BJP government in India represent, and help to build up a movement against fascism in India. **The attack on Kashmiris is a particularly brutal assault, but it is also just one part of the BJP's overall fascist policies and attacks on the people of India.**

Here in the U.S. we have an internationalist duty to stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir and support their struggle against the brutal attacks launched by the fascist Modi government. R.U.F. has been involved in protest events around the country, and R.U.F. members are working hard to expose the role of the U.S. government in perpetuating and deepening the misery and oppression of the people of Kashmir. We're proud to stand with the people of Kashmir in their struggle for freedom and self-determination!

**Freedom and self-determination for Kashmir!
Down with Hindu fascism!**



Mass Rebellion and Inter-Imperialist Competition in Serbia

by Lena C.



Tens of thousands march in Serbia's capital, Belgrade. They have been protesting against president Aleksandar Vučić for the past ten months.

Since the imperialist-engineered breakup of Yugoslavia in 1992, and the subsequent NATO bombing of the region, the people of Serbia and the other Balkans countries have suffered immensely. Now Serbia is a key site of inter-imperialist competition. As the so-called "great powers" struggle for world supremacy, the people of Serbia are caught in the middle and trying to find a way forward free from oppression and exploitation.

Recently, a nation-wide protest movement against the current political situation in the former Yugoslav republic of Serbia has gained notable traction. More than twenty years after the civil wars of the 1990s and imperialist powers carving up the region, the people of Serbia have mobilized to oppose the state's increasingly fascist tendencies and collusion with imperialists. **Years of sanctions, two NATO bombing campaigns, and the 2008 financial crisis have exacerbated the already dire conditions for working people in Serbia.**

In addition to these issues, the increasingly hostile inter-imperialist struggle between the U.S., China, Russia, and the European Union has left the people of Serbia caught between a rock and a hard place. In response, the people, in their thousands, have taken to the streets every Saturday since November 2018. This mass mobilization has inspired many and represents the anti-imperialist sentiment of the Serbian people as they struggle for liberation from corrupt local rulers and imperialist vultures who seek to tear up the country and feast on the remains.

Imperialist Build Up in Balkans

The imperialist domination of Serbia and the Balkans began prior to the break-up of Yugoslavia, which was made up of six Slavic republics: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Montenegro, and two autonomous regions, Kosovo and Vojvodina. In the 1980s, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) planned to provide the erstwhile Yugoslavia "structural adjustment" loans meant to privatize as much of the economy as possible. The austerity program was fervently struggled against by a people's movement that crossed ethnic lines. **In 1989, 650,000 Serbian workers held a strike to protest the government's proposed policies, which included a wage freeze.** The trade unions were able to unite Serb, Croat, Bosnian, and Slovenian workers against the restructuring.

However, due to the corrupt local elite and most significantly the lack of a revolutionary movement, these "reforms" were eventually adopted. The debt and economic crises that followed exacerbated the uneven development between Yugoslav republics and autonomous



City and Republic/Territory	GDP Per Capita
Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina	133
Zagreb, Croatia	188
Pristina, Kosovo	70
Skoplje, Macedonia	90
Titograd, Montenegro	87
Belgrade, Serbia	147
Ljubljana, Slovenia	260
Novi Sad, Vojvodina	172

Source: Radovinović, Radovan; Bertić, Ivan (1984) | *Atlas of the World: A New Look at Earth*

The policy of uneven development by the Yugoslav State impoverished many regions and enabled reactionary leaders to use these differences as nationalist propaganda.

regions. The policy of uneven development by the Yugoslav state to extract resources from poorer regions and refine them in industrialized regions benefited a few regions at the expense of others, fostering feelings of resentment between different ethnicities.

Imperialist powers such as Germany and the U.S. seized on these ethnic tensions and further aggravated them by supporting and sponsoring reactionary, nationalist leaders. These leaders, like Tudjman of Croatia, Izetbegovic of Bosnia, and Milošević of Serbia pitted various ethnic groups against each other by placing the blame of the crisis on the people of different ethnicities. Sponsoring these leaders and promoting such tensions were crucial to the imperialist's efforts to break up and better control the region. **The earlier united working-class resistance to IMF "restructuring" had posed a significant threat to the imperialists' maneuvers, and they sought to break working-class unity by sponsoring genocidal hatred.**

The civil wars that broke out in 1991 were disastrous on all fronts. Led by reactionaries on all sides, the wars were the worst manifestation of regional strongmen's efforts to attain political power and establish expansionist ethno-states by inciting national chauvinism and hatred. In order to control the course of the civil war and secure Western imperialist interests were protected—instead of those of their rivals, Russia and China—NATO joined the war under the guise of

"humanitarian intervention."

The wars were quite brutal on all people across the republics and territories. **There were a series of mass killings like the 1995 Srebrenica massacre and Bosnian genocide.** These atrocities included the slaughter of over 8,000 people and the displacement of at least 25,000-30,000 Bosniak civilians. They were carried out by warlord politicians like Radovan Karadžić, who was president of Republika Srpska – an autonomous political entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina comprised of Serbians. He was largely responsible for the Bosnian genocide and was in hiding until he was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal (ICT).

The overlap between warlords and politicians throughout the Yugoslav wars was indicative of the political situation at the time. The politicians worked closely with the warlords to sponsor ethnic hatred and incite the people into committing atrocities. Similar ethnic cleansings also occurred in Croatia and Kosovo, of Serbians and ethnic Albanians, respectively. As part of these atrocities mass rape of women and children were carried out on a larger scale, as well as the pillaging of towns and villages. **All people in the region suffered immensely in the name of various ethnic chauvinisms, but for the profit of the imperialist plunderers.**

Sponsoring these leaders and promoting such tensions were crucial to the imperialist's efforts to break up and better control the region.

In 1999, NATO again bombed Serbia. This time to supposedly stop the Serbian State's oppression and ethnic cleansing of Muslim, ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo. After decades of harassment by the Serbian State—and specifically the discriminatory policing that included everything from arbitrary identity checks to outright torture—the Albanians in Kosovo rose up to oppose the national oppression they faced. Then-Serbian President Milošević, a reactionary nationalist, stripped Kosovo of its autonomy and fired thousands of Albanian state employees in 1987. As tensions in Kosovo mounted, private U.S. military companies and the CIA trained and provided other support to a fascist, drug and organ trafficking paramilitary organization.



This was the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), who co-opted the struggle of the Kosovars by inciting national hatred and violence against Serbians and by turning Kosovo into a protectorate of the U.S. and European imperialists. Due to the lack of a revolutionary organization to liberate the Albanians in Kosovo, the KLA achieved Kosovo's independence not through a liberation struggle, but by seeking imperialist support. Instead of rising up to create a socialist state, the KLA led the Albanian population of Kosovo down the dark path of imperialist domination—as that was the primary reason the U.S. became involved in the Kosovo issue. **The U.S. and other European powers came to the “defense” of Kosovo not to protect or liberate the Kosovars, but because they saw an opportunity for further capitalist exploitation and imperialist expansion in the region.**

During NATO's “humanitarian intervention,” the imperialists targeted bridges, hospitals, schools, and factories. The imperialist coalition's 78 day war on Serbia killed and injured thousands of civilians while producing more Kosovar refugees than there were before the 1999 bombing. Estimates of the damage caused by the bombing are as high as \$100 billion and Serbia's GDP was reduced by 25 percent. **NATO even “accidentally” killed Albanian refugees in Western Kosovo, the people they were supposed to be saving!** These basic facts expose the fraudulent claims of a “humanitarian intervention” by the bloodthirsty imperialists.

Immediately after seceding from Serbia through back-door deals with notoriously brutal imperialists like Madeline Albright, the narco-state of Kosovo—with U.S. blessing and encouragement—traded most of the state-owned assets to imperialists and multi-national corporations in exchange for the ability to dominate the multi-billion-dollar drug trade in the Balkans. Hashim Thaçi, a KLA military commander who became Kosovo's first Prime Minister, has been implicated in various lumpen drug and organ trafficking operations. **Currently, 70% of Afghan heroin passes through Kosovo to Western Europe and opium poppies are the second most cultivated drug in the Balkan region after marijuana.**



Bill Clinton is honored for his role in enabling the narco-state of Kosovo to secede from Serbia and maintain a stranglehold on Balkan drug and organ trafficking.

Kosovo's government of the lumpen bourgeoisie has shown its gratitude to the U.S. by erecting a statue of President Bill Clinton while the people of Kosovo continue to starve. Around 40% of the population of Kosovo officially lives in poverty (although the real numbers are likely much higher), and many are migrating elsewhere to escape the State's corruption and the ongoing pauperization of the masses.

Estimates of the damage caused by the bombing are as high as \$100 billion and Serbia's GDP was reduced by 25 percent.

As a direct result of NATO's deliberate destruction of factories throughout the two bombing campaigns, thousands of Serbian working people lost their jobs and ability to scrape by. Millions of Serbs fled the country, and following the ousting of President Milosevic, the Serbian government has only intensified its reactionary and dictatorial assaults on the people. **The country has been continually opened up to plunder by different imperialist powers, including the United States, Russia, and China.** The Serbian government, in collaboration with the imperialists, has increased the pressure on the people through a variety of neoliberal austerity measures. For example, as part of these austerity measures



Luxury apartments that were built in the Savamala area, which was forcibly bulldozed.

privatized evictions are now legal; this allows people to be evicted for being late on even an electricity or television bill! This policy allows the developers to easily drive poor Serbs from their homes so that they can be demolished and replaced with luxury condos, hotel resorts, or the like. The privatization of evictions was specifically recommended by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) during its “reconstruction” of Serbia after the war. This is one of many factors which has led to a growing anti-government sentiment among the Serbian people.

Current Political Situation

In recent years, the Serbian government and overall political system in Serbia have reached a crisis of legitimacy. During the 2017 Presidential election, a satirical candidate who campaigned on building a coastline for landlocked Serbia, was runner-up behind former Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vucic (a reactionary nationalist who played a big role in spreading racist and nationalist propaganda in the late 90s). This crisis is starker in Serbia than in the U.S., where the two-party system still holds legitimacy in the eyes of the people. In the U.S., both parties are simultaneously scrambling to co-opt the struggles of the working class. “Radical” candidates like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders have been largely successful in leading the people down the dead-end of bourgeois democracy by tricking them into thinking that by voting for the “right candidate,” the system can be fixed. **By contrast, the Serbian state is trying but largely failing to win over the people due to its increasingly**

dictatorial policies and openly selling out the people to capitalist-imperialists.

In 2016, when President Vucic was Prime Minister, his family reportedly held €1 million in real estate assets. This is likely a gross underestimate, but given the low-cost of real estate in Serbia, this is still a sizeable real estate portfolio. In contrast, his 2016 property declaration stated he was one of the poorest statesmen in Serbia. This is typical of how the ruling elite in Serbia attempt to hide their assets for fear of retaliation by the overwhelming majority of working people who can barely scrape by. **Since then, President Vucic has amassed more wealth while intensifying state censorship as well as imperialist “investment” and economic control of Serbia.**

Many imperialist countries like China, Russia, and the United States invest great sums of money for the construction of apartments and infrastructure for the wealthy Serbian elite and foreign businesspeople. One example of this is the United Arab Emirates’ construction of luxury apartments in the Savamala area of Serbia’s capital, Belgrade. These luxury condos are only one of many gentrification and displacement projects that the junior imperialist, the UAE, is sponsoring in Serbia. Before the construction of luxury apartments, thousands of residents in the Savamala area refused to leave. **With no popular support for imperialist destruction of the neighborhood, the increasingly fascist government turned to outright barbarism and sent thirty masked men to attack people with baseball bats and bulldoze the buildings in the area.** In response, the Serbian people flooded the streets in uproar. This particular incident was one of the catalysts for the larger protest movement which continues today.

While the Serbian state turns to more openly fascist politics, it is important to note that elements of a bourgeois democracy do still exist—albeit in a deep crisis. And it’s also important to remember that a capitalist democracy provides very little freedom or justice to the people. Large demonstrations are possible in Serbia without mass arrests and violent State-sponsored crackdowns. However, this could change in the near future. **As the protest movement continues to grow and the global economic crisis deepens, the ruling elite in Serbia and their imperialist masters may soon decide that outright fascist oppression is a more efficient way to run the country and make super-profits off the hard labor of the Serbian people.**



Imperialist Tug-of-War

As Vucic and his lackeys struggle to maintain their rule, the various imperialist factions continue to fight tooth and nail to secure a stronghold in the region. China, in particular, is in intense competition with the U.S. and European Union. **The Belt and Road initiative, which is China's plan to overtake the U.S. as the dominant world superpower, is the main way the Chinese ruling class is making inroads in the Balkans and globally.** The Chinese state uses high-interest, predatory loans (similar to loans advanced by the IMF and other U.S.-backed institutions) to finance various infrastructure projects that exploit the local population and plunder other countries' resources. Recently—much to the agitation of the European imperialists—the Chinese imperialists have made significant inroads in Europe, with annual foreign direct investment by Chinese multinationals reaching an all-time high of \$18 billion in Europe in 2014. These investments are causing the European and U.S. ruling classes to worry and maneuver to counter such influence.

For the Chinese ruling elite, Serbia is an essential neocolony in their plans to establish dominance in Southeastern Europe. As a result, Serbia is currently the largest recipient of Chinese “aid” in the Balkans and has been loaned approximately €5.5 billion (about \$6.12 billion in USD) for the construction of bridges, highways, and railroads. These loans now amount to 12% of Serbia's national debt. **Chinese companies are gobbling up Serbia's state assets at an alarming rate and have already purchased copper mines, steel plants, power plants, high-speed rail lines, roads and ports.** In September 2018, Serbian President Vucic and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed that China would contribute approximately \$3 billion in “economic and military investments” for the construction of a Chinese-owned tire factory, the “development” of copper mines, and the construction of the largest industrial park in Europe comprised of 1,000 Chinese companies – all to exploit the desperate Serbian working class.

China also seeks to expand its military and surveillance reach to the Balkans. In 2016, the

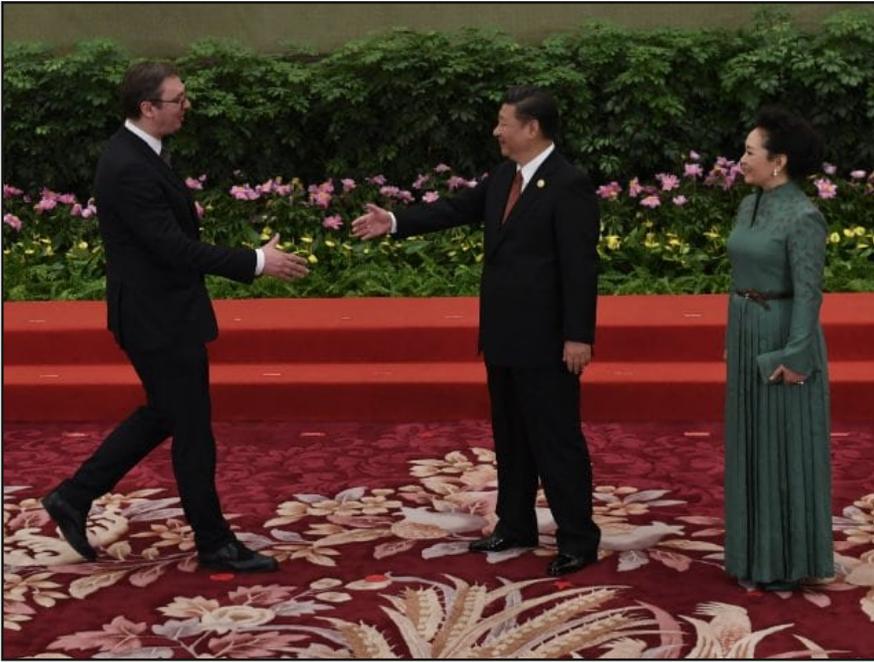


A massive Chinese-owned coal mine in Serbia. Chinese companies have been buying up Serbian resources left-and-right, carrying out environmentally destructive practices, and displacing Serbian people from their land.

Chinese state agreed to supply military drones and conduct a technology transfer to enable Serbia's production of future drone systems. As the protests across the country continue to intensify, the Serbian state has requested the help of China's police force for their experience in cracking down on protestors. **The presence of Chinese policemen in Serbia is indicative of the global strength of Chinese imperialism and how they are able to dominate the Serbian people for the interests of the Chinese imperialists and the Serbian elite.**

As the protests across the country continue to intensify, the Serbian state has requested the help of China's police force.

Furthermore, Huawei, China's largest multinational technology corporation, has been openly supporting and collaborating with the Serbian state in its crackdown, including providing video surveillance for the Serbian police and “counter-terrorism” departments. In April 2019, Serbian state officials announced they would implement Huawei's Safe City Solution, a surveillance system that uses thousands of security cameras that use facial and license-plate recognition software to attempt to track the



Serbian President Vucic meets with Chinese head of state Xi Jinping in 2019. These meetings have been crucial to securing Chinese support for crackdowns on the protests in Serbia.

movements of every single person in the whole city. **These surveillance systems will undoubtedly be used against protestors by the Serbian and Chinese police to clamp down on dissent.**

In response to China's growing influence, the European Union (EU)—the project of old colonial powers to create a neocolonial network of countries subservient to their ruling classes—is scrambling to assert its strength. For over a decade, Serbia's ruling elite has been trying to become an EU member in opposition to the will of the Serbian people, many of whom vehemently oppose joining the Union. The EU—and in particular France and Germany, who run the show at the expense of even other EU member states—bullies non-EU members like Serbia to comply with its frameworks and institute neoliberal reforms harmful to the people. **In “exchange” for membership the powerful countries in the EU set up factories in poor member-states to take advantage of the low-cost of labor as neoliberal reforms force people to sink deeper into wage-slavery.**

While the Serbian state continues to push for membership, approximately one-fourth of Serbians polled by the European Commission responded that they think joining the EU would have a negative impact on their lives. A large number of Serbians observe the harm neighboring member countries such as Greece have endured in the form of various austerity measures and other

disastrous neoliberal policies. So, many realize that joining the EU would not solve the problems they face. **They see how people in those states become migrant laborers and beggars who have to wander around the EU hoping to find work for incredibly low wages.**

While the EU remains a strong player in the region—providing 70 percent of the total foreign direct investment to the Balkan region—China increasingly serves as an alternative for the elite in Serbia and other Balkans nations. To counter China, the EU is now attempting to regulate the industries in which China is involved. In 2016, a subsidiary of Chinese steel manufacturer Hesteel purchased Serbia's only steel mill and in early 2019, the EU introduced a limit on how much steel they would import, negatively affecting several countries that export steel to the EU,

including Serbia.

In Serbia, this quota caused the Chinese-owned steel mill to reduce production and ultimately resulted in the firing of workers. The goal of these EU-quotas is not to “protect EU producers” but instead to protect the capitalists' interests at all costs and their ability to compete on the global stage for domination. The true nature of this maneuver is evident in the fact that the EU exempted Norway and Cameroon from the steel import limit. The European ruling classes are frightened by China's rise as an imperialist competitor and will do whatever they can to outmaneuver and outcompete China. **The suffering of the Serbian people is just an inevitable consequence of the so-called “great powers” playing their “Great Game.”**

Despite China's growing influence in Serbia, the Serbian state seeks to maintain an aura of neutrality. In addition to courting the EU, the Serbian state maintains military and economic ties with Russia as well. Given the close alliance between Russia and China, there are different contradictions between those ruling classes and the concerns that the EU and the U.S. have with China. Russia has a stake in China's push to create a second imperialist system outside of U.S. control. However, given that it is militarily and economically weaker than the U.S., the Russian ruling class is scrambling to ensure it has a top position as an exploiter and oppressor.



As NATO expands along the Russian border, Putin and his capitalist backers are working to consolidate their strength through Eastern Europe. In militarily annexing Crimea, the Russian state showed its willingness to use force to do this. **In the Balkans, Russia currently prefers to employ cultural propaganda such as Pan-Slavist ideology to convince the Serbian people to welcome Russian imperialism with open arms.**

The Russian empire had a history of utilizing this “shared Slavic identity” to expand its dominance to the region. In the lead up to and during the First World War, Tsarist Russia used Pan-Slavism to justify its involvement in the war as a means to “liberate” Slavs in the Balkans living under Ottoman and Austrian rule. Similarly, the contemporary Russian state claims that it must save its Slavic brothers and sisters from Western domination, and replace it with their own imperialist domination, of course!

The Russian empire had a history of utilizing this “shared Slavic identity” to expand its dominance to the region.

The Russian oil and gas industries are also a powerful force in the region and a way in which the Russia state exerts its imperialist influence. In Europe in particular, Russia is the dominant supplier of oil and gas and in 2017 supplied 30% of Europe’s petroleum oil and 39% of gas imports. The Russian ruling class seeks to expand and leverage this position to strengthen its influence in the Balkan region and in Serbia in particular. During the financial crisis of 2008, the U.S. decreased its economic stake in Serbia’s crippled economy and sold Serbia’s state-owned oil and gas company, Naftna Industrija Srbije (NIS) back for a symbolic \$1. In 2012, Gazprom (Russia’s largest company) capitalized on the opportunity to make inroads in the Serbian market and bought a majority stake in NIS. **By monopolizing the Serbian oil and gas market, Russia strengthens**



“Partnership for the Future” billboard in Serbia’s capital, Belgrade. On the left side is the Russian flag and on the right, the Serbian flag. This is part of the Russian effort to promote Pan-Slavic ideology.

its role as the supplier of oil and gas in Europe and is able to leverage this position to exert influence on European powers.

NATO and the Western ruling classes have long been battling Russian influence in the region. In NATO’s expansion to Eastern Europe, the political elite in countries that were bombed by NATO, like Montenegro, have given into pressures to join the Union. In Serbia now, this conflict between the imperialist powers is deepening. It is not clear which bloc of imperialists Serbia will side with. Despite continued participation in the “Slavic Brotherhood” joint military exercises with Russian and Belarussian forces, Serbia has ten times more military cooperation with NATO member states.

In Serbia now, this conflict between the imperialist powers is deepening. It is not clear which bloc of imperialists Serbia will side with.

The Serbian State has largely succeeded at courting all imperialists simultaneously. **It’s cooperation with NATO is particularly striking, given its role in destroying the majority of the country.** In 2015 the Serbian state signed an Individual Partnership Plan (IPAP) that allows NATO to use Serbian military facilities and infrastructure and in 2016 went further to grant NATO forces freedom of movement and





Women in the Yugoslav Partisans who fought against the Nazis in WWII. These partisan fighters united the various different ethnicities in the region in the struggle against fascism. This sort of movement shows what is possible in Serbia and the Balkans.

diplomatic immunity throughout the country, effectively serving as an additional police force. These newly agreed upon privileges for NATO forces are unacceptable to the Serbian people, who refuse to let such betrayals go by ignored. The people of Serbia and the Balkans are fighting back after being torn apart by competing imperialist forces.

It is unlikely the various competing imperialists will allow the Serbian state to maintain even a façade of neutrality for much longer given the mounting tensions associated with capitalist-imperialist competition. **Due to the inherent contradictions of capitalist-imperialism that make imperialist war inevitable, as well as the increased competition between imperialists in the region, the Balkans will likely be drawn into and potentially serve as a front for an impending war between imperialist powers.** Meanwhile, the Serbian people are actively resisting and protesting the continued plunder of their country for the profit of a few Chinese, American, EU, and Russian oligarchs.

A Way Forward

While it is positive that the people of Serbia are rallying against the conditions brought about by inter-imperialist competition, a truly revolutionary organization is needed in order to overthrow the people's oppressors. The current protest movement in Serbia lacks such an

orientation and therefore has several limitations to its potential, long-term success.

Currently, the anger of the masses is directed at Vucic and his lackeys. As a result, many are primarily focused on his removal from power through an electoral victory by opposition Parties. Given the increasingly fascist tendencies of the Serbian state, the immense focus on the present dictator is not necessarily a negative characteristic of the movement. However, it does allow other local rulers to exploit the sentiments for their benefit. Members of the opposition party in particular have made a point of attending, speaking at, and recruiting people for their Party at the protests. While some of the leaders of the protest movement warn against resting hope on the opposition, the fragmented leadership of the protests is

increasingly leading the people down a dead-end. **The opposition Parties in Serbia are not a real alternative for the people, the only difference between them and Vucic's administration is that they represent a different section of the same corrupt, local elite.**

The opposition Parties in Serbia are not a real alternative for the people.

For the people of Serbia, the exploitation perpetrated by the state and its imperialist backers is obvious. **What isn't as obvious, is how to channel the energy of the people into a movement that brings about the end of such exploitation, and which really establishes a pro-people and genuinely socialist society.** It is essential that the people recognize that siding with the imperialist enemy of your own imperialist enemy will only change where the profits flow to. With an inter-imperialist crisis looming, there will certainly be openings for the people of neocolonies like Serbia to oust their oppressors. The liberation of the Serbian people, and the growth of an internationalist and anti-chauvinist society in the whole Balkan region, is contingent on the growth of a principled, revolutionary organization that enables the people to chart a new path.



The Revolution in Sudan

by Rodney and Smith



Thousands of people took to the street on April 12, 2019 to celebrate the end of Omar al-Bashir's thirty year military dictatorship.

The Sudanese people have recently led a mass uprising successful in toppling the highly repressive Omar al-Bashir regime. However, a coup sponsored by imperialists installed a new military dictatorship. Despite this setback, the Sudanese people are continuing their long history of struggle for liberation from corrupt local rulers and their imperialist backers.

The recent overthrow of Omar Bashir's 30-year old military dictatorship, has brought mass international attention to Sudan. The ousting of the Bashir regime was carried out by a mass movement of progressive classes, and should be seen as a great victory for the people of Sudan. However, it also has created openings for further imperialist plunder of the country as well. **As the transitional government is being formed it is evident that foreign interests in Sudan are concentrated on exploiting the people of Sudan and extracting the wealth of a country rich in natural resources.** Before exploring how foreign powers seek to exploit Sudan and its people, it is important to review of Sudan's history as a colonial and neo-colonial state.

From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, Sudan was controlled by British-Egyptian rule. In 1882 the British invaded Egypt to put down a nationalist revolution that was hostile to colonial rule. This was a move to not only shut down resistance from the Egyptian people, but to also to maneuver against other imperialist countries like France which threatened British dominance in the region. As competition for imperialist plunder in the region heated up, in 1896 France attempted to challenge British

supremacy in Egypt by obstructing the flow of the headwaters Nile river—especially those in Sudan—to disrupt England's economic operations in the country. To counter this maneuver by the French, British authorities determined that they needed to conquer Sudan to protect their interests in the Nile river valleys and secure British imperialist dominance in the region. The British defeated the French and Sudanese forces in the Battle of Omdurman by using an army composed of mostly Egyptians, and secured British rule in the region. **This use of colonized people in an armed force against other colonized people was an essential aspect of British colonial rule and a way in which they sponsored ethnic hatred as part of their divide-and-rule strategy.** An Anglo-French agreement was signed in 1899 that halted French imperialist expeditions into East-Africa and granted England dominion over the region.

After the British defeated the French in inter-imperialist war in North-East Africa, England had to determine how it would govern Sudan, its newly acquired territory. They adopted a policy of joint rule with the Egyptian elite. This was done through the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium which allowed the British to run the show, but gave the Egyptians power to oppress





Egyptians fought alongside the British in their war to conquer Sudan, and these Egyptian members of the British military crushed many uprisings in Sudan.

the Sudanese. **This was a key part of sponsoring ethnic hatred which the British used to rule their colonial subjects by pitting one against another and claiming to be “mediators” themselves.** Even under this Condominium, England suppressed the Sudanese countryside and various uprisings throughout the country. The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium would remain in place until Sudan won its national independence on January 1, 1956.

In order to secure their continued domination of the region, the British tried to set up a puppet government which was nominally independent, but actually loyal to their interests.

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium is but one example of how imperialist power functions throughout the globe. While imperialist countries often enter into agreements with its colonies, semi-colonies, and neo-colonies that disguise their true intentions, we have to expose their tricks and reveal that their principal objective is to expand their empire, suppress national movements, create favorable conditions for the

export of capital, and increase profits at the expense of the masses who inhabit the geographic regions they aim to exploit.

Even with these strategies, the British could not hold back the Sudanese people’s struggle for liberation forever. By the early 1950s the British empire was in shambles and anti-colonial movements were spreading like wildfire. In order to secure their continued domination of the region, the British tried to set up a puppet government which was nominally independent, but actually loyal to their interests. In particular, they wanted to install a unified Egyptian and Sudanese state and used their Sudanese puppets to push for this. However, the Sudanese people were so outraged at the way they had been treated by Britain’s Egyptian lackeys that they were dead set on winning an independent country.

Ismail al-Azhari was a Sudanese lackey of the British who had been an administrator in the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. **He was a key puppet through which the British pushed for a unified Egyptian and Sudanese state;** he directly worked against the Sudanese independence movement during the British colonial rule. However, when it became clear that the Sudanese people were not going to accept this he quickly switched his tune and supported an independent Sudan.

After the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 scared the British, they pivoted and were willing to support an independent Sudan. With the Egyptian Generals, they came up with a “transition plan” to a nominally independent Sudan. **This was really just a change from direct colonial rule to neocolonialism.** This is evident because the British colonial administration was not destroyed in this transition, but remained an integral part of the government, and ensured British rule of the country despite its nominal independence. Ismail al-Azhari was handpicked by the British to run the new Sudanese state. However, his government was incredibly corrupt and inept.

Around this time the U.S. had overtaken the British as the dominant imperialist power in the world. The U.S. imperialists were looking for new markets for U.S. goods and new sources of raw materials and cheap labor.



With the promise of “helping to develop and diversify the Sudanese economy” the U.S. was able to win the loyalty of a section of the Sudanese elite. **Many people were rightly outraged at the treatment that they had faced at the hands of the British, and because of this some harbored illusions that the U.S. might represent a progressive alternative.** The imperialistic aims of the U.S. became more clear when they sponsored a military coup in 1958 that installed General Ibrahim Abboud in power.

The U.S. elite’s strategy for ruling Sudan involved settling Sudan’s disputes with Egypt and instead fostering ethnic and religious hatred internal to the country. Abboud would oversee a theocratic dictatorship which would forcibly facilitate the spread of Islam and the Arabic language throughout the majority Christian south. Under this policy the Southern Sudanese—and all other religious and ethnic minorities—were forced to hide all aspects of cultural and religious differences from the ruling elite or face brutal repression. **This oppressive program was met with resistance by southern Sudanese who viewed self-defense including violence as the only logical answer to opposing General Abobud’s authoritarian and violent rule.**

This pattern of various imperialist powers competing, and the Sudanese people paying the price in blood, has continued to the present day. **However, it’s also important to see that despite these hardships the people in Sudan have a rich legacy of people’s struggles and have overcome a number of military dictatorships, even though they have yet to win their ultimate liberation.** These twists and turns of inter-imperialist competition led to the eventual establishment of Omar al-Bashir’s military dictatorship in 1989 which secured the backing of the imperialist Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, his government grew increasingly close to China.

More recently, inter-imperialist conflict between the Chinese and U.S. imperialists has literally divided the country in two. Starting in the late nineties, China began to invest heavily in Sudan and won support of the ruling elite there.



U.S. President John F. Kennedy meets with Sudanese dictator General Ibrahim Abboud in the Oval Office in 1961.

Through a series of bribes and other maneuvers typical of imperialists, China was able to secure a dominant role in Sudan, which led to U.S. sanctions against Sudan in 1997. These sanctions were nominally aimed at combating terrorism, but in reality aimed to cut the Sudanese government’s access to international markets, and prevent China’s rise a strategic competitor to the U.S.

This pattern of various imperialist powers competing, and the Sudanese people paying the price in blood, has continued to the present day.

The U.S. tends to sanction any country that does not support its interest in an attempt to bully them into submission. They are able to impose these sanctions due to their international control of economic markets and immense military might. From Cuba to Iraq to Venezuela to Sudan, the U.S. has devastated economies through sanctions which of course bring the greatest harm and suffering to the vulnerable and impoverished working-class people of these countries.

Economic sanctions are a tactic that allow



Then-Chinese President Hu Jintao (right) visited Sudan and met with military Omar al-Bashir (left) to publicly reiterate China's support for Bashir in the wake of the genocide he carried out in Darfur.

the U.S. to claim they are using peaceful measures to oppose unfavorable policies from foreign governments but in reality, these sanctions are not peaceful, they are ruthless, cruel, and brutal. **These economic sanctions imposed on Sudan by the U.S. beginning in the Clinton era had an extreme effect. It is estimated that the cost of the sanctions before they were lifted in 2017 was \$45 billion dollars.** This is a significant amount considering Sudan's GDP only exceeded \$45 billion dollars in 2007.

It is important to also note that China was one of few countries to supply weapons to the Bashir regime.

However, U.S. sanctions did not curb Chinese influence in Sudan. In fact between 2000 and 2011, China exported mass amounts of capital through the initiation of 65 different infrastructure projects in Sudan, which included railway lines, power stations, electricity grids, shopping malls, and even a presidential palace built specially for Omar al-Bashir. All of this investment ensured that Chinese companies would get the lions' share of Sudan's resources—in particular its oil and gold—and that the profits made by the hard labor of the Sudanese

people would flow into the pockets of Chinese billionaires.

These kinds of infrastructure projects are often presented as being progressive investments intended to develop underdeveloped countries. These are lies. **The sole reason countries like China export capital to countries like Sudan is to extract as much profit as possible through the exploitation of Sudanese workers and loot of natural resources.** While China has a huge impact on Sudan's economy through foreign direct investment, China also supplied around 30% of all imports to Sudan prior to the lifting of U.S. sanctions. This relationship allowed China to extract raw materials from Sudan, and sell back finished products to the country, and is a hallmark of colonialism. It is important to also note that China was one of few countries to supply weapons to the Bashir regime. All of this is evidence of China's heavy economic and political investment in Sudan.

When sanctions were not effective in curbing Chinese influence in Sudan, the U.S. sponsored separatists movements in the south of the country. The people in South Sudan had been oppressed by those in the north going back to the times of British colonial rule. The people of South Sudan had real grievances and faced real oppression at the hands of Omar al-Bashir's government and prior regimes. **However, the U.S. was able to seize upon this and use it for its own imperialist aims.**

When sanctions were not effective in curbing Chinese influence in Sudan, the U.S. sponsored separatists.

And while the U.S. had previously supported General Abboud's military dictatorship which led brutal attacks against the people of South Sudan, in the mid-2000s the U.S. began an all out effort to split Sudan into two. In response this Omar Bashir's government launched a genocidal war on the people of South Sudan and the Darfur region in particular. With weapons supplied by China, the military and the fascist Janjaweed militias carried out a genocide that killed at least 400,000 people in South Sudan.



While the U.S. was trying to split the country for its own imperialist agenda, the Chinese imperialists' response was to support Bashir's genocide in Darfur to protect the interests of Chinese billionaires. This is the logic of capitalist imperialism. China imported hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil a day from Sudan, and many of the oil fields were located in the south of the country. The secessionist movement threatened to cut off that flow of oil and instead sell it to U.S. allies. **In the view of the Chinese imperialists, a genocide was a small price to pay if it secured their economic interests and future profits.** The U.S. imperialists

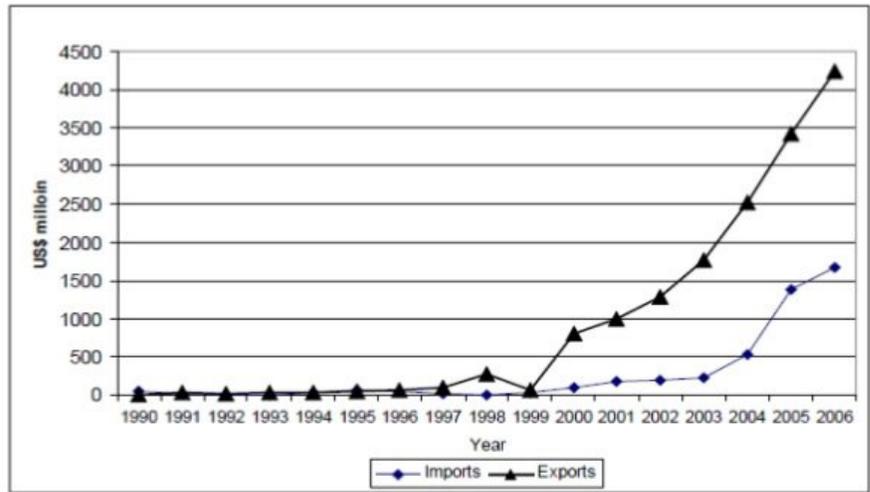
operate by the same logic, and the oppressed people of Sudan and the world constantly find themselves caught in the middle.

Ultimately the civil war between Bashir's government and the South Separatists resulted in the formation of the country of South Sudan in 2011. **This had significant implications of the economy of Sudan as the southern region, now an independent country, contained most of the oil reserves and other resources.** All of this led to a severe economic crisis that developed over the past eight years. In South Sudan as well, deep problems exist. Since its nominal independence it has been under the thumb of U.S. imperialists, and a brutal civil war broke out in 2013 which killed at least 400,000 people and continues to rage to this day.

In Sudan proper, as the economic situation declined, China was less willing and able to provide economic support, especially given that the Sudan's oil exports decreased by 80% after the secession of South Sudan. As a result of this, Sudan looked to find other economic sponsors. Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular saw an opportunity to expand their influence in the region and grow their budding imperialist power. When they launched their genocidal war on the people of Yemen in 2016 they called on Bashir's government for support, and he was happy to oblige in exchange for loans and investment. The Obama administration, seeing the opening to drive a wedge between

Trading Commodities

•Sudan Trade with China



Despite U.S. sanctions, Chinese trade with Sudan increased exponentially during the early 2000s, even as Omar al-Bashir's government was carrying out a genocide in Darfur.

Sudan and China agreed to roll back some of the sanctions against Sudan. Trump completed this rollback in 2017 at the behest of the Saudis and UAE.

With the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Sudan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been able to deepen their economic and political ties with Sudan. **In 2013 less than 1% of Sudan's exports went to the UAE. By 2016 that number was 60%.** Furthermore, in the wake of the recent upheavals in Sudan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have provided \$3 billion in support to the military in loans, fuel, and arms. This support of the Sudanese military by the Saudis and the UAE reveals an effort by these Arab countries to sponsor a new military dictatorship in the country, this time that is loyal to their interests. It also reveals how the Sudanese capitalists and ruling elite benefit through having ties with imperialist powers. It is clear that Saudi Arabia and the UAE view their relationship with the military as key to their own economic, military, and political power in the region.

In order to understand the recent maneuvers by these imperialist powers, and in order to more clearly see a way forward for the Sudanese people, it is important to analyze the recent mass movements that toppled the 30-year military dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir. These protest movements are incredibly inspiring, and while their work is far from complete, they show that the power of the people can topple even



People protest in Sudan's capital Khartoum in April , 2019. This photo become a symbol of the people's resistance.

deeply entrenched despots and tyrants. The heroic struggle of the people of Sudan is a inspiration to the people of the world.

The Recent Protests and the Present Situation

Despite the difficult conditions in which competing imperialist powers circle over Sudan like vultures and corrupt local despots try to bleed the people dry, the Sudanese people have risen up in heroic rebellion. The recent mass movements have driven the corrupt, decadent, and genocidal government of Omar al-Bashir out. **What's more the people have not only been struggling against the Bashir's dictatorship and a possible new military dictatorship, but also against the imperialist pigs who back these oppressive forces.**

The recent protest movement began in December, 2018 in the city of Atbara, which has a long history of working-class organizing, including a powerful railroad union. Given this history of organizing the people were better equipped and ready to fight back against their oppressors. **The catalyst for the protest was the government's decision to triple the cost of bread, a staple of the country's diet, as well as skyrocketing inflation of around seventy percent.**

The increase in the cost of bread was part

of a broader austerity plan imposed by Bashir's government to comply with the conditions of an IMF loan. Other conditions for this loan included cutting a variety of subsidies to social services and fuel that the people of Sudan depended on. Without these subsidies the majority of people in Sudan would simply be unable to make ends meet. However, in order to secure a good return on investment for powerful capitalist investors, the IMF pushed Bashir's government to cut these subsidies and raise tax revenues. **These sorts of "structural adjusts" which open countries up for capitalist imperialist plunder, are a typical condition attached to IMF loans and are often met with fierce resistance by the people.** This IMF loan in particular was part of the U.S.-Saudi-UAE scheme to further open Sudan up to loot and plunder by multinational corporations.

In this regard these protests in Sudan share a similarity to other anti-imperialist rebellions in neocolonies around the world like Haiti, Yemen, and Jordan where the people's initial rebellion against economic austerity imposed by imperialist institutions like the IMF quickly escalated into full-scale political rebellion against the established corrupt rulers like Bashir and his military clique. It is also important to note that the protests in Sudan not only targeted Bashir's government, but also the wealthy elite as a whole, including those in the opposition parties.

The initial upsurge itself was quite powerful and shows the power of the people when mobilized in resistance against their oppressors. **During the first protest which erupted in Atbara, the people surrounded the main office of the ruling party in the city and set fire to the building as well as the headquarters of the city government.** The next day, in the eastern city, Qadaref, demonstrators surrounded the office of a local governor, forcing him to flee the scene in a speeding car under a hail of rocks. The same day in Dongola, north of the capital of Khartoum, protesters torched the headquarters of the Bashir's ruling National Congress Party. These are just a few examples of how quickly the movement spread, and how angry the people were with the brutal and oppressive rule of Bashir's fascist military dictatorship.

While some liberals may decry such actions as "going too far" the reality is that the people have been crushed and beaten down by three decades of violent suppression at the hands of a military dictatorship. It is only natural that when the people rebel against their oppressors they will attack their enemies. After all, revolution is no dinner party, book club, or academic exercise. It is a violent process in which one class overthrows another by force. **No oppressor in history has ever governed by peaceful means, and none have ever given up power because of peaceful protests alone. They must be driven from power, or they will brutally slaughter the people to crush their rebellion.**

The struggles in Sudan have confirmed this lesson of revolutionary history. Bashir's government had a long track-record of violently suppressing the people and systematically depriving them of their means of livelihood. They had carried out a genocide and many massacres. **Given this violent oppression, it is only natural for the people to rise up in rebellion, including by opposing the state's violence with violent rebellion of their own.** These two types of violence are not the same. One is the violence of a small wealthy minority to maintain the power over the people, and the other is the violence of the oppressed majority to topple the oppressors



A funeral march in Atbara protesting the violent crackdowns and killing of protesters by Bashir's government. Many of the people who led these violent crackdowns are now playing a big role in the newly formed government.

and create a better world. And, as Malcolm X said, truth is on the side of the oppressed.

Bashir's government met the initial protests with violent attacks, including deploying the military, secret police, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) a paramilitary gang of former Janjaweed militia members—which was the force which carried out the genocide in Darfur. These forces fired live ammunition into crowds of unarmed protesters—killing many—carried out planned rapes and sexual assaults against women involved in the protests, and assassinated key leaders of the movement.

Revolution is no dinner party, book club, or academic exercise. It is a violent process in which one class overthrows another by force.

A curfew was imposed across the country, internet access was cut in many places to prevent the spread of news about the protests, and hundreds of people were arrested and tortured as Bashir's government attempted to suppress the movement. **Despite these efforts to stop the rising tide of rebellion, Bashir was eventually forced to resign when the military turned against him.**

Many generals and high ranking members of the military grew anxious as rank-and-file soldiers began to defect, take off their uniforms, and support the protesters. These defections in the military threatened to split the army and help the

movement to topple the whole government as a whole—not just Bashir and his closest allies. **The generals and other Sudanese elites became increasingly concerned as the protests continued to grow in power and threatened the oppressive and exploitative foundations on which the modern Sudanese state was built.** In this crisis the military and the wealthy elite hoped to quell the rebellion by forcing Bashir to resign. While many of them had been his long-time allies, they would rather let him take the fall—and preserve their own power—than risk supporting him only to have the protests topple his government, drive the elite from power, and divide up their wealth and redistribute it to the people.

So, as the protests grew in strength and numbers, more and more of the Sudanese elite began to support a military coup. During February 2019 Sudanese intelligence chief Salah Gosh met with Yossi Cohen—the head of the Israeli intelligence service Mossad—in Germany to discuss plans for a coup that would install Salah as the new president of Sudan. Gosh was instrumental in attacking and suppressing the protest movement, and he was seen by foreign imperialist powers as a capable “strong man” to take over for Bashir. The meeting was reportedly brokered by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.¹ While Salah ultimately did not become president and actually fled the country in April, this meeting was instrumental in organizing foreign support for the eventual military coup that ousted Bashir on April 11, 2019. **This coup installed the so-called Transitional Military Council, which is really just another name for military dictatorship.**

The Saudis and UAE were quick to throw their weight behind this coup and dictatorship after the Sudanese generals reiterated their continuing support for the Saudi-UAE led war in Yemen. To secure Saudi and UAE business interests in Sudan—and ensure they would get the lions’ share of the profits made by the hard labor of the Sudanese people—they extended over \$3 billion in “aid” to the military dictatorship. This included a large



Omar al-Bashir (right) and Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagolo (right) prior to Bashir’s fall. Hemeti led the Janjaweed militias that carried out the genocide in Darfur. He is now the defacto leader of government.

amount of military equipment and ammunition which was in turn used against the protest movement. The military dictatorship “promised” that it would be temporary and would allow elections in a number of years. **However, they also immediately imposed a curfew which prevented people from being out of their homes from 10pm to 4am.** They also continued to attack protesters and target them for retaliation, just as Bashir’s government had.

Despite these repressive measures the people had mobilized and organized to such a degree that the military dictatorship was quickly forced to grant the movement some concessions. **For example, curfew was repealed only two days after it was imposed.** Likewise, the head of the Transitional Military Council, General Awad Ibn Auf, was forced to resign after only one day in power. However, he chose Lieutenant-General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to be his successor, and Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagolo to be his vice-president.

The appointment of Hemeti is significant because he was not a member of the military. However, Hemeti led the Janjaweed fascist militias during the genocide in Darfur, and more recently, he oversaw their reorganization into the RSF. **His appointment was strongly supported by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as they saw him as a loyal ally.** Shortly after his appointment as second-in-command of the military dictatorship, Hemeti traveled to Saudi Arabia, met with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

1) <https://bit.ly/2GTkE2G>



During this meeting with Saudi Arabia Hemeti warned that “Sudan is standing with the kingdom against all threats and attacks from Iran and Houthi militias.”² This helps to clarify that Saudi Arabia now sees Sudan as a key ally in the region and plans to rely on their military support in any future conflict with Iran.

All of this leaves the Sudanese people in a precarious position. **They are facing another military dictatorship with foreign imperialist sponsorship.** What’s

more, in this situation a section of the middle-class leadership of the mass movement is pushing for capitulation. These people are generally represented by the Sudanese Professionals Association which is led by doctors, engineers, and other office workers. While this organization and people from these classes played an important role in toppling Bashir’s governments, they have fundamentally different class interests than the masses of Sudan people. A minimum wage worker in Sudan makes around \$1,100 a year, where as professionals often make around \$100,000 a year.

Given this reality, the Sudanese Professionals Association and many of its members can more easily reach a compromise with the military rulers of the country. **If the outright dictatorship and silencing of middle-class dissent is abolished, then middle-class professionals can lead a relatively comfortable life, even in a fundamentally oppressive society. However, the vast majority of Sudanese people have a real interest in toppling the entire power structure in the country.** Even though the outright military dictatorship of Bashir has been replaced by a power-sharing agreement between wealthy professionals and the military, the poor masses of Sudanese people will still be bound by the chains of wage slavery and life as subsistence farming peasants. Only through completely kicking out the imperialists, smashing the ruling military clique, and redistributing the wealth of the country can the



Even though the movement in Sudan had a temporary setback, the long legacy of people's struggles in the country shows that oppressive powers cannot keep the people down for long.

people achieve true liberation from oppression and exploitation. **The true nature of the newly formed government is evident in the fact that Ibrahim Ahmad al-Badawi, a World Bank economist, has been appointed the new Finance Minister.** He has noted that Sudan needs at least \$10 billion in funding for foreign countries, has promised to “restructure the economy overall” which is a coded way of speaking of imposing further austerity measures and opening the country up for more imperialist plunder.³

Therefore, even though Bashir’s government has been toppled, the Sudanese people’s struggle is not at an end.

Therefore, even though Bashir’s government has been toppled, the Sudanese people’s struggle is not at an end. A new government has been formed which serves imperialist masters and it is already plotting on how to continue to sell the people down the river. **However, the history of Sudan has shown that no oppressive government can last forever.** The people have a long and rich tradition of overthrowing corrupt and decadent rulers, and they were surely continue the struggle towards their collective liberation.

2) <https://bit.ly/2kd25wQ>

3) <https://bit.ly/2kabFk0>

The Easter Bombings and U.S.-China Competition in Sri Lanka

by Alan



In the wake of the Easter Bombings in Sri Lanka, the government declared Martial Law and deployed troops throughout the country.

In Sri Lanka over 300 people were killed in the Easter Bombings of multiple churches and high-end hotels. For many, April 21st, 2019 was the first time that they have heard of the country, at least in recent years. Sri Lanka is an island located to the south of India. The main ethnic groups are the Sinhalese and Tamils who are located in the South and North of the island, respectively. While the ruling elite of Sri Lanka often pushes the line that it is a “Buddhist country”, it is a religiously diverse land, and includes Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, and Muslims. **And, like many other countries in Asia and the rest of the world, it has been dominated politically and economically by the interests of foreign imperialists and colonial powers for hundreds of years, with its people constantly facing the brunt of oppression from these imperialists and their collaborating local ruling elite.**

The media—and the imperialists whose interests they serve—work to keep people in countries like Sri Lanka oppressed. Many leaders in Sri Lanka and abroad sent their blessings to the people who died in the Easter Bombings. The media coverage has largely

This past April, Sri Lanka was rocked by a deadly terrorist attack that killed over 300 people. The Sri Lankan government has since used this as a pretext for cracking down on dissent. In order to understand this situation, we look at the history of Sri Lanka: British colonial rule, the modern neocolonial administration, and the imperialists who jockey to control it—as well as the revolutionary struggles to drive these oppressors out.

framed Sri Lanka as a peaceful, beautiful island that was hurt by the evildoers of the world. Some reporters even went so far as to imply that the attacks were dominantly reflective of an ongoing war on Christianity by Muslims. These narratives distort and coverup the neocolonial reality of Sri Lanka for people who may know little about the country. **For a long time its people have been living in oppressive conditions created by the Sri Lankan ruling elite and the imperialists that they obey.**

This was particularly evident in the summer of 2009, when the Sri Lankan government massacred hundreds of thousands of Tamils in its final efforts to end the Tamil liberation struggle against the Sinhalese Buddhist ruling elite. The hypocrisy of the international corporate media is evident when one contrasts the lack coverage of this massacre. Genuine liberation struggles act against the interests of the ruling elite so none of the imperialists wanted to express their sympathies with the Tamil people’s struggle. **As a result, one of the most horrific genocides of the 21st century was barely covered in the corporate media.**



Even when there was coverage of the genocide of Tamils, it was only through distorted tales that fit the bourgeois narrative, framing it as a civil war that had ended—and implying that this would bring peace to Sri Lanka—instead reporting on how a liberation struggle was suppressed through genocide. There was the occasional concern expressed by some people of human rights violations that the government committed in the final stages against what the media often referred to as the “separatist, terrorist Tamil organization.”

These were generally bourgeois attempts to say, “both sides were wrong” and shed a few crocodile tears for the dead.

In doing so they completely ignored the root causes of the oppression of the Tamil people at the hands of the imperialists and their lackeys in the Sri Lankan ruling elite. But even this low-level of coverage quickly disappeared from the mainstream press, even while the Tamil people continued to struggle daily against all sort of oppression.



One of many open mass graves of Tamils during the genocide in Sri Lanka. Thousands were killed by brutal chemical weapons that melted people's flesh.

sells out the population in order to maintain their own status while satisfying the imperialists. Neocolonial relationships are the most prominent modern method of the capitalist imperialists' oppression of the people, and the Easter Bombings is an important case study which exposes how they operate.

The Colonization of Sri Lanka

In order to get at the core of the Easter Bombings, it is important to understand the general history that led to Sri Lanka's current neocolonial state. Before the colonial period started with the Portuguese colonization of the region in the 16th century, the Sri Lankan people were already oppressed by the feudal kingdoms. **Feudal oppression was not unique to Sri Lanka, but its particular form in Sri Lanka had a decisive impact on how subsequent relations were set up between the imperialists and ruling elite.**

After the Portuguese invaded, the Dutch were the next colonizers, and then the British. **It is important to note that contrary to the lessons of bourgeois history classes, none of these empires ever conquered Sri Lanka through their “military might”; some of the Sri Lankan feudal kingdoms and the people more broadly put up a resistance.**

But there were also many feudal chiefs who sold out to the colonizers. They aspired to secure themselves a comfortable position within

Genuine liberation struggles act against the interests of the ruling elite so none of the imperialists wanted to express their sympathies with the Tamil people's struggle.

When U.S. politicians suddenly claim to care about the oppressed of Sri Lanka and the struggles that they are going through, we have to realize that they are only doing it out of their own capitalist interests. Their concerns over the Easter Bombings were only meant to promote the Islamophobic “War on Terror” narrative and justify their maneuvers to capitalize on the tragedy and gain an advantage against Chinese imperialists' maneuvers in Sri Lanka. From studying the aftermath of the bombings we can learn about the role that Sri Lanka plays in the present power struggle between the imperialists, and the ways in which the Sri Lankan ruling elite



A British artistic depiction of the suppression of the 1818 Uva Rebellion in Sri Lanka during which the peasants rose up against the seizure of their land. Although painted by the British, it shows the brutality of the reprisals they carried out.

the empires of the colonial powers. Though resistance movements provided serious pushback against the British, many of the resistance leaders were looking out for their own power, and were not ultimately interested in liberating the people as a whole. Despite not immediately selling out like other chiefs, many found positions within British Sri Lanka after resisting became unfavorable for them.

The British colonization brought very severe oppression of the Sri Lankan people. The Waste Lands Ordinance—a colonial law—took away the land that peasants were able to “own” under the feudal system, and the Grain Tax put such a heavy tax on peasants (including those who bought back land they had lost) that it forced them out of their lands again, leaving many to starve. **These maneuvers by the British in Sri Lanka mirrored similar ploys they carried out in their other colonies, and globally led to what is known as the Late Victorian Holocaust in which between 30 and 60 million colonized people in the British Empire were killed.**

The land that the colonizers stole from the Sri Lankan peasants went to the British crown, and to British plantation owners. Despite beating down the people through all sorts of maneuvers, the British were so afraid of the Sri Lankan peasantry that they would not let hire them because the British were afraid of earlier rebellions by the peasants in 1818 and 1848 in

particular. Instead, they brought over plantation workers from British colonized India to work as slaves on the plantations. **Like the Sri Lankan peasants, the Indian plantation workers faced intense suffering and death due to the conditions that they were put through.**

This contradicts a primary argument used by the contemporary Sri Lankan elite—the scapegoating of people of Indian-origin as the reason for the economic problems of in Sri Lanka. **In reality the problems today are the direct result of the ruling elite’s historical collaboration with the imperialists and their shared efforts in the exploitation of the people, including those who were forcibly imported from mainland India.** And today, they

push for ethnic violence and scapegoating to save themselves from public outrage and opposition.

The End of British Rule and the Neocolonial Present

The devastation of the Sri Lankan people and culture led to anti-British sentiment. Resistance movements and actions formed in response. These movements played a role in preventing the total decimation of Sri Lanka by the British. However, the movements, and the leaders especially, were often dominated by a bourgeois reformist outlook.

The anti-imperialist sentiment of the people was real, but they were time and time again abandoned by leaders who only looked to “demand” that the British give them rights, instead of working to build a militant mass movement to overthrow imperialist rule. These bourgeois reformists would form the Ceylon National Congress (CNC), and acted as the “representatives” of the Sri Lankans under British domination. For the British, working through the CNC was a great way to quell direct resistance, and ensure that their interests would be preserved even after allowing Sri Lanka to become technically independent. The “liberation” in 1948, or transitional state of Sri Lanka from direct to indirect imperialist rule (known as neocolonialism), is an example of this arrangement.





A Bodu Bala Sena (Buddhist Power Force) anti-Muslim rally in Sri Lanka. The BBS is a Buddhist fascist organization with ties to the government which has carried out a series of anti-Muslim pogroms.

From 1948 to the present day Sri Lanka has been a neocolonial country, free in name but actually controlled by foreign powers. Two main parties emerged in this period, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the SLFP being the party that put out a more “progressive” line. Regardless of its initial promises and statements, the SLFP became just as bad as the UNP. **They both depend on inducing ethnicity and anti-people nationalist ideas that are used to mask the real economic issues that were plaguing the population.** The parties both pushed for Sinhala Buddhist nationalist thought—Sinhalese being the majority of the population—and encouraged violent attacks against minorities such as the Tamils.

From 1948 to the present day Sri Lanka has been a neocolonial country, free in name but actually controlled by foreign powers.

Many of these politicians pushed the idea that the Sinhalese Buddhists were the “real” Sri Lankans, and that their economic trouble came from Tamils “stealing jobs” that should be theirs. Often this view was justified through glorification of feudal Sri Lanka, when Sinhalese was the most spoken language. Tamil was seen as an outside language that came from India (though Sinhala also came from the subcontinent), and the politicians often frame Tamils as an invading force that helped to ruin the supposedly great feudal times.

This view is very inaccurate. **The feudal kingdoms—both Sinhala and Tamil—never fought for the people, instead they represented the interests of the land-owning classes.** It also ignores the complicated migration patterns that formed the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Many Tamils were brought over by the British as plantation workers. Though there are bourgeois and ruling elite Tamils, these people are more aligned with the Sinhala Buddhist ruling elite and bourgeoisie than the Tamil people. The Tamil-Sinhala conflict only intensified, and no one from the ruling elite (Sinhala or Tamil) did anything

to unite the groups, but instead only worsened it by promoting ethnic tensions as way of distracting people from the real causes of their poverty and oppression.

The true reason for why the Tamils held certain jobs was more closely related to the Indian plantation worker and Sri Lankan peasant conflict. A divide-and-rule strategy was used by the British to control the labor and the Sri Lankan peasants, and its success in the plantations was replicated in other fields. **By pitting the plantation workers against the peasants, and the Sinhalese against the Tamils, the British were able to keep all of the people down.** There was little done to revert the damage in the neocolonial transition, to the harm of the Sri Lankan people and to the benefit of the imperialists and Sri Lankan ruling elite. And the fruition of these colonial and neocolonial policies can be seen in the widespread Sinhalese contempt for Tamils, especially those with jobs.

Both the UNP and SLFP never did anything to solve the real economic issues that plagued the Sri Lankan people, and instead helped to further subjugate Sri Lanka for the imperialists by taking World Bank loans and imposing various austerity measures on the people. It was the working class and the peasantry that faced the brunt of these policies, putting them further into economic hardship by the 60s and 70s. The real difference between the parties is that the SLFP had to maneuver while touting a “progressive” line, but this was little more than a mask they put on to disguise their true intentions. For example, in 1964, then Prime



PM Ranil Wickremesinghe (left) President Maithripala Sirisena (right) share a laugh. While nominally political rivals, they are united by their shared interest in oppressing the Sri Lankan people.

Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike of the SLFP nationalized the foreign oil companies. However this was mostly to appeal to the masses that came out in protest in response to the economic troubles at the time. Bandarnaike later reversed this decision due to pressure from the U.S.

The Easter Bombings and Inter-imperialist Conflict

The events following April 21st show the current ruling elite's consistency with their predecessors. **Immediately, the military was given an excess amount of power to "deal" with the situation, and a heavier military presence was deployed throughout the country. A nationwide curfew and social media ban were put in place, framed as a necessity to deal with the tragedy.** However the approach that the government is taking is not meant to serve the people during a time of tragedy. Instead, the government induced isolation and fear among the population, by taking up Islamophobic "War on Terror" rhetoric that was also being put out by many governments in response to the Easter Bombings, especially the U.S. and China.

The government used that fear and isolation to justify bringing foreign agencies like the FBI to "help their investigations," and to expand its intensely militarized "state of emergency." The government arrested over 100 people that they claimed have connections to the

individuals and groups involved. But these people were arrested under de facto martial law, without any democratic process. The numerous arrests may be more of a result of the government trying to support its dubious claims that terrorists are rampant on the island.

There is even more reason to be suspicious of the government given the events preceding the bombings. Many reports have come out exposing the fact that the Sri Lankan government was repeatedly warned about the threat of an imminent attack—both by internal security agencies and ones from other countries—however they took no actions to stop an attack. The incompetency and lack of action has a lot to do with the feud between the president, Maithripala Sirisena (of the SLFP), and the prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe (of the UNP). After the attack, the blame was passed on to members of lower ranks and rivals. **Sirisena and Wickremesinghe have a long history putting their political needs in front of the people, just like all the other members of the ruling elite.** Therefore their claims about the attacks should be viewed with extreme skepticism.

Islamophobic thought has been put forward through other means as well. Sirisena placed a ban on wearing clothes that cover the face because of "security concerns" over concealed identity. This sort of law is clear attack on Muslim women.



The ban implies that clothes such as burkas and niqabs are security threats. It is notable that Sirisena has been so aggressive with such “security measures,” despite ignoring the multiple warning memos prior to the bombings. One of the most significant examples of the true intent of this policy is the Sri Lankan police’s claim that Muslim American activist Amara Majeed was one of the bombing suspects. Because of this she was harassed and received death threats, and expressed that she and her family were afraid for their safety.

After backlash from Majeed and others, the Sri Lankan police admitted the “mistake.” Majeed is of Sri Lankan origin, and wears a hijab in part as a form of protest against these Islamophobic laws. The Sri Lankan government may try to pass this situation off as a mistake, but they have done similar things many times before. **Sri Lankans who have done work against the agenda of the state have often been labeled as terrorists, associates of terrorists, or threats to the state.** This is then used by the government to justify arresting or even outright assassinating them.



Since the Easter Bombings Sri Lanka has been under Martial Law. Soldiers with machine guns have been deployed throughout the country, in particular in Muslim communities.

killed every terrorist responsible for the Easter Sunday attacks, extremists abroad can still cause trouble for us. We need intelligence sharing with foreign partners to deal with this challenge.” From this the message is clear, the Sri Lankan government plans to let foreign intelligence agencies run wild within their borders! Perhaps they will allow the CIA to set up a secret black-site prison and torture chamber.

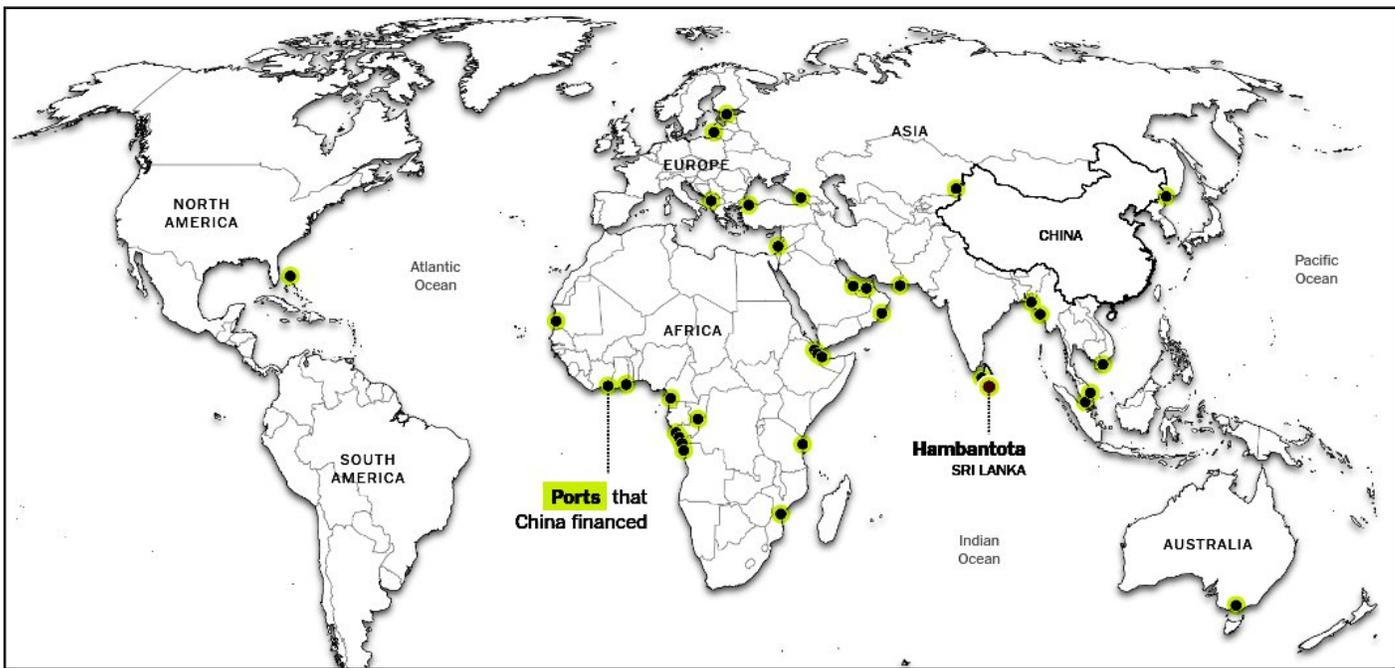
The anti-Muslim sentiments are fostered in part by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist groups and individuals. These forces promote the messages and actions of the ruling elite, and are often themselves members of the ruling elite. The attitudes towards Muslims of reactionary forces are very similar to the attitudes towards the Tamils in earlier times (and the discrimination against Tamils is still significant but less intense than in the past). These right wing forces try to portray Muslims, like Tamils, as foreigners who are coming to the country to dominate Sri Lanka.

The influence of Arab countries in Sri Lanka along with globally promoted Islamophobia help to justify thought and policies that hurt Sri Lankan Muslims. **Like in the past, modern members of the Sri Lankan ruling elite need to maintain ethnic conflicts in order to mask the true nature Sri Lanka’s neocolonial existence.** Though there have been Christian-Muslim tensions, these have arisen mostly in response to the bombings. The Buddhist nationalist ruling elite’s role in fostering these tensions against non-Buddhists is the main factor.

From this the message is clear, the Sri Lankan government plans to let foreign intelligence agencies run wild within their borders!

It is no surprise that anti-Muslim riots arose soon after the bombing, striking fear into the hearts of Sri Lankan Muslims. On May 13, a Muslim carpenter was killed by a mob in the North Western Province of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan authorities’ condemnation of the mob violence should not mislead us from seeing the ruling elite’s involvement in creating the anti-Muslim sentiment.

The bombings opened a new way for the ruling elite of Sri Lanka to connect the problems of the Sri Lankan people to global, imperialist-backed anti-Muslim sentiments. Ranil Wickremesinghe has been explicit about this: “The danger is not over, we are now a victim of global terrorism. Even if we have arrested or



The Hambantota port is only one of a series of projects China has built globally as part of their effort to become the most powerful empire in the world through the Belt and Road Initiative.

The imperialists also need the “War on Terror” justification in order to legitimize their own schemes. **Competition between the U.S. and China is intensifying as they vie for control of neocolonies, and Sri Lanka is one of these neocolonies.** During Mahinda Rajapaksa’s SFLP presidency, which began in 2005, he courted a relationship with China, opening Sri Lanka up for their imperialist plunder. In exchange, the Chinese imperialists helped the Sri Lankan government to suppress the Tamil Tigers—armed revolutionaries who waged a struggle for Tamil liberation from the late 1970s until 2009. China sent millions of dollars of arms and other investment and support to Rajapaksa’s government.

China was not the only foreign country which helped to suppress the movement—the U.S. and India also took part—but China was able to secure a big share of control of the country because of their military aid in suppressing the Tigers. After the defeat of the Tamil Tigers in 2009, Rajapaksa took out loans from China for developing the Hambantota Port, located in the south of Sri Lanka. This port was part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative, through which the Chinese imperialists aim to overtake the U.S. as the leading world superpower. The loans that China extended to Sri Lanka had particularly high interest rates; a practice that China and other imperialists have long used to gain further control of neocolonies.

The debt became so bad that in 2017 Sri

Lanka gave a 99-year lease of the port to China, effectively ceding control of the port to the Chinese state and military. And even though Sri Lanka says it is not meant to be a military base for China, it is clear that the imperialist country has other plans. In 2014, a Chinese submarine arrived in Colombo; in 2019, after the bombing, they donated a frigate to the Sri Lankan Navy when some Sri Lankan sailors and officers went to China for training. While all this amounts to selling out the Sri Lankan people, it was a great win for Rajapaksa. Through these maneuvers he was able to get his name on an airport and secure election financing from China. Of course, it was not just Rajapaksa. Sirisena, who was elected in 2015, has further increased China’s influence in the country despite calling for “national sovereignty.”

At present Sri Lanka is caught in the imperialist conflict between the U.S. and China. As part of neocolonialism, various imperialist powers are able to invest in countries like Sri Lanka and compete for control. **Recently, the competition between the U.S. and China in Sri Lanka has reached a fever pitch. This is reflected in various maneuvers by members of the Sri Lankan elite.** For example, Sirisena has been dead-set against relations with the U.S. Pretending that he hasn’t been building closer ties with China, he claimed, “Some foreign forces want to make Sri Lanka one of their bases. I will not allow them to come into the country and challenge our sovereignty.”



However, Wickremesinghe, his UNP rival and current PM, has been much more open to being a U.S. lackey. In July 2019, he was in talks with the U.S. to sign a State of Forces Agreement, which would grant the U.S. the ability to build a military base inside the country. The U.S. military personnel at this base would be subject to U.S. law instead of Sri Lankan law. **This would effectively protect them from any prosecution for crimes they commit against the Sri Lankan people.** The U.S. and its supporters argue that the agreement would help the U.S. keep Sri Lanka sovereign and defend against Chinese influence. Wickremesinghe is trying to form the type of connections with the U.S. that Sirisena and Rajapaksa have with China. The only way to overcome this impasse is for the masses to come together in revolutionary struggle against the ruling elite of Sri Lanka and their imperialist masters.



A early women's brigade of the Tamil Tigers. In addition to fighting for the liberation of Tamil people, the Tigers also fought against patriarchy and caste oppression.

The only way to overcome this cycle is for the masses to come together in revolutionary struggle against the ruling elite of Sri Lanka and their imperialist masters.

Sri Lanka's revolutionary movement is at a low-tide right now, but the country has a rich past full of numerous examples of revolutionary struggles and mass rebellions. None of these movements completely succeeded in overthrowing the elite and kicking out the imperialists. However, they showed great unity among the masses, and struck fear into the hearts of the oppressors. One such example took place on August 12, 1953, when leftist forces joined against the then UNP government in response to big increases in rice, railway, and postal rates. These austerity measures were an attempt to resolve the economic crisis created by the ruling elite through bleeding the people dry. The mass protests frightened the government and "reformists," which led to mass repression. However, despite this crackdown on the protest movement the prime

minister resigned shortly thereafter. Another mass rebellion took place on May Day 1963, in which thousands of people marched for International Worker's Day, and expressed their immense dissatisfaction with the dominant SLFP and UNP parties. That May Day protest was so successful because of a high level of working class organization and strikes against the economic issues that the government had created. The strikes led to the unity of various trade unions under the Joint Committee of Trade Unions (JCTU).

The Tamil Tigers were a revolutionary group that fought one of the longest national liberation struggles in Sri Lanka.

However, perhaps most notable in the revolutionary history of Sri Lanka is the struggle of the Tamil Tigers. The Tamil Tigers were a revolutionary group that fought one of the longest national liberation struggles in Sri Lanka. **They fought against the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist ruling elite and the Tamil co-conspirators with these elite, who were together scapegoating and oppressing the Tamil minorities.** Through the revolutionary struggle they were able to liberate the northern parts of Sri Lanka, and operated their own communities there. This caused great alarm



After the defeat of the Tamil Tigers the struggle for a liberated Tamil Eelam faced a temporary setback. However, a strong international solidarity movement worked to raise mass awareness of the Tamil genocide.

among the imperialists and the Sri Lankan ruling elite, who ended up working together to suppress them. **The Tigers put up a long and heroic fight. Even against such overwhelming force, their eventual defeat was primarily due to their own internal issues and not simply the might of the oppressors.**

Analyzing the Sri Lankan movements of the past teaches us the positive and negative aspects of these struggles, along with conditions specific to Sri Lanka. All this needs to be considered by future mass movements in the neocolony. **Many past mass struggles could have been more successful, but were eventually led in negative directions by opportunist leaders and members.** This is not unique to Sri Lanka, but rather something that every revolutionary movement has to deal with. The only way to be prepared for that is to be principled, ensure that leaders are principled, and that members within the movement receive good political education.

Unlike the U.S. and Britain, there is hardly even a pretext of democratic rule in Sri Lanka (and in reality there is no real democracy for the masses in those countries either). The ruling elite are very quick to pull the trigger, both literally and metaphorically in the sense of unleashing mass repression on almost all forms of protest. This is also an obstacle that revolutionary movements in Sri Lanka must confront. **What's more, there are**

deep ethnic divides in the country. Past revolutionary movements struggled to overcome these divides. The broad masses of people in Sri Lanka have a real class interest in overthrowing the ruling elite and kicking out the imperialist plunderers. So there is a basis for them to come together and struggle against their common oppressor. But they also need to handle various ethnic chauvinisms and biases among the people. Foreign working-class revolutionary movements can also provide a guide for what can be done in Sri Lanka. The revolutionary movement in the Philippines in particular provides some key lessons. Like Sri Lanka, the Philippines is a neocolony in the middle of U.S.-China competition.

Despite mass state repression, the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Filipino people, and a series of dictators, the movement has persisted and has become more influential in its fight for the people. **For the past fifty years it has been growing in strength and provides a shining example to the people of Sri Lanka and the world that a better world is possible and the mighty and powerful oppressors can be overthrown.**

The broad masses of people in Sri Lanka have a real class interest in overthrowing the ruling elite and kicking out the imperialists plunderers.

The need to liberate Sri Lanka is contrary to dominant media that relegates the country to a "nice tourist destination." But such false narratives are quite flimsy. In learning a bit of the history of the country, looking at past mass struggles in Sri Lanka, and learning from other movements internationally, it becomes clear that there is a way forward for the people. The road ahead is torturous, and the masses of people will certainly be attacked again and again by the ruling elite and their imperialist sponsors, but despite this the future is bright.

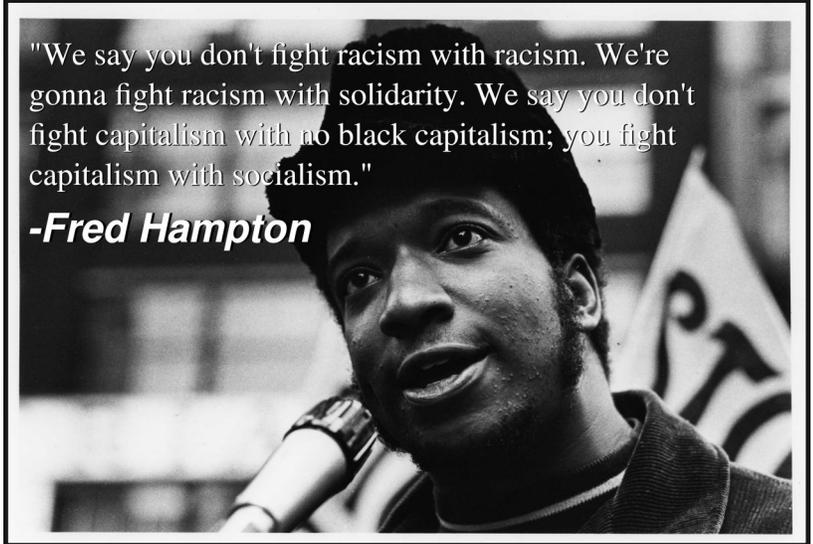
History of the BPP Part 4: The Chicago Chapter & Fred Hampton

by Smith

This is the fourth of a seven part series on the history, legacy, and continuing relevance of the Black Panther Party (BPP). Founded in 1966 in the spirit of the politics of the late Malcolm X, and highly influenced by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the Black Panther Party was a Black revolutionary organization. For a time they played the leading role in the Black Liberation struggle in the U.S. and inspired people across the country to take up revolutionary politics. This stood in sharp contrast to many prominent voices in the civil rights movement who pushed for making peace with white supremacist capitalist society. In the previous article we discussed their expansion beyond the Bay Area and their confusion over the lumpen-proletariat. In this article we will analyze the work of the Chicago Chapter of the Black Panther Party, their ability to work with the lumpen in a revolutionary manner, and how they organized with white and Chicano groups. We also discuss how the FBI attacked the Chicago chapter of the BPP and assassinated Fred Hampton.

"We say you don't fight racism with racism. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity. We say you don't fight capitalism with no black capitalism; you fight capitalism with socialism."

-Fred Hampton



This stood in sharp contrast to many prominent voices in the civil rights movement who pushed for making peace with white supremacist capitalist society. In the previous article we discussed their expansion beyond the Bay Area and their confusion over the lumpen-proletariat. In this article we will analyze the work of the Chicago Chapter of the Black Panther Party, their ability to work with the lumpen in a revolutionary manner, and how they organized with white and Chicano groups. We also discuss how the FBI attacked the Chicago chapter of the BPP and assassinated Fred Hampton.

The Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party was one of the best organized and most militant branches of the Party. They had huge successes in organizing among the Black community, getting street gangs to give up criminal activity and work together for the revolution, and in particular developing revolutionary work that brought together people from many different nationalities. This work inspired people across Chicago and the whole country. It provided a clear example of how to win over lumpen-proletarian gangs to revolutionary politics and how to unite the Black Liberation struggle with the broader revolutionary movement throughout the country. **These organizing efforts cut at the roots of the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country that divides people and tries to keep their struggles separate and isolated.**

However, much like with the Panthers' successes elsewhere, their work in Chicago also drew the attention of the U.S. government. The FBI was very concerned with the developments in

Chicago, and in particular with the young leader of the chapter, Fred Hampton. **They feared that Fred would become a "black messiah" who would inspire Black people all across the country to get involved in the revolutionary movement to overthrow the white supremacist capitalist power structure and establish a socialist government for the people.**

So, as the Panthers' work in Chicago continued to advance, the FBI worked with the Chicago police to sabotage and undermine their efforts. In particular, they focused on Fred Hampton, whose revolutionary leadership was key to the chapter's success. In order to understand the work that the BPP did in Chicago, it's helpful to understand a bit about Fred's background.

Fred Hampton

Fred was from a working class family and grew up outside of Chicago. His mother Iberia worked in a factory for Corn Products—now Ingredion, a multi-billion dollar company with

operations all over the world. **She was heavily involved in the union at her factory, and eventually became a shop-steward and led a two month long strike involving over 700 workers.** He spent a good deal of time at the union hall during this strike and helped with things like feeding the striking workers and their families. So from a young age Fred saw that if you want to make change you need to get organized and fight. This first hand experience showed him that when working people come together they can actually win victories over their oppressors. Even the powerful businessmen who owned Corn Products eventually had to cave to the demands of the workers. **These experiences helped to build Fred's clarity that it was pointless to just ask the racist capitalists who run this country to treat Black people better; instead, he would organize people to fight back for the revolutionary overthrow of these people.**

Another formative experience was the murder of his childhood friend Emmett Till. Fred and Emmett grew up together, their parents were friends and Fred looked up to Emmett, who was a few years old than him. In 1955 when Emmett, who was fourteen years old at the time, was visiting his family in Mississippi he was brutally lynched because a 21 year old white woman claimed he whistled at and flirted with her. Years later she would admit that she had lied about what happened. However, at the time in the Jim Crow South, the word of one white woman was enough to spell death for Emmett Till. **The woman's husband and her half-brother abducted Emmett from his relative's house, beat, mutilated, and tortured him, shot him in the head, and then dumped his body in a river.** Emmett's mother Mamie demanded that his body be returned to Chicago where she had an open-casket funeral to show the world the brutality of white supremacy in the U.S.

All of this had a tremendous impact on Fred Hampton and many other young Black folks in Chicago and around the country. **It showed them just how racist the U.S. was and how little justification was needed for white supremacists to torture and lynch even children.** The incident also showed how the government works hand-in-glove with white supremacist forces, as both of



Emmett Till was lynched in 1955. On the right side is a photo of his mutilated corpse.

Till's murderers were acquitted by an all-white jury. While Emmett Till's death has often been credited with sparking a new wave of the Civil Rights movement, it is important to see how it also inspired a new generation of revolutionary Black Liberation fighters, who wanted more than just minor reforms. Things like the murder of Emmett Till showed many that the whole system in this country was (and is) rotten to the core, and needs to be fundamentally changed. While this idea was not yet fully clear to a young Fred Hampton, his friend's murder played a big role in radicalizing him.

As a teenager Fred got involved in organizing in the civil rights movement. He founded a youth chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the suburbs west of Chicago, where he was able to recruit over two hundred people in a year, and launch a series of political campaigns for an integrated public pool and recreational center for the youth. While this was ultimately a form of liberal organizing that did not get to the roots of the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country, Fred learned how to mobilize people to fight against white supremacy and segregation.

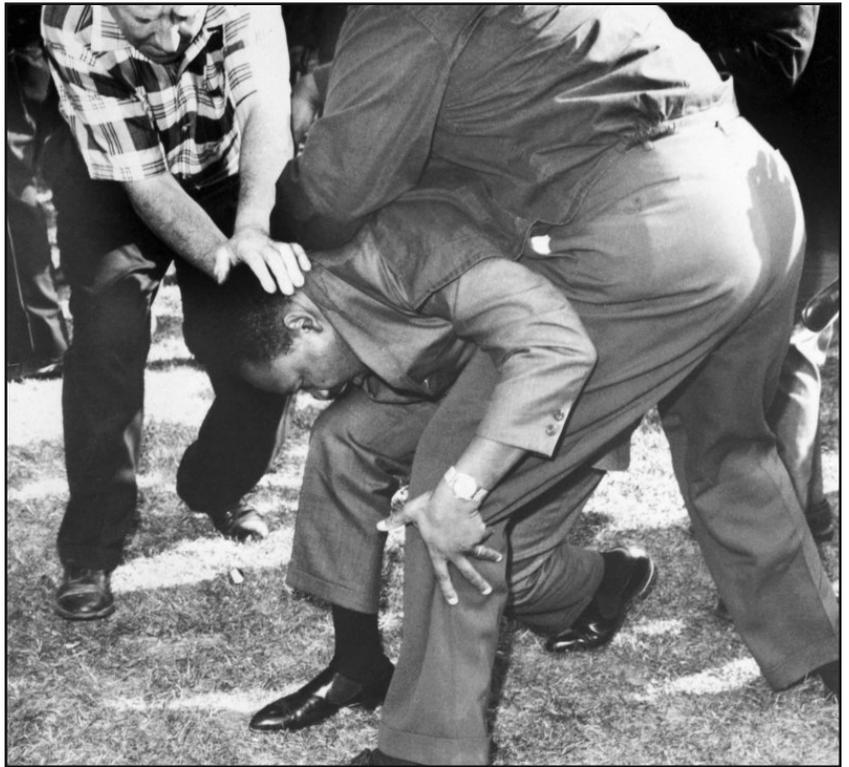
As he developed politically he began to see more of the issues with the NAACP and their approach to organizing. For example, while Fred was in high school the NAACP ran a big campaign in the area to get better pay for police officers, on the grounds that this would reduce police brutality by ensuring that more "professional" police were hired.



Around this same time period, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to Chicago to organize peaceful protests against urban segregation in the northern ghettos with his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). **These protests were organized in response to the series of uprising in Black ghettos during the 1960s. MLK and his followers hoped to show people that peaceful protests and not radical political struggle were the best way to make change.** Fred and the NAACP worked to support these efforts.

Instead of showing the poor Black residents of the ghetto that integration into white supremacist society was the answer, the experiences in Chicago in 1966 would radicalize MLK, Fred, and many more. **When they marched against segregation they were met with an angry mob of white supremacists dressed as Nazis who carried big Swastika flags, hurled rocks at the march, and attacked them in various other ways.** The SCLC's non-violent approach left the marchers completely unequipped to deal with violent attacks from white supremacists. During this march Fred, then 16 years old, told MLK that he couldn't keep marching for non-violence in the face of these violent attacks. After MLK called off a subsequent march through Cicero, which was considered the most racist neighborhood in Chicago at the time, many grew disillusioned with his unwillingness to confront white supremacists and his overall middle-class approach that opposed even self-defense in the face of violent attacks from racists and Neo-Nazis.

The time in Chicago was actually very transformative for MLK himself. During his time in Chicago he said that the slums in the U.S. were a form of "internal colonialism," and noted that "*Swastikas blossomed in Chicago's parks like misbegotten weeds.*" He also noted that, "*I've been in many demonstrations all across the South, but I can say that I have never seen, even in Mississippi and Alabama, mobs as hostile and as hate-filled as I'm seeing in Chicago.*" This was a really turning point for MLK that led him to see the close link between white supremacy and the systematic economic and political disenfranchisement of Black people.



MLK was attacked by white supremacist counter-protesters during his marches in Chicago.

Fred, like many other young Black people in Chicago at the time, was particularly disillusioned with the Civil Rights Movement after MLK's failed campaign in Chicago. They had seen first-hand how the tactics of reformism and the belief in non-violence in all situations left the movement unable to defend itself against attacks from white supremacists and the police.

During this march Fred, then 16 years old, told MLK that he couldn't keep marching for non-violence in the face of these violent attacks.

Fred turned to the writings of Malcolm X and Mao Zedong, among others. He read Malcolm's works on the importance of organized self-defense for Black people, and he read Mao's writings about how the Chinese people were able to defeat both the Japanese fascist invasion of their country and the U.S.-backed nationalist party. **These and other revolutionary works inspired Fred and got him thinking about the need for a revolutionary movement in the U.S., particularly among Black people.**

Then in May, 1967 the Black Panther Party staged their protest at the California State House. Fred and other Black youth around the country were inspired. In the suburbs of Chicago Fred and others adopted more militant organizing tactics. When Fred was set to testify before the Maywood Village Board about the need for an integrated public swimming pool, he and others organized a bunch of Black youth to come to the meeting and testify. The Village Board refused to let most of them in, and when the people began a peaceful protest outside the building the police—perhaps scared of the sight of hundreds of Black youth protesting—attacked the young people with tear gas and arrested many. Although Fred was inside the meeting he was later arrested for “mob action.” **This arrest placed him on the FBI’s “Key Agitator Index” and led to whole bunch of police harassment for then-17 year old Fred Hampton.** This protest led to an effective break with the NAACP. While they did not explicitly oppose the protest they also refused to condemn the police brutality and absurd arrests of Fred and others.

Founding and Growth of the Chicago Chapter

Around this time period the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) set up an office in Chicago. Stokley Carmichael and H. Rap Brown had organized with SNCC during the Freedom Summer in Mississippi in which they exposed how the Democratic Party worked hand-in-glove with the KKK to suppress Black voters. Much like Fred and countless other young Black people around the country, SNCC was moving in a more radical direction. They too were increasingly disillusioned with the Civil Rights Movement and with electoral politics. **Inspired by the Panthers, SNCC and others had begun to talk about revolution and the need to overthrow the white supremacist capitalist power structure.** People across the country were becoming increasingly aware that the political system and the government were a part of this power structure and therefore unable to fundamentally change it.

Fred got to know the folks in SNCC who had recently joined the Panthers themselves, and after some conversations with the BPP headquarters in Oakland, a Chicago chapter of the Party was formed with Fred as its Chairman. In just six months they had gained so many members that they had to temporarily stop accepting new members in order to focus on consolidating the



Fred Hampton and Bobby Rush in the Chicago BPP office in 1969. The posters behind them show the influence of Malcolm and Mao.

existing membership and getting more organized internally.

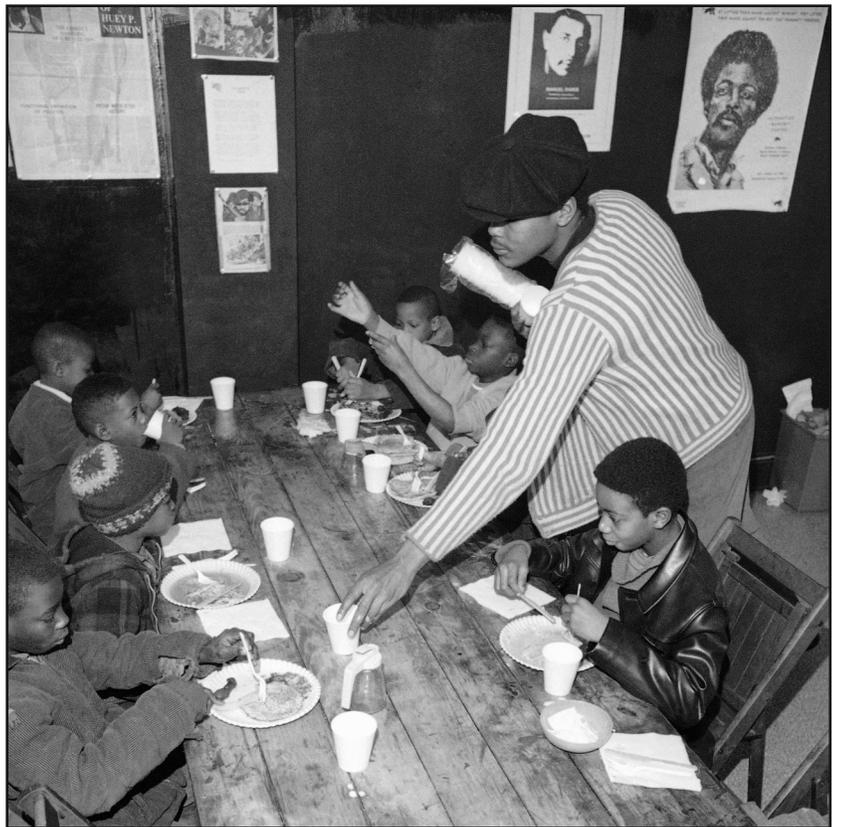
While the chapter had various issues—which are analyzed later in this article—their rapid growth and the mass support they received show how impressive their work was and how the masses of people in Chicago were ready to support revolutionary politics at the time. In particular, the Panthers were able to organize to meet the important and pressing needs of the people, including the Breakfast for Children Program, the Free Medical Clinic, and addressing the issues of gang violence and the drug trade in the slums. **The Panthers also waged a big struggle against middle-class cultural nationalist groups who had a reductive analysis of the issues in U.S. society. These sorts of groups tended to reduce everything to a question of identity and skin-color instead of seeing the complex relationship between white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism.**



A big part of the Chicago Panthers' success was that political education was a constant part of all their work, and this meant political education for Party members and for the people. **Fred constantly emphasized that without education the people will be unequipped to wage revolution and even more unable to continue the revolution after overthrowing the white supremacist capitalist power structure.** He looked to examples like Kenya's anti-colonial struggle, where the independence movement was co-opted by a section of people who collaborated with the British and ultimately installed Jomo Kenyatta as a dictator and puppet of foreign powers. Fred emphasized that *"with no education you will have neocolonialism instead of colonialism, like you've got in Africa now and like you've got in Haiti."* He emphasized that these situations didn't have to turn out this way, and that *"if the people had been educated they would of said 'We don't hate the motherfuckin white people, we hate the oppressor, whether he be white, black, brown, or yellow.'"*

In particular, Fred and others in the Chicago branch looked to Chinese Revolution as an example. They were very inspired by the efforts of Mao and others during the Cultural Revolution to struggle against those in China who wanted to restore capitalism and become the new oppressors. Even though the Panthers knew they were a long way from revolution, they clearly saw that one of the major lessons of the Chinese Revolution was the importance of political education every step of the way.

They knew how inept and racist the U.S. educational system was, and how it taught kids history from the perspective of the slave-owning "Founding Fathers," the settlers who carried out the genocide of the Native Americans, and the big businessmen who helped make the U.S. into a global empire. They took to heart Malcolm X's point that the corporate media "controls the minds of the masses" and that *"if you are not careful the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."* Because of these lessons, they worked hard to educate the people through the Panther newspaper as well as a variety of political programs.

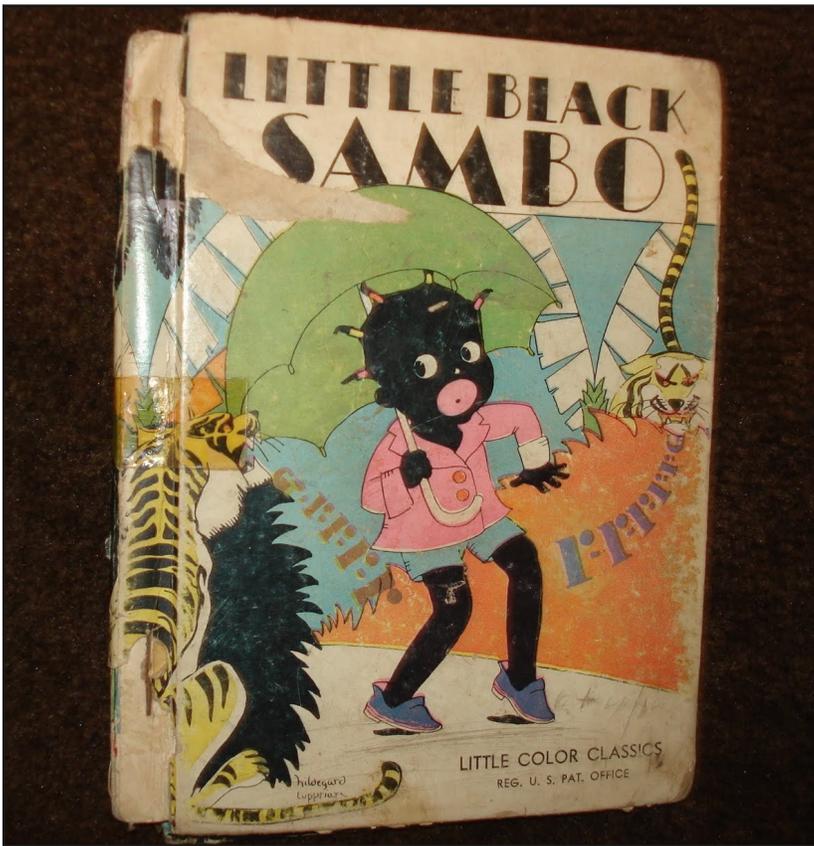


A big part of the Panthers' Free Breakfast Program was the political education that kids received. They learned about the real history of the U.S.

Through the Breakfast for Children program the Chicago Panthers were able to meet a major social need in the Black community and provide crucial political education to young kids in the community. Many working class Black parents did not have the time or the money to consistently provide breakfast to their children. **What's more, the education system was so openly racist in the U.S. at the time that white supremacist myths and stories were part of curriculum.**

"We don't hate the motherfuckin white people, we hate the oppressor, whether he be white, black, brown, or yellow."

While the popular conception today is that overt racism was largely confined to the Jim Crow South, this couldn't be further from the truth. It was such an institutionalized part of American society that it was built into the school curriculum—this is still true, but today things are less overt. Huey P. Newton described his experiences in a public middle school in Oakland:



The story of Little Black Sambo was standard classroom reading materials in public schools across the U.S.

Blackness was all about.

“As I suffered through Sambo and the Black Tar Baby story in Brer Rabbit in the early grades, a great weight began to settle on me. It was the weight of ignorance and inferiority imposed by the system. I found myself wanting to identify with the white heroes in the primers and in the movies I saw, and in time I cringed at the mention of Black. This created a gulf of hostility between the teachers and me, a lot of it repressed, but still there, like the strange mixture of hate and admiration we Blacks felt toward whites generally. We simply did not feel capable of learning what the white kids could learn.”

Huey’s experiences in the public school system were typical at the time. All over the country the white supremacist capitalist power structure used—and still uses—the public school system to spread the ideology of white supremacy. At the time it was more explicit than it is today, but the racism and white supremacy persists. **This helps to clarify that the Breakfast for Children program was about far more than just giving kids a nutritious meal, or providing people with a service they lacked.** This political

program was a key part of the struggle against white supremacy, and an important effort to combat the white supremacist school system and educate young people about the need for revolutionary change in this country. They learned about the racist nature of the system in this country and how capitalism kept people in the chains of wage-slavery. They learned about U.S. imperialism and about the history of slave revolts and struggles against white supremacy.

This program helped to win over the parents of these students as well. They knew the Panthers got up early in the morning to cook breakfast for their kids, and they saw that their kids were actually learning in ways that they never did in school. Because of this, mass support for the Panthers grew everywhere they were able to setup successful Breakfast for Children programs. **The FBI and U.S. government began to take notice and worked to do everything they could to discredit these programs.** In a 1969 memo, then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote that the program “represents the best and most influential activity going for the BPP and, as such, is potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities...to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for.”

“At the time, I did not understand the size or seriousness of the school system’s assault on Black people. I knew only that I constantly felt uncomfortable and ashamed of being Black. This feeling followed me everywhere, without letup. It was a result of the implicit understanding in the system that whites were “smart” and Blacks were “stupid.” Anything presented as “good” was always white, even the stories teachers gave us to read in the early grades. Little Black Sambo, Little Red Riding Hood, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs told us what we were.

“I remember my reaction to Little Black Sambo. Sambo was, first of all, a coward. When confronted by the tigers, he gave up the presents from his father without a struggle—first the umbrella, then the beautiful crimson, felt-lined shoes, everything, until he had nothing left. And afterward, Sambo wanted only to eat pancakes. He was totally unlike the courageous white knight who rescued Sleeping Beauty. The knight was our symbol of purity, while Sambo stood for humiliation and gluttony. Time after time, we heard the story of Little Black Sambo. We did not want to laugh, but finally we did, to hide our shame, accepting Sambo as a symbol of what



The FBI tried to “Red-bait” the Panthers by using anti-communist myths to discredit their work. However, the BPP was so successful in joining with the people and organizing to meet their needs that in many cities these government efforts to undermine their work were unsuccessful. Fred described how this played out:

*“The pigs say, ‘Well the Breakfast for Children Program is a socialistic program, it’s a communistic program.’ And the women say, ‘I don’t know if I like communism. I don’t know if I like socialism. But I know that the Breakfast for Children program feeds my kids.’ A lot of people think the Breakfast for Children program is charity. But what does it do? It takes the people a stage to another stage [of political development]. Any program that’s revolutionary is an advancing program. Revolution is change. **Honey, if you just keep on changing, before you know it—in fact, you don’t have to know what it is—they’re endorsing it, they’re participating in it, and supporting socialism.**”*

This really sums up how the people related to the program at an early stage. **Most weren’t too familiar with larger ideological questions like the nature of socialism and how the transition to communism—a classless society free from oppression and exploitation—is possible.** However, they saw firsthand how the Breakfast for Children program had a positive impact in the community. From there it was just a matter of clarifying to them what the Panthers were about in a broader sense.

Fred and others worked to clarify that the program wasn’t a charity. **They weren’t just feeding people who needed food. It was part of a larger effort to get the people educated and organized so they could lead a revolution.** Where charity only addresses the symptoms of an unjust society, revolutionary organizing gets at the root causes. The Panthers knew that as long as the white supremacist capitalist power structure continued to exist there would still be hungry kids and people lacking many basic necessities. No amount of charity can change that, but a revolutionary movement can. The Panthers knew that the political and economic system in this country is based on the wealthy getting richer and



Despite the FBI's best efforts to discredit the Panthers, a nationwide protest movement grew opposing the frameups of Party members.

the poor getting poorer. And so to address issues like kids not getting breakfast, they didn’t just provide food, they did so in a way that built up the revolutionary movement and provided revolutionary education to the youth.

Another way that the Chicago Panthers won the confidence and support of the people was through addressing the issue of gang violence in the city. **The gangs in the city were particularly oppressive, selling drugs throughout the communities, and fighting frequent turf wars that endangered the people.** Also, many parents were concerned that given the unemployment and poverty in the Black community—which are the result of a white supremacist capitalist system that systematically discriminates—that their kids would be drawn into the gangs by false promises of wealth.

There were other issues in the gangs too. They gangs each had their own turf, and saw the Panthers’ efforts to organize as a threat. They did not want revolutionary organizing on their territory. So, in order avoid confrontation with these gangs the Panthers had to figure out how to handle this situation. The gangs also worked closely with the police, who allowed them to poison the Black community with drugs in exchange for a share of the profits.

In this sort of situation it wasn’t possible to work with all the gangs and gang members. But, in many cases the Panthers were able to work out a treaty at a minimum. These treaties



The Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity inspired people around the country to organize to unite political struggles that united people of different nationalities.

allowed the Panthers to run their programs and sell their newspapers in neighborhoods that gangs considered their “turf” without risk of violent confrontation. In other cases, they had even greater successes. For example, Fred Hampton met with David Barksdale, the head of the Black Disciples street gang. He was able to convince Barksdale to look at the larger issues facing the Black community and to understand them as part of the white supremacist capitalist power structure in the U.S. This initial conversation not only opened the door to the Panthers organizing on Black Disciple turf, it also got the gang to begin to change their approach. They got involved in the Panthers efforts to organize against police brutality.

He had similar discussions with the Young Lords—a Puerto Rican street gang—and got them to organize themselves into a revolutionary political party, the Young Lords Party. **He made similar efforts with gangs from other nationalities, and he was even able to win over a white street gang that called itself the Young Patriots and had previously flown the Confederate Flag.**

Many of these gangs stopped their gang activity altogether, and even those that didn’t get involved in what became known as the Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity, a bunch of groups from different ethnic backgrounds that came together to organize against police brutality and to broker truces between gangs to

get them involved in organizing for the people instead of dealing drugs and ripping people off. These were important steps in transforming the gangs from anti-people forces that made their living by ripping people off and selling their dangerous and addictive drugs, to pro-people forces involved in the revolution. **This process involved a lot of struggle, including the struggle against backwards and predatory ideas that many gang members held.**

While the Panthers did not complete this process of transforming all the gangs, they showed a clear way in which revolutionary working class leadership can

win over members of the lumpen-proletariat to revolutionary politics. **This work in Chicago was particularly inspiring not only because it showed how to get the lumpen involved in the revolutionary movement, but also because it united people from a variety of different ethnic and national backgrounds.**

In a very diverse country like the United States with a larger number of working class people from different nationalities, it is essential to find and develop ways for the people of different ethnicities to join together in the revolution. **Only by the joint effort of people of all the nationalities in this country will we be capable of overthrowing the white supremacist capitalist class that runs this country.** And only after overthrowing them by a revolution will it be possible to establish socialism and begin to systematically destroy the basis for all inequality and oppression.

This doesn’t mean that important steps to overcome social issues and make the people’s lives easier can’t be taken before the revolution—the Panthers’ programs show the importance of these efforts—but it’s only after overthrowing the oppressors that it’s possible to really get to the root of most issues. This is because the oppressors have such a vested interest in perpetuating and expanding oppression and their power over the people. **It’s only when we smash their power and put the power into the hands of people that real systematic change can begin.**



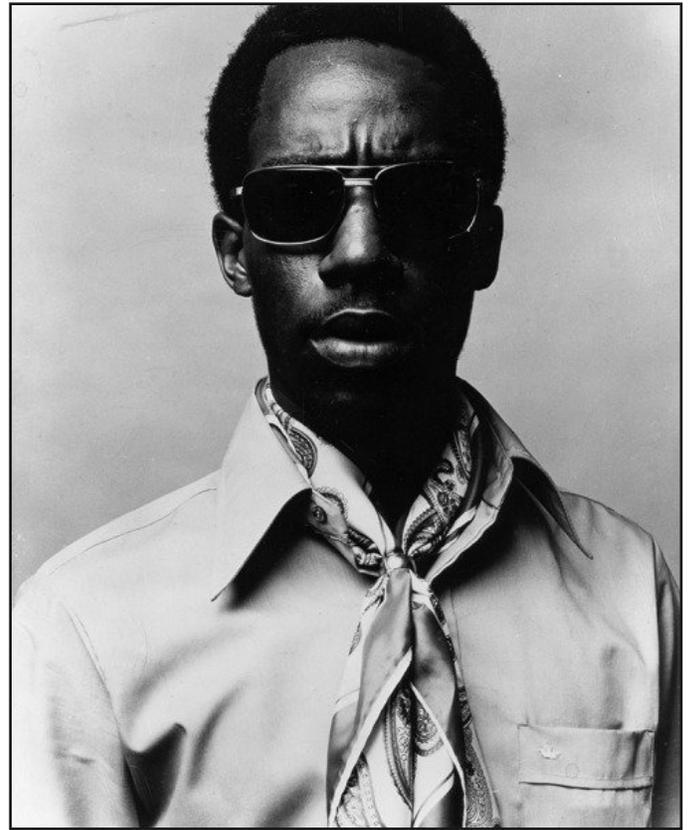
COINTELPRO and the Lumpen Line in Chicago

The immense successes of the BPP in Chicago did not go unnoticed by state authorities. Fred himself had been on an FBI watch-list since he was 17 years old, simply for organizing peaceful protests with the NAACP. However, beyond simple surveillance of activists—which is itself an outrage and it shows the true character of the government that they would have the FBI monitor even teenagers who were organizing peaceful protests against institutionalized racism—the FBI was involved in all sorts of efforts to disrupt the Panthers on a national level, and in Chicago in particular.

[O'Neal's] bravado and tendency to brag about ongoing robberies and other crimes should also have been major red flags.

The FBI watched the Panthers closely from the very formation of the Chicago chapter. **In fact, they were so concerned about the growth and spread of the Black Panther Party that by late 1967 when the Chicago chapter formed, the FBI actually had an informant join as one of the first members.** This was William O'Neal, who would later drug Fred Hampton on the night of his assassination by the Chicago police department and the FBI. O'Neal was a teenager at the time who had been involved a series of crimes. He had stolen cars, broken into people's home to steal their valuables, and more. Eventually he got caught, and the FBI offered him a deal. If he would collaborate with them and become an informant, they would make sure he was never charged for any of the crimes he had already committed, and they would even pay him \$100 a week, which was a good salary at that time—the equivalent of about \$722 a week today. Shortly after joining the FBI's payroll they asked O'Neal to go and join the BPP. He would become the fifth member of the Chicago chapter.

O'Neal's story is important because it shows that while the Chicago Panthers had a lot of success in winning the lumpen-proletariat over to revolutionary politics, they were also negatively impacted by the Party's overall lumpen line. While it would have been hard to tell what O'Neal was about when he first came to the office to join the Party, over time it



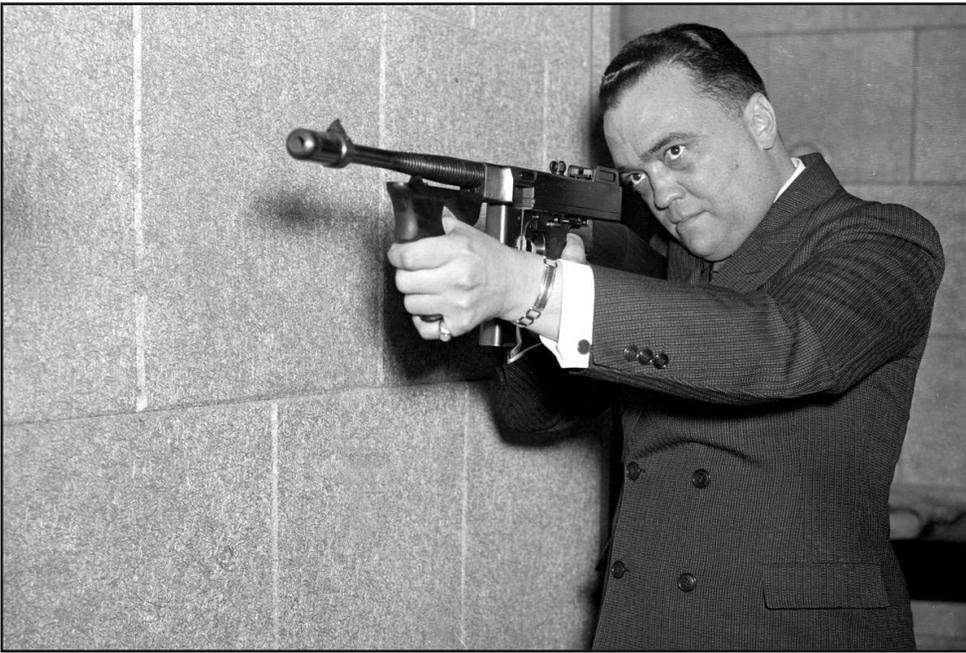
William O'Neal wanted to be a cop when he was growing up so that people would "respect" him.

should have become clear that he had no real interest in revolutionary politics. His bravado and tendency to brag about ongoing robberies and other crimes should also have been major red flags. In an interview, O'Neal admitted that he had grown up admiring the police and wanting to become a cop himself so that he could gain "respect."¹ When this wasn't possible, he turned to crime, but after becoming an informant for the FBI he said that he felt "pretty proud" and that he was "doing something good for the finest police organization in America."

These piggish views that O'Neal held came out in various ways. Jeffrey Haas who was a radical lawyer for the Panthers, a founding member of the People's Law Office, and one of the key lawyers who exposed how the FBI had assassinated Fred Hampton, described O'Neal's attitude in his book *The Assassination of Fred Hampton*:

"I got the techniques down,' O'Neal used to say, bragging about how he got away with burglaries and stickups. His fascination with criminal activity seemed inconsistent with him being an informant. Then I realized maybe not; it

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



FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was a notorious racist who did everything in his power to destroy the Panthers and the Black Liberation Struggle.

made his cover that much better[...]O'Neal didn't talk politics. He proposed actions, frequently armed ones[...]I reconsidered O'Neal's behavior in light of the new disclosure [that he was an informant for the FBI]. It fit uncomfortably well. He always had money; he was constantly offering to chauffeur Fred and Rush and later Deborah in his big car; he never attended political education classes and pushed actions over thought and in politics he advocated the most militaristic line; he often carried a gun; he was constantly suggesting other Panthers engage in criminal activity."

Haas' description makes it clear that there were many warning signs that O'Neal was at the very least a sketchy character. It makes sense that a radical lawyer might not see these things for what they were. However, revolutionaries need to be clear that the behavior Haas describes is counter-revolutionary and anti-people. **It is precisely this sort of behavior which is typical of snitches and agent provocateurs.** When O'Neal first joined the Panthers he used his knowledge of electronics and firearms to secure himself a position as head of security for the local chapter. He would then use this leadership position to insulate himself from criticism.

All of this shows how the lumpen line even impacted the Chicago chapter. Because the party maintained that the lumpen-proletariat is the most revolutionary class, activities like robberies

and stickups were not viewed critically enough. People can get involved in politics from many different backgrounds—even those who have a history of armed robberies if they are willing to change their ways. **However, if people get involved in revolutionary politics continue to engage in stickups and other similar activities, this should be a major red flag.** Especially in O'Neal's case where he carried these out for personal profit and tried to encourage others to join him, the BPP should have seen these as major warning signs.

Additionally, O'Neal's tendency to avoid all political education classes,

and to constantly advocate armed actions and a militaristic line over revolutionary politics, shows that he shirked the duties of serving the people and learning from revolutionary history. **Instead he tried to frame politics as primarily about bravado and armed conflict with the authorities.** There is a need for a revolutionary party to defend itself from violent attacks from the state and its thugs, so being armed is not a bad thing in and of itself. There also is a real need to overthrow the ruling class and their white supremacist power structure. **The racist capitalist pigs who run this country won't go down without a fight, so there is no problem with developing a military strategy to successfully overthrow them in a revolution.** However, this is not what O'Neal was doing.

Instead of doing the needed political work to educate and organize the people so they could eventually be ready for an armed insurrection to overthrow the ruling class, O'Neal was advocating for premature violent confrontations with the police. These abortive efforts would have led to a massive crackdown on the Panthers beyond the likes of even what was seen during the height of COINTELPRO. At its peak the Chicago chapter of the Party reached 500 members and sold over ten thousand copies of the Panthers' newspaper a week. **However, even this significant strength was nowhere near what was needed to overthrow the power-structure in Chicago, let alone across the whole country.**



FOIA(b) (7) - (D)

It was decided by Miranda that he didn't want Braswell to stay during their discussion and he was sent out of the house.

After he left, it appears the discussion then concerned the Blackstone Rangers. Miranda said that he would welcome them into the Black Panthers, but only if they would be willing to act according to the rules of the BPP. If they are not so willing he does not want anything to do with them.

It appears that the BPP is upset over the recent shootings of members in Chicago. It was suggested that perhaps they all should carry guns from now on. No final decision was made on this suggestion.

A breakfast program of the BPP is being conducted in Hartford at St. Michael's Church on Clark St. The church has allowed the Hartford BPP to use its small pickup truck when they wish to pick up any donations. It appears that the truck is being used for more than that purpose, particularly by Robert White.

In Hartford, [FOIA(b) (7) - (D)] were out attempting to buy as much 00 buckshot as was possible to take to New Haven. They were able to purchase at least 250 rounds. After they purchased the ammunition it was taken to the home of [FOIA(b) (7) - (D)]

An FBI memo detailing their surveillance of the Panthers' discussion with the Blackstone Rangers as well as other activities around the country.

In this situation, to advocate anything other than self-defense in the face of attacks from the police and other white supremacist groups amounted to a "left"-adventurist deviation that would have led to massive setbacks for the Panthers. **Informants and snitches are typically instructed to push for these types of actions in order to expose revolutionary organizations to violent attacks by the state, which can then be justified as "anti-terrorist" measures necessary because of the "threat" posed by the group.** O'Neal was a particularly destructive snitch, but he was not the only one in Chicago. There were between ten and fifteen FBI agents working to disrupt the Chicago Chapter of the Party, and each had a least one snitch reporting to them.

William O'Neal is particularly important not only because he was the one who gave the FBI the floor plans to Fred Hampton's apartment that allowed them to assassinate him, and literally drugged Fred on the night he was killed, but also because he was typical of informants in the Party. **His bravado, militaristic posture, his lumpen attitude, and his unwillingness to engage with political education were similar to many other snitches in the Party.** This is important because it shows how the Panthers' lumpen line left them open to infiltration in Chicago, as well as around

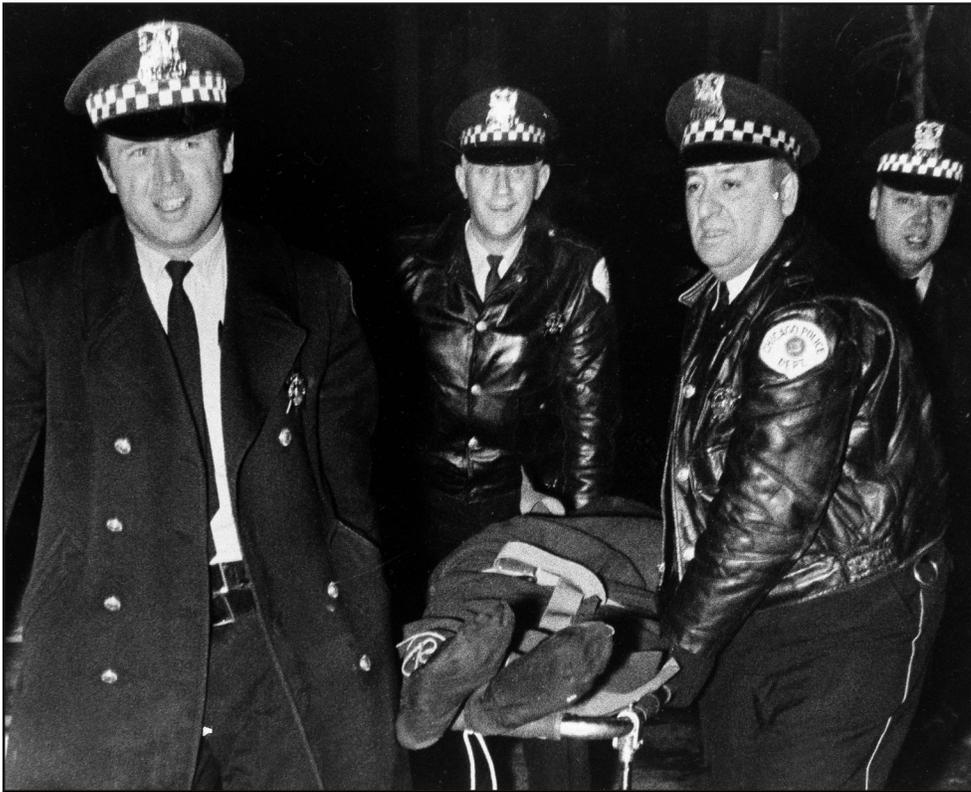
the rest of the country.

As the Panthers grew rapidly in Chicago, the FBI became increasingly concerned about their successes. After they convinced a number of street gangs to give up drug dealing and turf wars and instead join in a revolutionary political struggle against police brutality, the FBI went into high gear. **They started sending fake letters—known as brown mail—to the Panthers and the last big street gang that was not yet involved in the Rainbow Coalition, the Blackstone Rangers.** These fake letters included death threats and misinformation aimed at sparking violent conflict between the Panthers and the Blackstone Rangers.

Through a lot of principled work, the Panthers were able to head-off a conflict, but when they did eventually meet with the Rangers, they were unable to convince them to let the Panthers organize on their turf. Instead, the Rangers' leader, Jeff Fort tried to convince Fred and the Panthers to sell drugs. He promised Fred that he would soon be rich. The Panthers' refused outright. The Panthers' policy was that no members should use drugs. Alcohol, though not prohibited outright, was forbidden at the Panthers' office.

Though the FBI was able to sabotage the Panthers' efforts to work with and transform the Blackstone Rangers, the Bureau was unable to stop the Party's rapid growth. **The campaigns to Free Huey and to Free Bobby Seale had catapulted the Panthers to national prominence, and the Chicago chapter organized some massive protests around these campaigns.** Fred Hampton had just been elected to the Central Committee of the Party, and was going to serve as the national spokesperson for the Party. The FBI was afraid that he would become a national leader of the Black Liberation Struggle. They were particularly concerned not only about Fred's ability to galvanize the Black population, but also to work with the white population, and develop strong alliances between the Panthers and other non-Black groups. The FBI saw this as a major threat to the





Chicago Police laugh and smile as they carry Fred Hampton's corpse from the apartment after they assassinated him.

white supremacist capitalist power structure, because it could lead to a unified working-class revolutionary movement across many nationalities in the U.S. This sort of movement could eventually grow into something capable of overthrowing the capitalist pigs who run this country and establishing socialism.

Hoover instructed his FBI agents to "pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence."

In a memo to FBI agents, then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, instructed them on how to combat the rise of Black radical groups like the Panthers—which they termed “Black Nationalist Hate Groups.” This memo warned agents that if they did not “discredit” and “neutralize” key individuals and groups, there could be a “true black revolution” in the U.S. **Hoover’s memo reveals that he was particularly concerned about the ability of Black revolutionary groups to unite with white people, and feared that this**

was a key step towards advancing revolutionary politics. He clearly saw that the Panthers were able to do this, and Hoover and others in the FBI were doubtless very afraid of what they saw transpiring in Chicago, in particular in the Rainbow Coalition for Revolutionary Action.

The same FBI memo warns of the “rise of a ‘messiah’ who could unify and electrify” the Black Liberation Struggle. Fred Hampton’s rise to the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party and to national prominence had the FBI worried that he could become such a figure, especially given that both Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale were facing murder charges, and Eldridge Cleaver had fled the country. Hoover instructed his FBI

agents to “pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence.” **This directive effectively gave the FBI agents a license to “preemptively” kill any Panthers they wanted to, on the grounds that these Panthers might go on to commit violence.** Fred was targeted for this sort of summary execution by the FBI in collaboration with the Chicago Police Department.

On the night of December 3rd, 1969 Fred went back to a Panther pad—an apartment that a number Panthers lived in together—after teaching a community political education class at a local church. William O’Neal was there and he had prepared dinner for everyone. **Knowing that Fred was going to be there, he slipped a powerful sleeping pill—Secobarbital, known as the “Red Pill”—into Fred’s drink.** That night Fred fell asleep mid-sentence while on the phone with his mother. He lay in bed next to his pregnant fiancée when, at 4 O’clock in the morning, eight heavily armed police officers broke in the front door right as six other cops simultaneously broke down the back door of the apartment. During the raid the police fired between ninety and ninety-nine shots into the apartment. There were other Panthers in the apartment and three people, including Fred Hampton, were killed.





Like Emmett Till before him, Fred had an open casket funeral and thousands of people lined up to pay their respects and mourn the loss of a young revolutionary.

Although the police described the incident as a “shootout” an independent investigation found that only one shot was fired by the Panthers, and that was when Mark Clark, a Panther, was killed and his shotgun fired into the ceiling as he dropped dead to the floor.

The raid was so successful for the police in part because they had the floor plans to the apartment from O’Neal and because he drugged Fred Hampton. However, the Panthers also had some internal issues and blind spots that left them vulnerable to this sort of raid.

As was already mentioned, it should have been more clear to the Panthers that O’Neal and people like him were potential liabilities at best, and possibly even snitches. **O’Neal’s role as head of security for the chapter left them vulnerable in many respects.**

Despite the information the police had, they did not kill Fred in the initial shooting spree. As he lay in bed in a pool of his own blood, two police officers walked over to him. They heard his ragged breathing. **One said, “He’s barely alive, he’ll make it.” The other raised his gun point-blank to Fred’s head and shot him two times. The pig then said “He’s good and dead now!”** These same pigs would later be photographed smiling as they carried Fred’s corpse from the

scene of the murder. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1990, William O’Neal would finally admit the role he played in drugging Fred Hampton and setting up the assassination. In talking about the Panthers he still used the term “we.” **That same night he would run onto the freeway and throw himself in front of a passing car, committing suicide at forty years old.**

Conclusion

The Chicago Panthers and Fred Hampton in particular are real inspirations for the people. **The amount that they accomplished in such a short period of time shows what is possible when people come together in the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country.** They were able to start

a whole series of important programs that got the people involved in important political struggles, educated them about history and revolution, and addressed major issues in the community. The Panthers worked tirelessly and made great personal sacrifices to serve the people. All of this won them the confidence and support of the people.

The Chicago Panthers also made major strides in an area that other chapters struggled with: united front organizing efforts with non-Black groups. These efforts still have a lot of relevance today. However, despite all of these successes, the Panthers in Chicago made a series of mistakes, including not being clear on the nature of the lumpen-proletariat, and not understanding the need for a secret organization of professional revolutionaries who are skilled at evading arrest and detection by the police and FBI. The Panthers in Chicago and around the country were not able to fully identify and rectify these mistakes, and so they began to add up. Eventually these led to serious setbacks in Chicago including the death of Fred Hampton and other key leaders like Mark Clark. In the next issue of Red Star, we will discuss how the arrests and assassinations of key Panthers hurt the organization and exacerbated existing tensions that eventually led to a split in the Party.

The 2020 Presidential Elections

by Khalil



The dizzying number of candidates in the current Democratic primary is reflective of the deep division and inability of the Democratic Party to put forward a viable candidate.

This summer, the 2020 presidential election race heated up. Donald Trump has been president of the U.S. for the past three years, and has used this time to cement his hold on the Republican Party (GOP), while advancing a plethora of reactionary policies and laws. During this time, the Democratic Party has maneuvered to retake the seat of power by painting itself as progressive and pro-worker, while also trying to get a handle on its own internal divisions. With over two dozen Democratic candidates all wrestling for the same prize, the hope of a perfect contender “rising above the fray” to take on Trump has instead become a frenzied attempt by a divided Party to hash out an internal power struggle and avoid another humiliating electoral defeat.

After nearly three years of Trump in power, it may seem like a Democratic candidate will be a breath of fresh air, a hope to put an end to the Trump administration’s attacks on the working-class, immigrants, women, Muslims, the environment, and more. At the very least, we are uninspiringly told that even if the Democrats are a corrupt disaster, we must vote for them as a “lesser evil” to oust Trump. **But this approach ignores a basic reality about American “democracy”—**

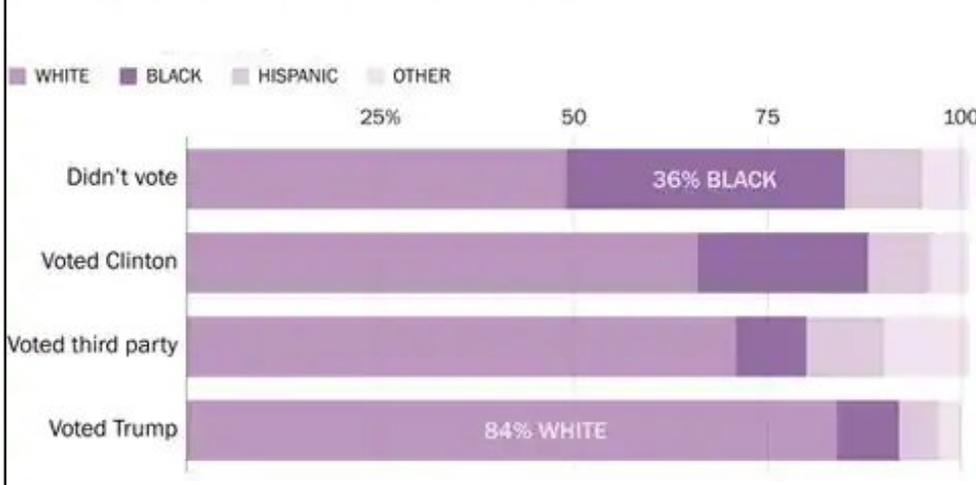
In the past couple of years, we have seen the growth of mass resistance in the U.S. Some sections of the ruling class, fearing the power of the people, have endeavored to co-opt this resistance. By painting Trump as the problem and Democrats as the solution, they frame the 2020 election as the people's chance to change things. In this article, we hope to expose the charade of U.S. “democracy” and the need for really revolutionary change.

that it is a democracy for the rich and powerful, but not for the broad masses of people—it is a democracy for the capitalists. Both Republicans and Democrats represent powerful financial and corporate interests. The politicians of both Parties rely on donations and support from the big capitalists in this country. As a result, both Parties are comfortably in the pocket of the ruling class, and at the end of the day both serve the capitalist oligarchs in their exploitation and oppression of working people.

The two-party system here in the U.S. is a particular form of capitalist rule. It allows for sections of the capitalist class—constantly in economic competition with each other—to compete with each other in politics. **What’s more, it provides false alternatives to the people—who, sick and tired of one Party, can turn around and vote for the other.** By distinguishing themselves on a few social issues such as gun control or abortion, the Parties can keep up the myth that they are “really different,” and keep the masses of people from taking up revolutionary politics. The Democrats in particular push the idea that they are a truly progressive alternative by proclaiming their “support” of marginalized groups like LGBT and Black people.



What 2012 Obama voters did in 2016



A significant percentage of Obama voters either didn't vote or voted for Trump. This shows that people felt that Obama and the Democratic Party did not represent their interests.

But despite all the bickering in Congress and various flame wars on Twitter, the two Parties are in fundamental agreement about maintaining the current capitalist-imperialist system. In fact, the majority of Trump's policies are continuations of Obama's.

Trump was able to succeed in the 2016 election by playing off several contradictions in U.S. society. The Republican Party was unable to produce a viable candidate from the established politicians, and Trump was able to galvanize the GOP base to win the nomination. In addition, the Clinton campaign promoted Trump for the nomination, believing he would be easier to defeat than other Republicans. But Trump built a strong reactionary base against the Democrats. He stoked and capitalized on racist hatred of migrants and promised to "secure the border," securing a white supremacist voting base. He portrayed himself as a savior of the working-class, claiming he would bring back jobs and opportunity to the millions of unemployed and disenfranchised in this country. **He routinely pointed out the incessant corruption and hypocrisy of the Democrats in order to win over a section of voters. This was quite important in his victory against Hillary Clinton.**

Many white working-class Trump voters had previously voted for Obama and supported the Democrats. **After eight years of empty promises and never-ending recession and unemployment, these workers saw they had been sold down the river. As a result, many simply abstained from voting, and saw that both Parties were screwing them over—in 2016, voter turnout was only**

55%. However, a section of workers only saw the Democrats, and not the ruling class as a whole, as the problem. As a result, some believed voting for Trump would be a solution, instead he has only led to further betrayal.

Since taking office, Trump has repeated the mantra that the economy is prospering tremendously and has never been better, but it has really only been improving for the upper crust of society. **In fact, Trump's economic policies have only led to greater poverty and instability for the working**

class. His Labor Department has made it easier for companies like Uber that hire "gig workers" to avoid paying minimum wage by labeling workers as "contractors" instead of employees.

His administration has also launched attacks on public sector unions and workplace safety. For example, the number of OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] safety workers is at its lowest point in history following funding cuts by the Trump administration, allowing workplaces to maintain unsafe and dangerous working conditions and practices that lead to injury or even death on the job. All of these policies make it harder for working people to survive and collectively fight for their interests. At the same time, Trump's 2017 tax cut bill allowed for corporations to pocket even more of the profits they make off the backs of workers.

In response to this, and in an attempt to maintain their increasingly progressive voting base, the Democratic Party has tried hard to paint itself as a pro-worker Party by pushing for meager minimum wage increases and getting support from big unions. **But when we take a look at Obama's actions, a very different picture emerges. During the 2008 financial crisis, Obama supported the \$700 billion bailout of banks (at the expense of taxpayers) and a whole series of related policies which ultimately led to over \$29 trillion being given to big banks by the Federal Reserve.**

Obama let bankers and Wall Street executives walk away unscathed from the crisis they created through speculation and gambling on



Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson visiting a concentration camp for migrant children in 2014.

the market. All the while, wages are falling¹ debt has increased, millions of homes were foreclosed on, and millions more people were left unemployed and out on the streets. In short, the ruling class used the 2008 crisis to stage a robbery of the working people in this country, and Obama drove the getaway car.

The Obama administration also pushed hard for so-called “Free Trade” agreements like the Trans Pacific Partnership that would encourage capitalists in this country to export capital and production to other countries, leaving more American workers unemployed and out in the cold. **Not only would these “free trade” deals make life harder for American workers, they would force thousands of poor people in countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines into sweatshop conditions for the profits of American oligarchs.** Although Trump scrapped the TPP, he has pursued many other free trade policies and the continuity between Trump and Obama exists in nearly every

1) U.S. media often tells us that wages are increasing, little by little. In fact, real wage growth (wage growth adjusted for inflation) has been falling since a tiny boost in 2015, and the wages being given out are not keeping up with the prices of commodities. In 1968, the minimum wage was \$1.60 (\$11.80 in 2019 dollars), compared to \$7.25 now. And those is only the tip of the iceberg since the official inflation numbers do not reflect the real inflation people face.

field of policy.

For example, take the situation at the border, which has sparked a great deal of outrage at the Trump administration. Trump has emboldened the most white-supremacist and fascist sections of U.S. society and helped to whip up racist hatred against migrants. His administration has overseen a marked worsening of conditions in migrant concentration-detention camps, and has made a show of large-scale mass deportation raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE]. **But the deportation machine was not created by Trump, it is part of the long-standing policy of**

the ruling class to oppress and exploit migrants.²

The militarized form this takes today—with a huge repressive police force in both ICE and the Border Patrol, numerous detention camps, etc.—was perfected during the Obama administration. **Obama massively increased the budgets for ICE and the Border Patrol, allowing them to become the militarized forces they are now. His administration deported roughly 3 million people, more than any president prior, and at a much higher rate than Trump.**

Or, to take another example, we can examine the environmental record of both presidents. Trump has opened up large swaths of public land to exploitation by oil, gas, fracking, and mining corporations. His administration has loosened regulations on toxic air pollution and pulled out of international climate agreements. This has also sparked a good deal of protest. Many protesters are calling for Obama-era regulations to be put back in place, but ignore Obama's own lackluster record. It is true that Obama introduced a number of regulations, but these were nowhere near sufficient to address climate change. **What's more they were relatively toothless, and a drop in the bucket compared to the regulations he slashed to green-light fossil fuel projects in the U.S.** And in fact, Obama set the precedent for Trump's pro-oil and pro-gas policies with his “Pivot to the Pacific”.

2) For more on this subject, see “U.S. Imperialism at the Border” in Red Star #3 (Spring 2019)



The “Pivot to the Pacific” was a strategy of the Obama government to move military and economic resources from Afghanistan and the Middle East to the Pacific in order to more effectively counter the rise of Chinese imperialism. **This entailed increasing domestic oil and gas production, to not rely as heavily on oil producers in the Middle East.** As a result, American oil and gas production rose rapidly under Obama’s tenure, which led to the United States becoming the top oil producer in the world by 2018.

The similarities between Trump and Obama do not end there either. **Trump has continued drone warfare, surveillance, jailing whistle-blowers, imperialist interventions, and more anti-people policies which also defined the Obama years.** While the Democratic Party tries to paint the two politicians as completely different, the reality is that both Obama and Trump, as heads of the U.S. state, pushed forward very similar anti-people policies. This is how the U.S. government and state functions and has functioned in the past—to maintain the rule of a handful of capitalist oligarchs against the interests of the people.

American oil and gas production rose rapidly under Obama’s tenure, which led to the United States becoming the top oil producer in the world by 2018.

That being said, there are real differences between Trump and Obama, and they reflect different interests and ideas among the capitalist class. But these differences do not mean one is better than the other. **They are differences concerning how best to maintain the rule and profits of the ruling elite—how best to exploit and oppress the masses of people at home and abroad.** What is important to understand is not that Trump and Obama are the same, but that they represent the same class interests. And furthermore, it is not just that Trump and Obama are bad people (although they certainly are), but



While there are some differences between Obama and Trump, they are united in their efforts to preserve the present unjust social system in this country and around the world.

that our entire political and economic system is set up to benefit the rich at the expense of the working masses.

Through their ownership and control of the education system, media, and dominant culture of society, the ruling class in this country has established a democracy of the rich, where the masses are given the illusion of free choice in elections to prevent them from rising up against a clearly twisted system. The ruling Parties distinguish themselves on a couple issues and will often speak as if they represent the interests of regular people, in order to convince the people that “the system works.” This prevents people from taking up revolutionary politics or thinking outside the bounds of bourgeois elections and the two-party system. But this cannot prevent people from resisting. In fact, discontent among the masses of people has reached such a degree where a section of the bourgeois politicians of this country—long some of the most anti-communist in the world—are supporting self-proclaimed “socialists” in their bids for election. Many politicians now have to denounce systemic racism and voice support for workers in order to remain politically viable.

While this change in the Democrats’ rhetoric reflects a growing progressive political consciousness among the masses, it does not mean that this political party is a solution to the problems in our society. In fact, the Democrats (and the ruling class as a whole) work very hard to prevent



Presidential candidate Joe Biden has a long history of groping women, including young girls.

the progressive masses from turning to revolutionary politics which aim to overthrow the ruling class and put the workers and oppressed peoples in control of society. Even as the Democrats respond to real outrages people have—about the situation at the border, sexual assault, environmental destruction, poverty, etc.—they propose change only insofar as it does not threaten the fundamental workings of the exploitative power structure.

The Democrats are united about maintaining the status quo of the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country, but they remain deeply divided on how to do so. The large number of candidates running for president reflect these divisions, which are themselves indicative of divisions among the ruling elite as a whole. The Party is increasingly torn between the “mainstream” Democrats, who want primarily a return to a “pre-Trump America” (while maintaining monopoly capitalist domination), and the “progressives”, who want to increase social welfare and pass a few reforms to convince people that the system can be changed from within. These divisions, and the unwillingness of most of the ruling class to give basic concessions to the masses (in the form of reforms like Medicare for All or relieving college debt) provide a serious challenge for the Democrats in 2020, but also provide openings for revolutionaries to put forward an alternative to the current system.

The mainstream Democratic candidates, in their competition with each other, attempt to portray themselves as the most progressive candidate. They are simultaneously juggling the

reactionary interests of their capitalist backers with the increasingly progressive demands of their base. **Demands for universal healthcare, student loan forgiveness, anti-racist policies, etc. have forced entrenched representatives of the status quo like Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and Elizabeth Warren to make bombastic—but ultimately hollow and insufficient—“plans” to solve all the issues in this country.** The competition between them becomes a question of who can win over the progressive

vote while not alienating “middle of the road” voters. Kamala Harris criticizes Joe Biden for opposing busing, Pete Buttigieg is criticized for not doing anything in response to police brutality in his town, Kamala Harris is then criticized in turn for her record as District Attorney, supporting truancy laws, and so on.

What has been exposed in these debates is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the real reactionary nature of these politicians. **Joe Biden is not only an old-style racist, but a misogynist pig who has a long record of sexually harassing women, including many young girls.** Elizabeth Warren cheated affirmative action policies by falsely claiming that she had Indigenous ancestry in order to get ahead in the system. Kamala Harris even back-pedaled her recent criticism of Joe Biden and refused to stand by federally mandated busing to desegregate school. The progressive posturing of the Democrats in these debates is little more than a cover for their actual unwillingness to change the status quo.

This has proven to be a big problem for the Democratic Party and for the mainstream politicians in particular, as they struggle to keep the favor of the capitalist class amid a more progressive and younger base of voters. **As a result, candidates will speak one day to Wall Street brokers and billionaires, and the next day condemn Trump’s tax evasion and corporate tax cuts.** They will criticize the jailing of immigrant children at the border, and the next day will speak to executives of top military contractors who profit off the murder of children in Yemen, Afghanistan and Iraq, contributing to numerous refugee crises around the world.



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  @AOC · 6h

It's not a fun or politically popular position to take. But consistency is important.

ALL workers should get cost of living increases. That's why minimum wage should be pegged to inflation, too.

Voting against cost of living increases is 1 reason why dark \$ loopholes stay open.

 1.1K  1.1K  11.5K 

“Socialist” AOC claimed a \$4,500 pay hike for Congress members (who already receive \$174,000 a year) was a “cost of living” increase that would help close loopholes for corruption.

This blatant doublespeak will buy some people over, but as the economic situation worsens day after day, and as the Trump administration continues to advance reactionary and oppressive policies in the most ham-fisted manner, more people will see through this shallow “opposition” the Democrats are putting up.

This is a big reason for the growing influence of the so-called “progressives” and “socialists” in the Democratic Party. This section of the Party is certainly much smaller than the mainstream politicians. However, since Bernie Sanders’ run in 2016 and the election of several young Congresswomen in 2018, this section has had a considerable amount of influence over the Party by appealing more to the young and progressive base. **The growth of this section is the main reason candidates like Biden, Harris, Warren, and others have been pushed to take up progressive-sounding slogans and policies.**

The so-called “progressives” make much more far-reaching promises than their mainstream counterparts, taking up slogans such as “Abolish ICE” and “Medicare for All.” They are more openly critical of many policies supported by both Republicans and the mainstream Democrats. This allows for them to build up considerable popular support among Democratic voters. **However, despite the calls for a “political revolution,” these Democrats are not serious about opposing capitalism or U.S. imperialism, but instead they aim to build a marginally more inclusive form of the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country.**

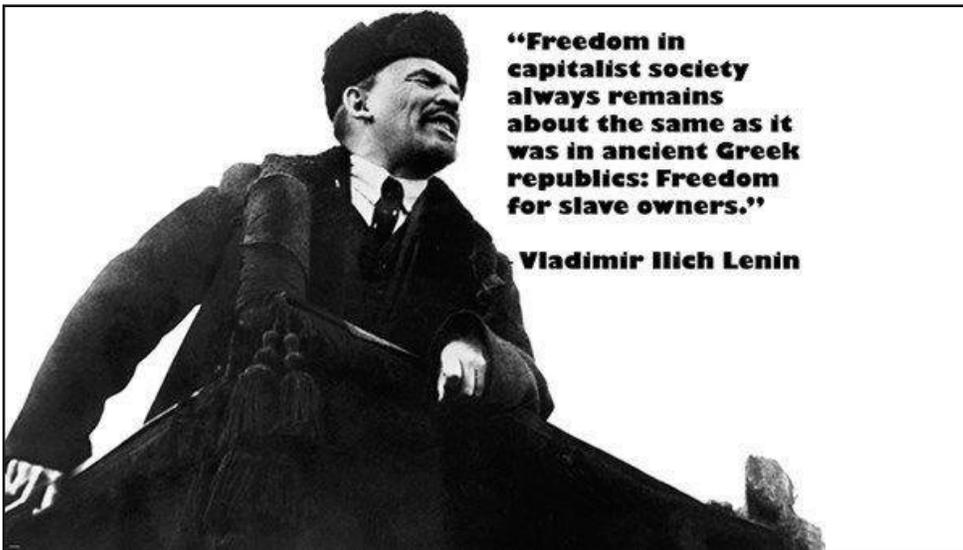
For example, this section of the Democratic

Party is more openly critical of “money in politics” and “the billionaire class.” These terms address part of the problem with our current system but ignore the fact that the state is an instrument of class rule and class oppression. With their wealth and countless ties to politicians and the parties, the ruling class is able to maintain a strong hold over the machinery of the state—that is, the bureaucracy, military, police, elected officials, courts, prisons, etc.

As Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin wrote in his work State and Revolution, “*The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order’, which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes.*” **The reformist section of the Democratic Party seeks to do nothing more than “moderate” the class struggle, get a slightly “better deal” for some members of the working-class, redistribute some wealth and create some welfare programs which will serve as a band-aid to a bullet wound.** They also seek to capitalize and personally benefit from their positions of power and corruption. For example, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez recently called for a raise for Congress people—who already received a six-figure salary—with the ridiculous justification that giving them more money will make them less corrupt! Ultimately, these faux-socialist politics are another dead end which prevent people from taking up revolutionary politics, another attempt to convince them that the present system is the only thing possible.

Furthermore, these reformists in the





Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin saw through the false claims of “liberty” in capitalist countries like the United States and led the people of Russia towards real socialist democracy of the workers and oppressed people.

Democratic Party ignore the fundamental conflict of interests between the working class and the capitalist class. Capitalism relies on the vast majority of people to toil their lives away for the wealth and prosperity of a few at the top. **The majority of people face either wage-slavery and living paycheck to paycheck, or homelessness and starvation.** The capitalists, on the other hand, are able to live in luxury and excess off the labor of working people. These reformist Democrats such as Sanders or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez do not seek to overturn this twisted system. While they call themselves “socialists,” they only seek to pass some meager reforms and keep the underlying power structure in place.

Capitalism relies on the vast majority of people to toil their lives away for the wealth and prosperity of a few at the top.

However, the Democratic Party mainstream (and the ruling class overall) is so reactionary that they are reluctant to give even small concessions like welfare to the masses. **Instead, they prefer to force poverty and austerity down our throats so they can continue to profit and live luxuriously while the economic situation for the people worsens.** As a result, these more “progressive” politicians are viciously opposed by the mainstream

Democrats and Republicans alike. The maneuvers by the Democratic National Committee to cheat Sanders out of the nomination in 2016 are thus not just indicative of the corruption of the ruling elite, but also of the opposition of the elite to even relatively minor reforms.

As the people become more and more fed up with the present system, the ruling class will become more and more desperate in its attempts to keep people believing in it. They promote a slew of ideas that justify the current oppressive power structure. **One notable example is the idea that**

that even if both candidates for president are bad, we should still vote in order to prevent the Republicans and/or Trump from stacking the Supreme Court with right-wing and reactionary judges, or to keep the Court “independent.” But these pleas rely on the false claim that the state is neutral and does not protect the interests of the ruling elite.

The Supreme Court, like every part of the state, is in the hands of the ruling monopoly capitalists. Its “independence” is a sham. **In fact, the reactionary judges such as Brett Kavanaugh get along quite well with the liberal ones, as already both Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsberg—both liberal “justices”—disgustingly embraced the rapist pig Kavanaugh as “one of the family.”** The reality is the court system, whether controlled by Democrats or Republicans, pushes forward reactionary and anti-people rulings unless the masses of people struggle hard against it. The court is already “stacked” with representatives of the ruling class against the working and oppressed masses.³

Another tactic of the ruling class is to co-opt mass movements in order to confine them to reforms and electoral initiatives. One recent example is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

3) For more, see “Kavanaugh and the Supreme Court: Two Tools of Ruling Class Reaction” in Red Star #2 (Winter 2019)



The uprisings in Ferguson, Baltimore, and other cities sparked a wave of mass protest against white supremacy across the country. However, the leadership of BLM was divided between more radical elements who wanted to expose the systematic oppression of Black people and link it to the white supremacist capitalist power structure in this country, and reformists who wanted to link the movement up with the Democratic Party, pass a few changes like body camera laws, and have more “Black faces in high places” (i.e. more Black elected officials). With organization generally only at the local level, these divisions were sharp enough that they could be exploited by the state.



The ruling class was able to crush strong mass movements like Black Lives Matter by funneling them into electoral politics, strangling the militancy and creativity of the masses.

Though this is disheartening, history shows us that a disciplined revolutionary movement with clarity of purpose can guard against these maneuvers by the state and ultimately win victory for the people.

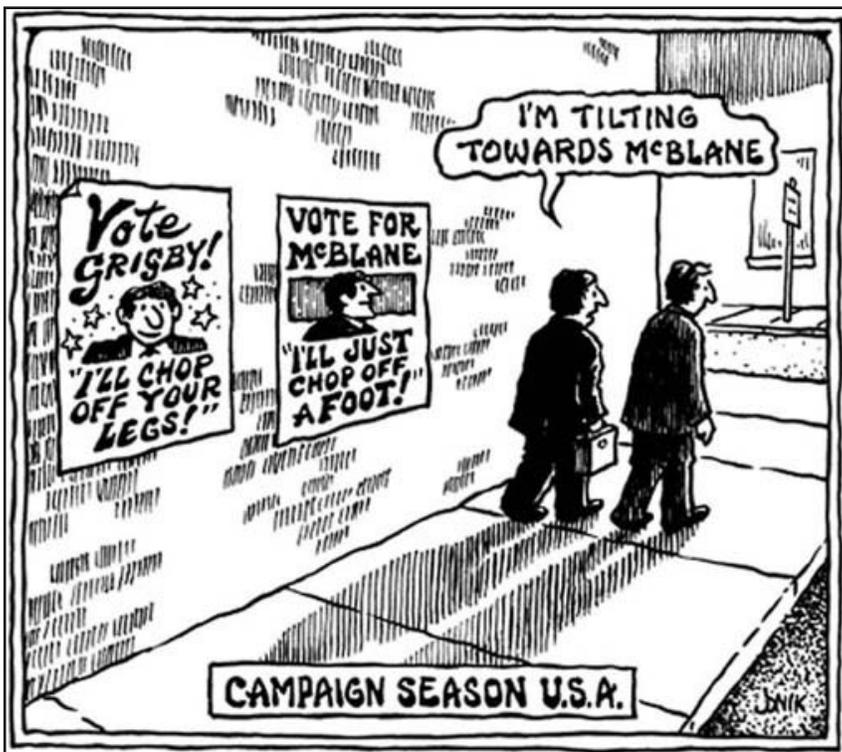
More radical leaders were sidelined and even murdered under mysterious circumstances (likely by local police and/or the FBI), and the reformist elements gained control of the movement as a whole and aligned it with the Democratic Party and U.S. state. As a result, the movement was reoriented to focus on representation in the white supremacist system, election campaigns, and the like.⁴ Though this is disheartening, history shows us that a disciplined revolutionary movement with clarity of purpose can guard against these maneuvers by the state and ultimately win victory for the people.

4) For more details, see Black Lives Matter Cincinnati/Mass Action for Black Liberation’s article “Why BLM Cincinnati is Changing its Name”: <https://bit.ly/30tekFa>

From the perspective of the ruling elite as a whole, co-optation is a beneficial strategy, as it drives the people away from the streets and into the ballot boxes. They can drain movements of their militancy and radicalism and turn them into toothless get-out-to-vote initiatives. The Democrats seize on people’s outrage as a way to build support in the election, while doing nothing to address the fundamental root causes of the issues, and while convincing people that their Party is not part of the problem.

So then, what is the way forward? **It is clear that the election of a different politician will not be a way out of the deepening economic crisis, or the endless wars, or white supremacy, or patriarchy.** People are more and more recognizing this is a fruitless endeavor, but most do not see another option, and are then overcome with pessimism and nihilism. The American ruling class has used the two-party system as a highly advanced system of bourgeois dictatorship, where a single beast with two heads can promote the illusion that we have a real choice in the elections. They promote the lie that the current system is the best we’ve got, and that our only hope for change is to choose between two evils on a ballot slip every four years, to choose which representative of the ruling class will oppress us.

We do have a choice in this election, but it is not between Democrat or Republican. We can either put our heads down and accept the current system where the vast majority of people have no control over their lives and are confined to wage-



The entire political system in the U.S. is based on the logic of voting for the "lesser-evil".

slavery and oppression, or we can come together and struggle for a better world. We can either buy into the high-sounding but ultimately shallow promises of candidates backed by the wealthy, or we can organize to overthrow this twisted system.

When we look at the history of this country, we see that not a single progressive gain came by voting for this or that candidate, but through people's struggle. It is only through massive upheavals and sustained rebellion that the ruling class has given any concession to the people. It was only through a militant and well-organized labor movement that the American working class won the 8-hour day, the weekend, and other labor protections (the right to unionize, safety regulations, etc.).

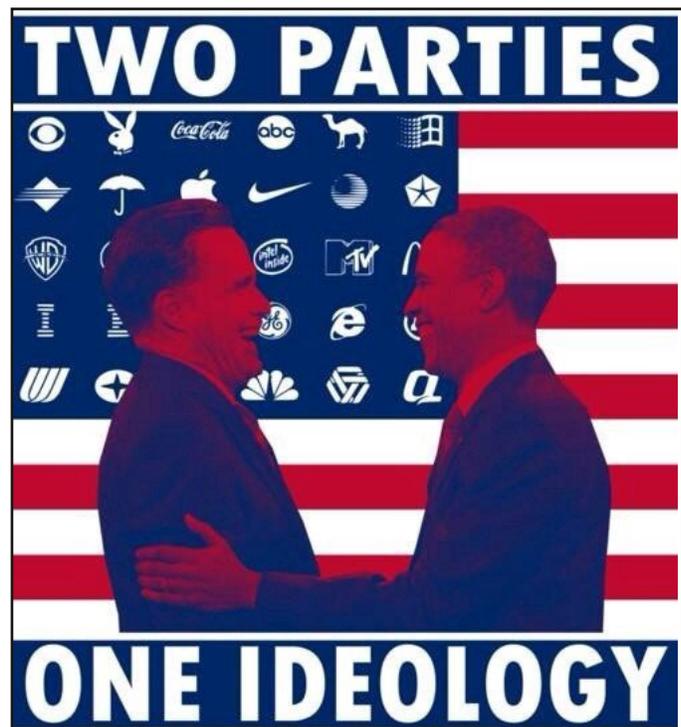
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It was only through the threat of real revolutionary upheaval by the working class in the midst of the Great Depression that the New Deal was passed. It was through the civil rights movement and Black Liberation struggle that Black people won civil rights and ended legal

segregation in the 1960s. The list goes on. **Of course, all these basic rights and concessions granted by the ruling class are gradually chipped away at, rolled back, and under attack, because they are in contradiction with the long-term interests of the ruling elite.**

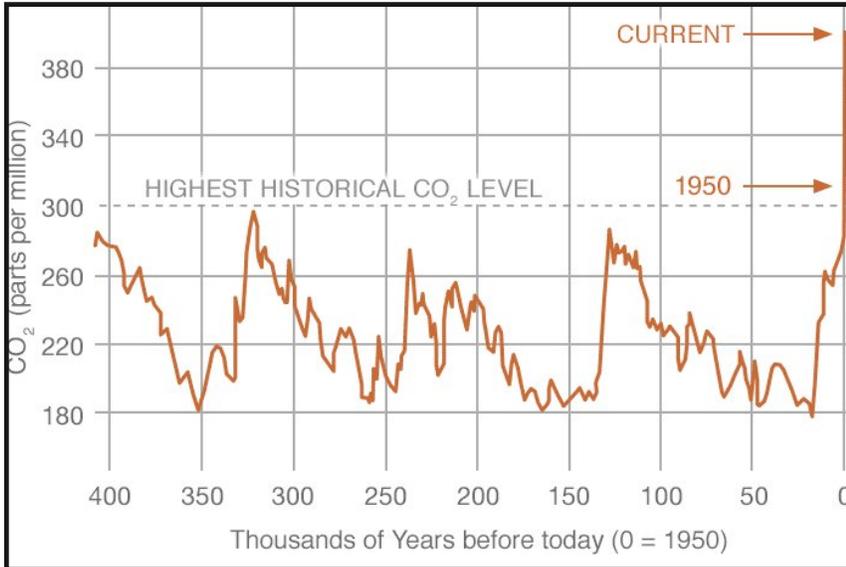
Therefore, our political struggles cannot limit themselves to achieving basic gains and concessions from the ruling class, but instead must aim at the overthrow of the whole anti-democratic capitalist system. As revolutionaries, we must join in the daily struggles of the people and other movements and provide conscious leadership to oppose co-optation by the ruling class. **We must expose how the ruling class spreads lies which justify a parasitic system that survives on the blood, sweat, and tears of the people.** We must build up a strong and vibrant revolutionary movement which can organize the people to smash the current white

supremacist, capitalist power structure. This task may seem daunting, but the ruling class continues to demonstrate its unwillingness and inability to actually represent the interests of the broad masses of people. No matter who wins the next election, the people will lose. By uniting in struggle against this unjust system, we can win freedom, and build a new, pro-people, and socialist society from the ashes of the old.



Climate Change and Capitalism

by Altan D. and Katya



A graph showing historical levels of CO₂ and the rapid increase which began around 1950.

As the climate crisis intensifies, more and more people see the need to take action to stop it. However, there is a lot of confusion about what is to be done about this issue, and as a result the debate often focuses on reforming capitalism. RUF stresses that climate change is a feature, not a flaw of capitalism, and here we deal with the issue concretely: the origins of the climate crisis, how it actually benefits the capitalist class, and the need for a revolutionary alternative.

A recent report in July by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated that to limit the rise of global temperatures and prevent climate change from reaching catastrophic levels, significant changes would need to be made to cut greenhouse gas emissions within a mere 18 months. This follows a similar report from 2017 that stated society has a period of 12 years to slow the increase of global temperature to an acceptable rate to ensure human survival. The latest IPCC report is galvanizing resistance all across the world in the form of mass demonstrations, including various political action networks and a planned general strike on September 20th to put pressure on politicians and corporations to address carbon emissions and confront the reality of climate change.

However, all of these reports and the action sparked by these reports are deeply tied into the root causes of climate change—not just the emission of greenhouse gasses themselves, but also the structure of capitalism that leads to environmental destruction by virtue of its primary function to generate profit. **The capitalist elite are neither capable nor willing to really address climate change and its consequences, such as the deaths and mass**

displacement of people throughout the world as well as widespread ecological devastation. In the face of all this, revolutionaries and working people around the world must confront the question of what to do about climate change and the threat that it poses to so many people.

In the most basic terms, the rise in global temperatures is caused by the Greenhouse Effect, wherein the atmosphere of the planet, and certain gasses—“greenhouse gasses” such as water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, and nitrous oxide—absorb and re-emit radiation and heat from the sun to warm the Earth’s atmosphere and maintain global temperatures, making life on the planet possible. These greenhouse gasses historically come from a wide variety of natural sources, and as they accumulate in the Earth’s atmosphere, they continue to trap heat that warms the Earth’s climate overall. **While on a basic level greenhouse gasses are needed to maintain warmth on the planet, as they reach very high levels this has disastrous impacts on the climate.** Through the development of human society, productive activity has had a significant impact on the climate, in forms such as the development of agriculture, cutting down forests, and mining. Since the development of capitalism



A boat moves through the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

and the Industrial Revolution, the greenhouse effect has accelerated.

Capitalism emerged with the shift from earlier feudal social relations and modes of production in Europe, when feudalism and its institutions, such as serfdom gave way to the rise of a middle class of rich peasants and merchants who had started accumulating capital while being able to employ wage labor and evict peasants off of their land, forcing them to move into the rapidly growing cities to seek employment for the newly emergent bourgeoisie, first on the individual level and then in jointly owned corporations.

Under capitalism, the constant drive to increase profits leads to production that is carried out to increase profit and not for the benefit of society as a whole.

This process was accelerated by European colonization and conquest of much of the rest of the world, with the plunder of Africa, Asia, and the Americas for slave labor and for resources with which to accumulate further capital and in the hands of capitalists and colonial governors. **This imperialist conquest also had its own negative effects on the ecosystems of the various places the capitalists plundered, where forests were often cut down to make space for**

plantations to grow cash crops such as tobacco and cotton.

These crops themselves often also required destructive farming practices to maximize yields and profits. For example, tobacco farming is often done with a large amount of potassium enriched fertilizers which have many negative environmental impacts. Another key element of the development of capitalism was the advent of coal power for steam powered machinery in late 18th century. This resource was provided through the exploitation and brutal oppression of miners and destruction of entire mountains

in search of more coal. **The increase in burning of coal (and eventually oil and natural gas) en masse, as well as the destruction of forests that could convert CO₂ into oxygen, has led to a massive increase in the amount of carbon in the atmosphere.**

Under capitalism, the constant drive to increase profits leads to production that is carried out to increase profit and not for the benefit of society as a whole. **This is to say that production under capitalism is for the enrichment of the capitalists.** It is because of this that a surplus of commodities have to be constantly produced; this surplus has to come from an amount of commodities greater than both what the working people consume and what is necessary for capitalism to reproduce itself.

This also means that capitalists have a real incentive—and even a necessity if they don't want to go out of business—to produce products that do not last, so that consumers will constantly buy more stuff. This drive for maximum profit leads to a system of production of goods which is incredibly wasteful and lead to massive environmental destruction. Just think about how much garbage is produced by disposable wrappers of candy bars and things like M&Ms. And likewise, how many things are made to not last very long so that people always need to buy a new one every few years. **In fact, the accumulation of garbage alone has led to an “island” of plastic waste in the Pacific Ocean that is more than double the size of the state of Texas!**



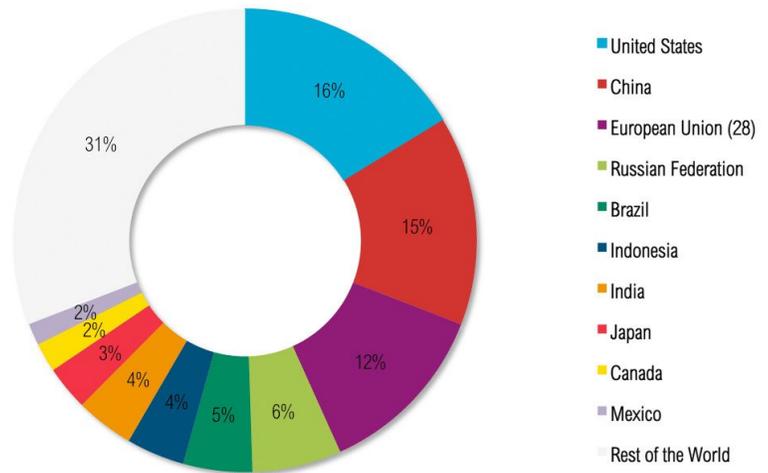
It should come as no surprise then that in the present day, the biggest culprits behind the pollution resulting from increased greenhouse gas emissions are, unsurprisingly, the imperialist powers and various large, multinational corporations. They are the greatest perpetrators of exploitation and imperialist plunder in the modern day. Through the 1990s and early 2000s the United States was the greatest leader of CO₂ emissions.

Since the restoration of capitalism in China in 1976, it has also been a major producer of CO₂. Over the past few decades it has rapidly expanded its production and seen a corresponding spike in emissions. China is now a bigger polluter than the U.S., in terms of CO₂ emissions. As China has developed into a global imperialist superpower, both it and the U.S. (as well as both of their allies) have begun a massive military buildup in preparation for World War III. This has led to a big spike in emissions as well, because the U.S. military is the biggest polluter in the world, and historically they have caused vast amounts of environmental destruction above and beyond simple greenhouse gas emissions. For example they poisoned the entire water supply on Cape Cod, giving thousands of people cancer, and they irradiated whole islands in the Pacific Ocean when they conducted nuclear tests there.

As China has developed into a global imperialist superpower, both it and the U.S. (as well as both of their allies) have begun a massive military buildup in preparation for World War III.

From this it becomes clear that the biggest polluters are the big capitalist corporations and the neocolonialist imperialist powers. In addition, one report has shown that the top one hundred companies are responsible for 70% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, and a

Cumulative GHG Emissions 1990–2011 (% of World Total)

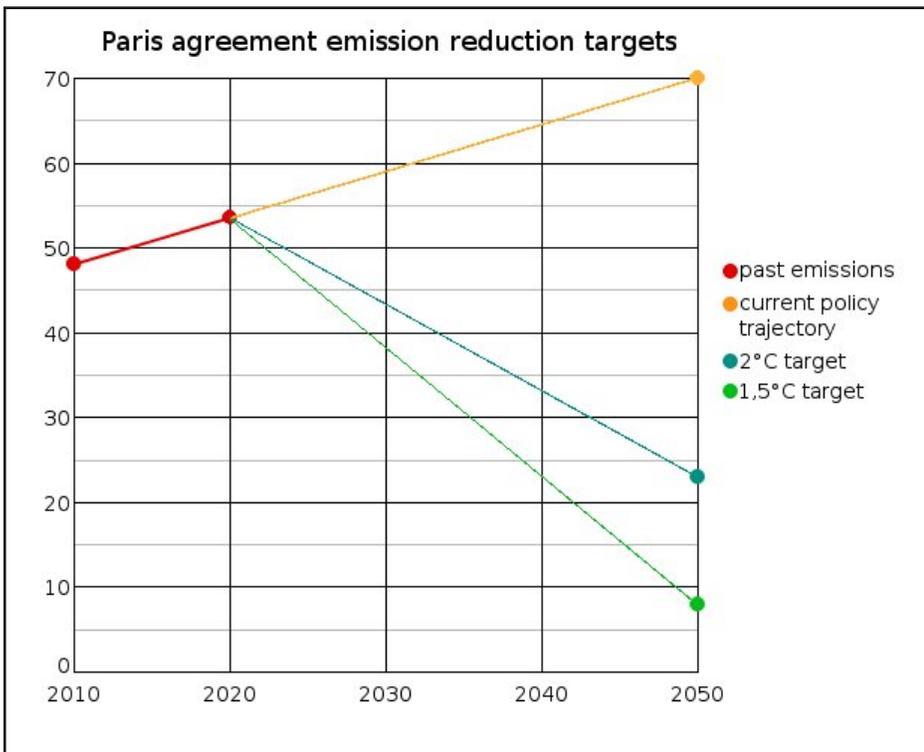


Countries most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, 1990-2011.

substantial chunk of these are oil companies which continue to produce mass quantities of petroleum for profit. All of this shows us that it is the actions and day-to-day operations of the capitalist and imperialist elite as a whole—not individual lifestyle choices of average people—that are the single greatest contribution to pollution and environmental devastation.

This is important to see because much of the contemporary discourse on climate change focuses on the need to change individual patterns of consumption. For example, we are encouraged to recycle our plastics, despite the fact that 95% or more of all materials placed in the recycling bin end up in a landfill instead of actually being recycled. Likewise, we are told to stop using straws, as if this tiny amount of plastic will make a difference when we drink from plastic coffee cups! All of this is part of a larger effort by the capitalist ruling class to distract from the fact that they are the biggest polluters and trick the people into believing that the climate crisis can be solved by individuals making minor changes to their consumption habits.

Even if everybody in industrialized countries took steps like driving a hybrid car and always turning off the lights, the reduction in carbon emissions would on the whole be fairly minimal simply because the capitalists and ruling elite in imperialist countries are the worst polluters overall. In fact, for capitalism



Despite the emission reduction targets outlined in the Paris agreement, emissions have remained basically unchanged.

“eco-friendly” lifestyle changes present a new market for businesses to profit off of, channeling the fear of climate change into “green” capitalism as companies phase out plastic straws, and other such consumer products and introduce new ones like “reusable straws.” These PR efforts also help to generate goodwill for new taxes on the poor to subsidize capitalism’s transition away from fossil fuels. Instead of drawing from the trillions of dollars in profits that capitalists make each year, most major nations are looking to “transition” to “green” energy by taxing the hell out of working people.

These major investments in alternative energy sources have occurred alongside other token initiatives such as the Paris Climate Accords signed by the United Nations in 2016, which claims to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C without actually setting any real enforcement mechanisms to compel the major polluting states to reach these goals. **However the reality, as many studies have pointed out, is that even if all the signatories had reached the target limit outlined in the Paris Agreement—which many have already failed to do—these measures likely would not be enough to limit temperature rise to the targets outlined in the agreement.** The Paris Accords, ultimately represent a lackluster promise by the very same imperialists who are destroying the planet for profit.

This is all part of an effort to generate the public impression that the capitalist governments are “doing something” about climate change while they actually continue to work hand-in-glove with major corporation to preserve the status quo. **These PR campaigns and lackluster agreements are coupled with a wide array of advertising and media messaging to blame “individual consumers”—especially poor people—for the problems of climate change.**

All of this aims to justify the present world order, and trick people into believing that climate change can be solved by some minor changes in the habits of individual consumers without addressing the elephant in the room, the pollution caused by capitalist enterprises. **Instead,**

what we need is a major social and political revolution that drives the capitalists pigs from power and establishes a social system for the people. Only in such a system will it be possible to carry out production for the social good—instead of maximum profit for the elite—and in a way that takes into account environmental impact of human activity.

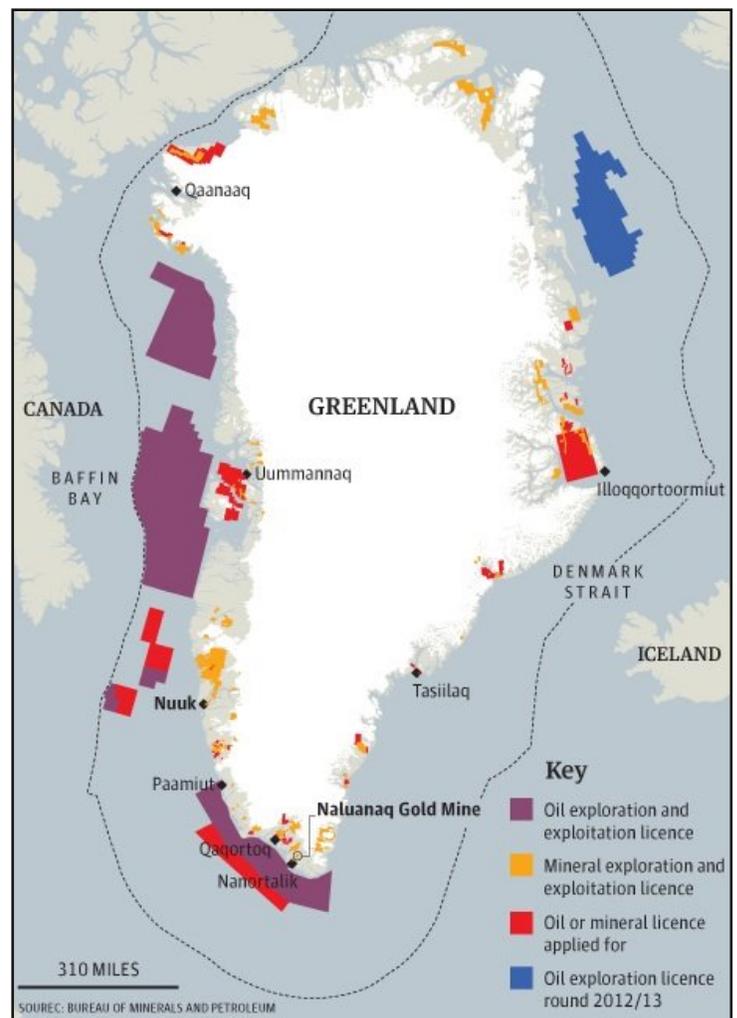
Furthermore, not only are capitalists and imperialists the ones most responsible for climate change, they will also be the least effected by the consequences of their actions. Some have argued that constant, continuing pollution and resulting sea level rise from the melting of the polar ice caps will hurt capitalism, making operations more difficult and costly. This will perhaps only be true in the short term. Climate change certainly wreak havoc on existing production, leading to flooding, droughts, famines, and dislocations of existing supply chains. Many factories and pieces of important infrastructure will be outright destroyed and whole cities will sink underwater. However, at present capitalists face a deep crisis of overproduction and the falling rate of profit. This means that they are producing far more goods than people can consume—just think about how much people buy on credit these days, from iPhones to cars, tvs, and more—and that the capitalists struggle to find profitable investments as a result.

Take the example of Uber, the “ride-sharing” company. They are worth over \$55 billion and are constantly **receiving new investment from major capitalists around the world. However, despite being worth so much, they have never made a profit, and by their own admission may never do so!** Why are capitalists investing so much in a company that is losing several billion dollars each year? Because right now there are not many profitable places to invest the money they make off exploiting working people. Since the 2008 economic crisis factories all around the world have closed and many of those that remain open are not operating at full capacity. There is already too much being produced and working people are too poor to buy it. That’s why tens of thousands of cars go unsold each year.

While the capitalists can invest in improving the existing factories, they face a diminishing return on investment. **It’s much more profitable to build a new factory than to marginally improve an existing one.** This is where climate change comes in and could actually help the capitalists!

While some individual capitalists will lose their fortunes as rising sea levels and increased flooding destroy existing infrastructure and displace hundreds of millions of people, these disasters will also create “exciting new investment opportunities” for the capitalist class as a whole. There will suddenly be a need to create new factories, cities, apartments, highways, and more. Assuming that climate change does not destroy all human life, the destruction caused by climate change will, paradoxically, make capitalism more profitable and help the capitalist class as a whole. The capitalist system will be able to adapt, persist, and even expand as a result of climate change.

The capitalists could also move significant capital and power towards projects to preserve themselves first and foremost. For example, a number of capitalists, such as Tesla’s founder Elon Musk and Amazon’s CEO Jeff Bezos are working on space companies that aim to eventually send people to live permanently on Mars. **They seem to hope that if they destroy this planet they can flee to Mars and set up capitalism—or a slave colony—there.** In addition to these plans, the capitalists are maneuvering to ensure that their wealth and social position is not hurt by climate change. For example, although Donald Trump has infamously denied the basic reality of climate change



As climate change causes the glaciers and icecaps in place like Greenland to melt, capitalists are lining up for the "exciting new investment opportunities."

—calling it a “hoax”, “pseudoscience” and even a conspiracy by the Chinese state to sabotage U.S. manufacturing—Trump has also petitioned a local council in Doonbeg, Ireland for approval to construct a series of sea walls to protect his golf course from erosion caused by rising sea levels. If the capitalists are trying to protect anything from climate change, it is their own assets and capital, and not the masses of people. Even though some capitalists will doubtless be hurt and even lose their fortunes as a result of climate change, it is working people that will be hit the hardest.

We don’t need to imagine a future scenario to see this, because climate destruction and its consequences are already playing out in our time. In Guatemala, massive droughts have caused widespread crop failures for the peasantry, forcing thousands to flee the country or face famine – a situation that peasants in many other oppressed nations have to face as the effects of climate change become more and



Villagers in the Pacific island nation of Kiribati contend with flooding from sea level rise.

more intense and widespread. Meanwhile, island nations, such as the Republic of Kiribati in the Pacific, are literally sinking into the ocean as sea levels rise, forcing many to flee their homes. Both of these examples are warnings of the catastrophic refugee crises to come, which are actually already beginning as a result of climate change.

In the past few years wildfires in the U.S. state of California have consumed 500% more land than they ever have before, and these fires will likely continue to intensify every year as global temperatures increase.

Meanwhile Puerto Rico is still reeling from the consequences of Hurricane Maria in 2017, which knocked out 95% of the nation's electrical grid, destroyed much of its infrastructure, and led to the deaths of at least 5,000 people.¹ **This disaster was also greatly exacerbated by the corruption and decadence**

1) For more information, see pages 82-88 in http://www.iboninternational.org/sites/ibon/files/resources/LII2C_English.pdf

of the U.S. colonial regime that still holds the island nation in chains. In the past few years wildfires in the U.S. state of California have consumed 500% more land than they ever have before, and these fires will likely continue to intensify every year as global temperatures increase and capitalists agricultural practices dry out the land.

Many people across the world have begun to experience the alarming impacts of climate catastrophes and as a result, many movements against climate change have emerged in the hopes of pressing for more substantial action across the world. This is part of a global upsurge and mass outrage over inaction of the

ruling elite in the face of climate change. These protests have been sparked in part by the many reactionary figures and their inaction or overtly malicious attitudes towards the environment. Examples include the U.S.' withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords under Donald Trump and Brazil's inaction and enabling of rampant forest fires in the Amazon Rainforest—which produces 20% of the planet's oxygen—as a result of capitalist development under Brazil's reactionary comprador president Jair Bolsonaro.

Young people in imperialist countries all across the world have walked out of their classes and fossil fuel divestment movements have emerged on universities around the world. International protest movements such as Earth Strike and Extinction Rebellion have also sprung up in recent months to protest the failure of the ruling elite to decisively handle the threat of climate change and pressure politicians and companies to take more substantial action. One such group, Earth Strike, has planned for a massive global general strike against climate change to take place late in September, 2019.

Though their mobilization is significant—and the people power of those seeking an alternative to climate destruction is inspiring—the approach that groups like Earth Strike and Extinction Rebellion are taking to combating climate catastrophe is fundamentally flawed.



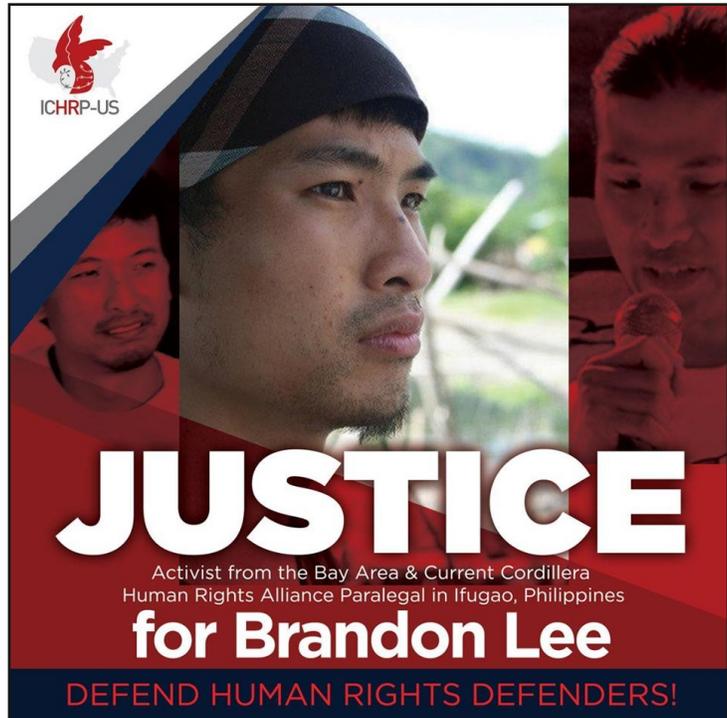
Brandon Lee: A Great Example of Serving the People

by Art and Nadia

A number of years ago Brandon Lee, a Chinese-American, moved to the Philippines to support the peoples' struggles there. He became a human rights activist working with the indigenous people in the Philippines as they struggle against displacement. The corrupt Filipino government and its imperialist sponsors are waging an all-out war against the people, and driving the indigenous people off their land to open it up for loot by multi-national corporations. In this war the government had their thugs shoot Brandon in the head, but despite this he lived and is recovering. Brandon's commitment to the people is great example of working class internationalism.

On August 7 in the Philippines province of Ifugao, Brandon Lee, a Chinese-American activist who grew up in San Francisco was shot in the head four times by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This shooting was a retaliation for Brandon's work in service of indigenous people, referred to as Lumad, a term encompassing several indigenous ethnic and linguistic groups in the country. **The shooting of Lee, who was a reporter and human rights activist, is part of a larger efforts of government intimidation against activists.** Now weeks after the shooting, Lee is still alive, but in critical condition. He suffered over eight heart attacks in operations to save his life in the days following the attack.

In recent weeks, a struggle has taken place to defend Lee's life from further attacks, and a related campaign has developed in the United States to bring attention to Lee's plight. **This has included protests in the Bay Area in front of San Francisco's City Hall and in New York City in front of the Filipino Consulate, as well as demands to U.S. government offices**



that Lee's case not be ignored.

A recent fact-finding mission from the U.S. traveled to the Philippines to investigate the shooting. On the trip were San Francisco Supervisor (a position in local city government) Matt Haney, and Raquel Redondiez, a member of the San Francisco Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines. **Redondiez stated that "throughout the Philippines, what we've heard is that where there are communities organizing and resisting the president's 'build, build, build and kill, kill, kill' development policy, the military is deployed against them to harass them, to intimidate them and even to forcibly evacuate communities from their ancestral domains."**

At an August protest on behalf of Lee in front of the Philippines Consulate in New York City, an activist told those gathered that "Brandon Lee is a modern day Norman Bethune." This was a reference to the Canadian doctor and surgeon who volunteered in both the Spanish Civil War against fascism and the Chinese War of Resistance against the Japanese Fascist invasion.





Norman Bethune operates on a member of the People's Liberation Army during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

Doctor Bethune lost his own life in China in 1939 during his selfless efforts to save the lives of Chinese soldiers wounded on the battlefield. The comparison to Bethune at the NYC protest was particularly apt. Bethune spent much of his life in Canada and the United States, countries which in the early 20th century supported the colonial and right-wing policies and alliances that resulted in devastation in China and Spain.

People in the U.S. and Canada, such as Bethune, saw the need to oppose their "own" ruling classes and instead support the struggles of the people internationally.

Despite the negative role of these respective governments, people in the U.S. and Canada, such as Bethune, saw the need to oppose their "own" ruling classes and instead support the struggles of the people internationally. So too with Lee, who came from the United States. The U.S. in particular has a

very long history of oppressing of the Filipino people. **Before 1898 the Philippines was a Spanish colony for around 350 years. The Spanish rule was very brutal, and a number of rebellions were brutally crushed.** Then in 1898 the United States declared war on Spain under the pretext that Spain had bombed a U.S. ship in Havana, Cuba, which was then also a Spanish colony. It turned out later that the explosion onboard the ship in question, the USS Maine, was due to a boiler malfunction and didn't have to do with Spain, but at that point the war had already started.

At the time the U.S. was an expanding power which desperately wanted colonies of its own. The U.S. elite needed to get access to new markets and resources to keep expanding their industrial operations and to keep making more profits. They realized that Spain's hold over its colonies was relatively weak, and when the pretext of the USS Maine came along they seized on it to declare war on Spain in order to seize control of Spanish colonies. **At the end of the war Cuba became a U.S. client state and the U.S. got direct control of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico.** The people in all of these places were not consulted about this, and the change meant nothing but a change in which



Brandon (in front in the red cap) with his Filipino friends at San Francisco State University, where he joined the League of Filipino Students.

colonial overlord was oppressing and exploiting them.

After World War II the Philippines became an independent country, but the U.S. did not let the country escape from its grasp. For decades The U.S. worked to keep the Filipino people under its thumb by supporting dictators who sold out the country to U.S. business interests. **These rulers have looted the country and committed brutal atrocities against the people to maintain their rule.**

The U.S. worked to keep the Filipino people under its thumb by supporting dictators who sold out the country to U.S. business interests.

It's important to remember that Lee is not just an American, but a Chinese-American. In recent years China has maneuvered to make large parts of the Philippines its effective neocolony, and has used military force to seize fishing waters and islands off of the Philippines coast, even claiming the entire South Sea as Chinese waters. As a student in San Francisco State College, Lee joined the

League of Filipino Students chapter despite not being ethnically Filipino. Lee's actions over the course of years underscores the basic point that the struggles of oppressed peoples transcend borders, and that the actions of powerful nation states do not represent the interests of the people.

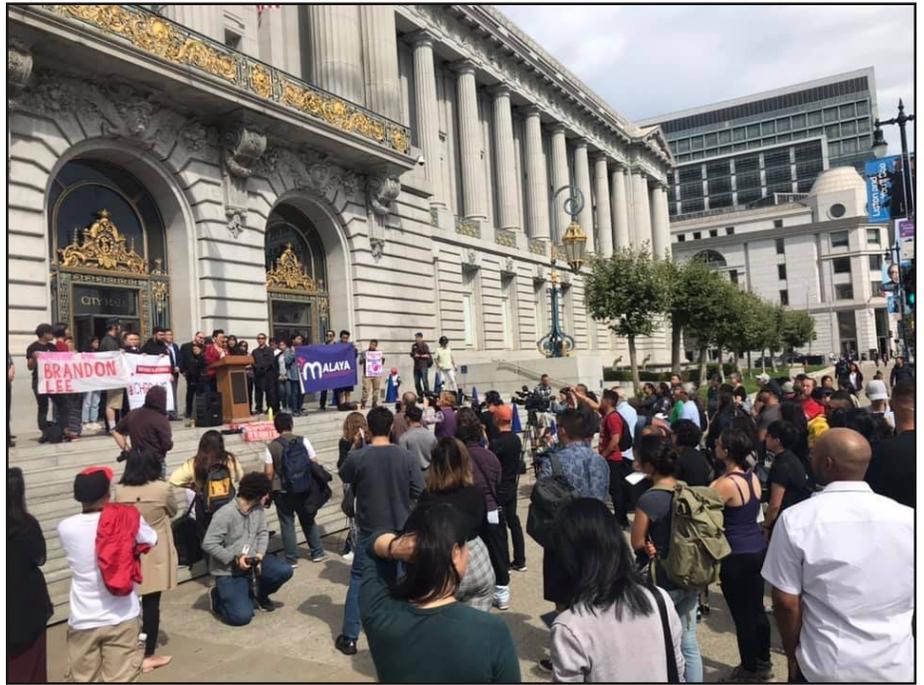
During a speech at the rally, Lee's friend stated that Lee wanted to move to the Philippines about ten years ago to support the struggles of the indigenous people there. And that was exactly what he did. In the years since he also married and had a young daughter in the country. His daughter was in the house at the time Lee was shot.

While it is unclear if Duterte's government will face any repercussions for attempting to murder an American citizen, several U.S. government officials have said they are looking into the matter. ***"It is shameful that a U.S. citizen is out there in this situation currently under threat, and not being fully protected by the Philippines government or let alone adequately by the American government,"*** San Francisco Supervisor Haney said. Haney's district includes many Filipino-Americans.

A representative of Congressional House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office said they were aware of Lee's situation in the Philippines and that they have been in contact with Lee's family, the U.S. Embassy, and the U.S. Department of State. Lee's family is pushing to have Brandon airlifted out the Philippines by the U.S. government. **While they do not trust the U.S. state, they feel that it has a responsibility to protect Brandon from further assassination attempts.**

During a speech at the rally, Lee's friend stated that Lee wanted to move to the Philippines about ten years ago to support the struggles of the indigenous people there.

Raquel Redondiez stated, *“I think there’s definitely, you know, private concerns expressed to family members at meetings with congressional offices, but what—the U.S. Embassy response was actually to contact the Philippine National Police to provide protection at the hospital, which was not welcomed by Brandon’s family and colleagues, who do believe that the Philippine National Police has been part of the harassment and the intimidation that Brandon and his colleagues have been experiencing the last several years.”* To underscore the point, Haney stated, *“He [Brandon Lee] has no doubt that this was the Philippine Army that targeted him.”*



A protest outside the San Fransisco City Hall against the attack on Brandon Lee.

Many indigenous people have resisted the Duterte government’s increasingly aggressive efforts to drive them off their land and open the area up for mining and dam projects sponsored by foreign companies. Last year the president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, threatened to bomb indigenous schools for their role in educating people about local struggles. He stated *“I’ll really have those [schools] bombed...because you are operating illegally and you are teaching the children to rebel against government.”*

Last year the president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, threatened to bomb indigenous schools for their role in educating people about local struggles.

Last year Lee expressed his concerns about threats in an interview, stating *“I’m a volunteer at the Ifugao Peasant Movement, IPM. For us, we have been harassed, intimidated, threatened with death threats, vilified, red-tagged, under surveillance constantly since 2010. A lot of it has to do with us defending the land, life and resources of the indigenous peoples here in Ifugao.”*

The same day Lee was shot, Philippines Army personnel visited the homes of several other

activists, who happened to not be there of the time, leading people to believe they could have been shot as well. **Shortly before he was shot, Lee was labeled as “an enemy of the state” on social media.**

In addition to these threats against indigenous peoples and those involved in their struggle, the Duterte regime has carried out a widespread campaign of terror against people across the country. After being elected as President, Duterte—despite being known as a prominent drug lord—started a massive “War on Drugs.” He used this campaign to reign terror on the people and eliminate rival drug gangs. **He also sponsored vigilante-style killings of people across the country. At least 40,000 people have been murdered in the streets in this “drug war” which is more accurately described as a war on the poor.**

Redondiez stated, *“We met with some of the folks from the ‘nightcrawlers,’ which are photojournalists who go and take photos of these extrajudicial killings. And they told us that these are so common that now their editors are telling them that they can’t even cover them anymore, because they need a new angle, because these are happening so often that it’s not even news anymore. And this particular journalist told us that the only thing that has changed is where they’re dumping the bodies and how they’re lying about it.”*

Lee decided to go into this dangerous



A protest in support of Brandon Lee in front of the Philippines Consulate in NYC.

environment and stand with the people of the Philippines. He went and lived among the people, helping out with their daily struggles and making them his own. This represents a serious break with the dominant values of our society, where we are constantly encouraged to value the lives of other Americans more than those of other people around the world. **This reactionary “America First” ideology is drummed into us constantly from the time we are very young, in school and in the media.** We are constantly bombarded with the idea that the U.S. is the greatest place on earth, and that it isn’t important to pay attention to or really care about what is going on elsewhere.

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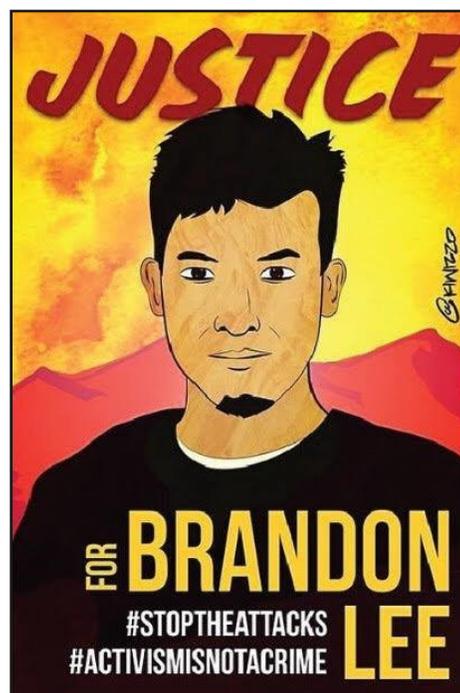
Constantly being exposed to this type of worldview has a real effect on how people living in the U.S. think of and relate to people living in other countries. To adopt a revolutionary and proletarian internationalist outlook we have to struggle against

this and other forms of U.S. chauvinism. **Brandon Lee provides a shining example for all of us here of what proletarian internationalism is all about.** His commitment to the struggle of the Filipino people against American and Chinese imperialism and against the corrupt and pro-imperialist Filipino government was so deep that he went to the Philippines and joined in their struggles.

We should all learn from his commitment to the people. **Proletarian internationalism means adopting the struggles for liberation of all the people of the world as our own.** It means supporting their victories and mourning their defeats as our own. The different struggles around the world form a part of a

much larger historical struggle which we’re engaged in: the struggle to liberate humanity from class society and establish Communism worldwide. Brandon Lee made a deep commitment to this struggle when he went to join and support the struggle of the Filipino people. Now we need to both support and defend his life as we learn from his spirit of self-sacrifice and his love for the people.

**Defend Brandon Lee!
Down with Duterte’s war on the poor!**





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