

**The true story  
of the White Nation**

# SETTLERS



**THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE  
WHITE PROLETARIAT**

**by J. Sakai**

**8.95**

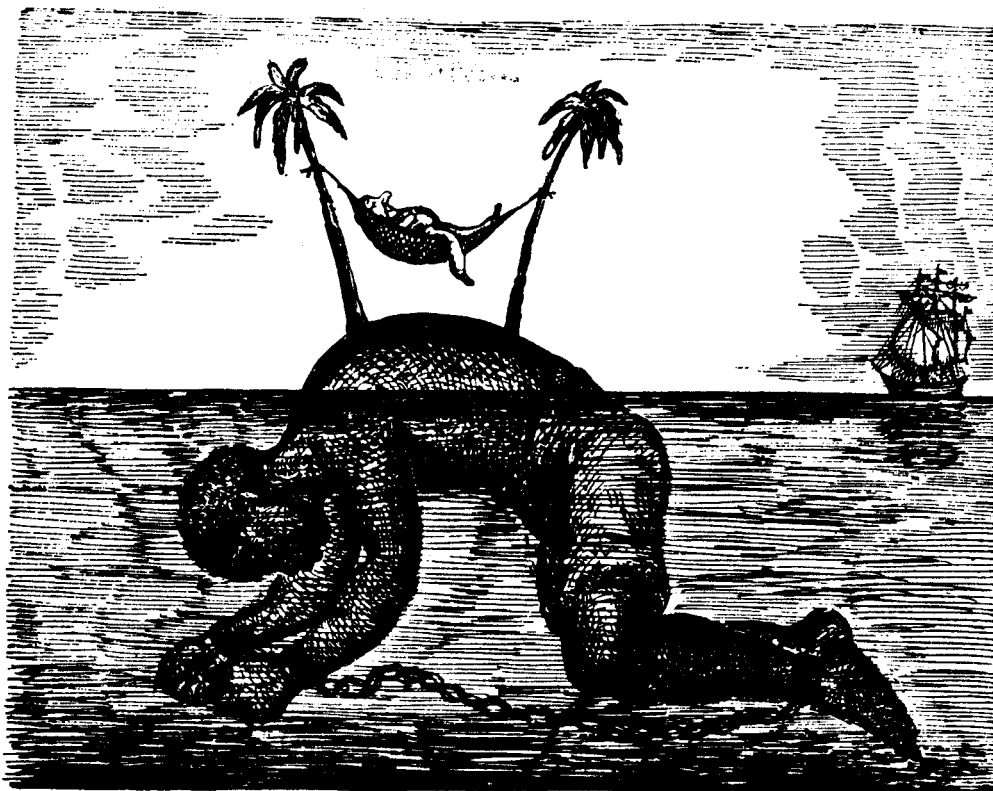
**The minority puts a dogmatic view in place of the critical, and an idealist one in place of the materialist. They regard mere discontent, instead of real conditions, as the driving wheel of revolution. Whereas we tell the workers: You have to go through 15, 20, 50 years of civil wars and national struggles, not only in order to change conditions but also to change yourselves and make yourselves capable of political rule; you, on the contrary, say: "We must come to power immediately, or else we may as well go to sleep." Whilst we make a special point of directing the German workers' attention to the underdeveloped state of the German proletariat, you flatter the national feeling and the status-prejudice of the German artisans in the crudest possible way — which, admittedly is more popular. Just as the word "people" has been made holy by the democrats, so the word "proletariat" has been made holy by you.**

**Karl Marx — on the 1850 split in  
the German Communist League**

**3rd Edition**

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# Introduction

One day a friend introduced me to a young New Afrikan brother who was selling things on the sidewalk outside a large office building. When our talk turned to this book, the young brother looked up proudly and said: "I already know *everything* about the White Man, and he knows *nothing* about me." As we were talking away I couldn't help thinking how many people had the same thought. Because they know that the white man is completely racist and treacherous, they wrongly assume that they know all about his society. This is really the point that this book begins from.


In, fact, the 1960's breakthrough of "ethnic studies programs" at universities has been dialectically turned around and used against us. We are getting imperialist-sponsored and imperialist-financed "Asian studies," "Black studies," "Puerto Rican studies," "Indian studies," "ethnic studies" pushed back down our throats. Some of the most prominent Third-World intellectuals in the U.S. Empire are getting paid good salaries by the imperialists to teach us our histories. Why?

U.S. imperialism would rather that all Third-World people in their Empire remain totally blank and ignorant about themselves, their nations, their cultures, their pasts, about each other, about everything except going to work in the morning. *But that day is over.*

So instead they oppose enlightenment by giving in to it in form, but not in essence. Like ju-jitsu, our original demand that our separate and unique histories be uncovered and recognized is now being used to throw us off our ideological balance. The imperialists promote watered-down and distorted versions of our pasts as oppressed Third-World nations and peoples.

The imperialists even concede that their standard "U.S. history" is a white history, and is supposedly *incomplete* unless the long-suppressed Third-World histories are *added* to it. Why?

The key to the puzzle is that Theirstory (imperialist Euro-Amerikan mis-history) is not incomplete; it isn't true at all. Theirstory also includes the standard class analysis of Amerika that is put forward into our hands by the Euro-Amerikan Left. Theirstory keeps saying, over and over: *"You folks, just think about your own history; don't bother analyzing white society, just accept what we tell you about it."*

<b>WANTED</b>		<b>BY THE FBI</b>	
<b>LEONARD PELTIER</b>			
<b>INTERSTATE FLIGHT - ATTEMPTED MURDER</b>			
FBI No. 631,091 D			
			
Photographs taken 1972			
Aliases: Leonard Littleshell, Leonard John Peltier, John Yellow Robe, Leonard Williams			
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>			
Age: 30, born September 12, 1944, Grand Forks, North Dakota (not supported by birth records)			
Height:	5'11"	Eyes:	Brown
Weight:	190 pounds	Complexion:	Medium
Build:	Muscular	Race:	Indian
Hair:	Black	Nationality:	American
Occupations: Carpenter, employment manager, hod carrier			
Scars and Marks: Birth mark on right cheek; scar on left side of neck; Tattoos: a rose on upper outer right arm, "Leonard" on upper outer left arm			
Social Security Numbers Used: 543-50-5518; 542-50-5417			
Fingerprint Classification: 9 C 30 W 011 17 Ref: 30			
1 20 W 001 24			
NCIC: R6C09P17P1016P1P1			
<b>CAUTION</b>			
PELTIER IS BEING SOUGHT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF A POLICE OFFICER. CONSIDER ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.			



a representative from Zimbabwe, at Pine Ridge

In other words, it's as if British liberals and "socialists" had told Afrikan anti-colonial revolutionaries in Ghana or Kenya to just study their own "traditions" --but not to study the British empire. Their story is not incomplete at all. It's a series of complete lies, an ideological world-view cleverly designed to further imperialist domination of the oppressed.

This work throws the light of historical materialism on Babylon itself. For so long the oppressed have been the objects of investigation by Euro-imperialist sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc. — all to further pacifying and controlling us (anthropology, for example, had its origins as an intelligence service for European colonialization of the world). Now it is time to scientifically examine the oppressor society.

The final point we must make is that this document — while it deals with *aspects* of our history within the U.S. Empire — is nothing like a history of Asians here. Nor is it a history of Indian nations, the Afrikan Nation, Aztlan, or other Third-World nations or peoples. While we discuss Third-World struggles and movements, this is not a critical examination of these political developments. This is a reconnaissance into enemy territory.



# I. THE HEART OF WHITENESS

## 1. The Land is the Basis of Nationhood

The key to understanding Amerika is to see that it was a chain of European settler colonies that expanded into a settler empire. To go back and understand the lives and consciousness of the early English settlers is to see the embryo of today's Amerikan Empire. This is the larger picture that allows us to finally relate the class conflicts of settler Euro-Amerikans to the world struggle.

The mythology of the white masses holds that those early settlers were the poor of England, convicts and workers, who came to North Amerika in search of "freedom" or "a better way of life". Factually, that's all nonsense. The celebrated Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock, for example, didn't even come from England (although they were English). They had years before emigrated as a religious colony to Holland, where they had lived in peace for over a decade. But in Holland these predominately middleclass people had to work as hired labor for others. This was too hard for them, so they came to North Amerika in search of less work and more money. At first, according to the rules of their faith, they farmed the land in common and shared equally. Soon their greed led them into fighting with each other, slacking off at assigned tasks, etc., until the Colony's leaders had to give in to the settlers' desires and divide up the stolen land (giving "to every family a parcel of land").(1)

This is typical of the English invasion forces. A study of roughly 10,000 settlers who left Bristol from 1654-85 shows that **less than 15% were proletarian**. Most were youth from the lower-middle classes; Gentlemen & Professionals 1%; Yeomen & Husbandmen 48%; Artisans & Tradesmen 29%.(2) The typical age was 22-24 years. In other words, the sons and daughters of the middle class, with experience at agriculture and craft skills, were the ones who thought they had a practical chance in Amerika.

What made North Amerika so desirable to these people? Land. Euro-Amerikan liberals and radicals have rarely dealt with the Land question; we could say that they don't have to deal with it, since their people already have all the land. What lured Europeans to leave their homes and cross the Atlantic was the chance to share in conquering Indian land. At that time there was a crisis in England over land ownership and tenancy due to the rise of capitalism. One scholar of the early invasion comments on this:

*"Land hunger was rife among all classes. Wealthy clothiers, drapers, and merchants who had done well and wished to set themselves up in land were avidly watching the market, ready to pay almost any price for what was offered. Even prosperous yeomen often could not get the land they desired for their younger sons...It is commonplace to say that land was the greatest inducement the New World had to offer; but it is difficult to overestimate*

*its psychological importance to people in whose minds land had always been identified with security, success and the good things of life."*(3)

It was these "younger sons", despairing of owning land in their own country, who were willing to gamble on the colonies. The brutal Enclosure Acts and the ending of many hereditary tenancies acted as a further push in the same direction. These were the principal reasons given on the Emigration Lists of 1773-76 for settling in Amerika.(4) So that participating in the settler invasion of North Amerika was a relatively easy way out of the desperate class struggle in England for those seeking a privileged life.\*

Then, too, many English farmers and artisans couldn't face the prospect of being forced down into the position of wage-labor. Traditionally, hired laborers were considered so low in English society that they ranked far below mere failures, and were considered degraded outcasts. Many English (including the "Levellers", the anti-capitalist revolutionary outbreak of the 17th Century) thought wage laborers should lose their civil rights and English citizenship. Public opinion was so strong on this that the early English textile factories were filled with Irish and Welsh immigrants, children from the poorhouses and single women. So jumping the ocean in search of land was not some mundane career decision of comparing dollars and cents to these Englishmen—it was a desperate venture for continued status and self-respect.(5)

The various colonies competed with each other in offering inducements to new settlers. In the South the "headright" system gave each new settler 50 acres for transporting themselves from England. Eventually Pennsylvania and the Carolinas offered even more land per settler as a lure. And land was "dirt cheap" for Europeans. In Virginia ten shillings bought a tract of one hundred acres; in Pennsylvania the best land sold per acre at what a

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\*It is hard for us to imagine how chaotic and difficult English life was in that transitional period. The coming of capitalism had smashed all the traditional securities and values of feudal England, and financed its beginnings with the most savage reduction of the general living standard. During the course of the Sixteenth Century wages in the building trades went down by over half, while the price of firewood, wheat and other necessities soared by five times. By encouraging this outflow the British ruling class both furthered their empire and eased opposition at home to their increasing concentration of wealth and power. And the new settlers, lusting for individual land and property, were willing to endure hardships and uncertainties for this prized goal. They were even more willing to kill for it.

carpenter would earn in a day. When new communities of invaders were started on the edges of conquered areas, the settlers simply divided up the land. For example, when Wallington, Conn. was founded in 1670 each settler family got between 238-476 acres. This amount was not unusual, since colonial Amerika was an orgy of land-grabbing. In fact, much of the land at first wasn't even purchased or rented—it was simply taken over and settled. As much as two-thirds of the tilled land in Pennsylvania during the 1700s was occupied by white squatters, protected by settler solidarity.(6)

So central was the possession of land in the personal plans of the English settlers that throughout the colonial period there was a shortage of skilled labor. Richard Morris' study of labor in colonial Amerika concluded: "*In the main, the ultimate economic objective of colonial workmen was security through agriculture rather than industry...As soon as a workman had accumulated a small amount of money he could, and in many cases did, take up*

*a tract of land and settle on it as a farmer.*"(7)

Where land was not available, settlers refused to come. Period. This is why the British West Indies, with their favorable climate, were less attractive to these settlers than wintry New England. As early as 1665 a member of the Barbados Assembly complained, noting that the limited space of that island had already been divided up: "Now we can get few English servants, having no lands to give them at the end of their time, which formerly was their main allurements." And British servants, their terms up, would leave the Indies by the thousands for Amerika.(8)

**It was this alone that drew so many Europeans to colonial North Amerika: the dream in the settler mind of each man becoming a petty lord of his own land. Thus, the tradition of individualism and egalitarianism in Amerika was rooted in the poisoned concept of equal privileges for a new nation of European conquerors.**

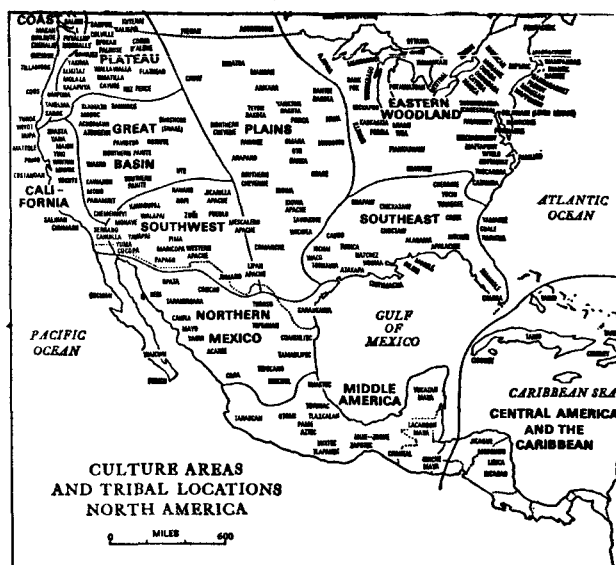
## 2. The Foundations of Settler Life

The life of European settlers—and the class structure of their society—was abnormal because it was dependent upon a foundation of conquest, genocide, and enslavement. The myth of the self-sufficient, white settler family "clearing the wilderness" and supporting themselves through their own initiative and hard labor, is a propaganda fabrication. **It is the absolute characteristic of settler society to be parasitic**, dependent upon the super-exploitation of oppressed peoples for its style of life. Never has Euro-Amerikan society completely supported itself. This is the decisive factor in the consciousness of all classes and strata of white society from 1600 to now.

Settler society was raised up, above the level of backward Old Europe, by a foundation of conquest. This conquest was a miracle drug for a Europe convulsed with the reaction of decaying feudalism and deadly capitalism. Shot into the veins of the Spanish feudal nation, for instance, the miracle drug of "New World" conquest gave Spain the momentary power to overrun North Africa, Holland, and Italy before her historical instant waned. For the English settlers, this conquest made real the bourgeois vision of building a whole new European society. Like many such "fixes", for Euro-Amerikans this conquest was addicting; it was habit-forming and rapidly indispensable, not only culturally, but in the mechanism of an oppressor society whose lifeblood was new conquest. We will examine this later, in the relationship of settlerism to imperialism. For now, it is enough to see that this conquest is a material fact of great magnitude, an economic and social event as important as the emergence of the factory system or the exploitation of petroleum in the Middle East.

We stress the obvious here, because the Euro-Amerikan settlers have always made light of their invasion and occupation (although the conquered territory is the precondition for their whole society). Traditionally, European settler societies throw off the propaganda smokescreen that they didn't really conquer and dispossess other nations—they claim with false modesty that they merely moved into vacant territory! So the early English settlers depicted Amerika as empty—"a howling wilderness", "unsettled", "sparsely populated"—just

waiting with a "VACANT" sign on the door for the first lucky civilization to walk in and claim it. Theodore Roosevelt wrote defensively in 1900: "...the settler and pioneer have at bottom had justice on their side; this great continent could not have been kept as nothing but a game preserve for squalid savages."(9)



It is telling that this lie is precisely the same lie put forward by the white "Afrikaner" settlers, who claim that South Africa was literally totally uninhabited by any Afrikans when they arrived from Europe. To universal derision, these European settlers claim to be the *only* rightful, historic inhabitants of South Afrika. Or we can hear similar defenses out forward by the European settlers of Israel, who claim that much of the Palestinian land and buildings they occupy are rightfully theirs, since the Arabs allegedly decided to voluntarily abandon it all during the 1948-49 war. Are these kind of tales any less preposterous when put forward by Euro-Amerikan settlers?

Amerika was "spacious" and "sparsely populated" only because the European invaders destroyed

whole civilizations and killed off millions of Native Amerikans to get the land and profits they wanted. We all know that when the English arrived in Virginia, for example, they encountered an urban, village-dwelling society far more skilled than they in the arts of medicine, agriculture, fishing—and government.\*(10) This civilization was reflected in a chain of three hundred Indian nations and peoples stretched from the Arctic Circle to the tip of South America, many of whom had highly developed societies. There was, in fact, a greater population in these Indian nations in 1492 than in all of Western Europe. Recent scholarly estimates indicate that at the time of Columbus there were 100 million Indians in the Hemisphere: ten million in North America, twenty-five million in Central Mexico, with an additional sixty-five million elsewhere in Central and Southern America.(11)

These numbers have long been concealed, since they give rise to the logical question of what happened to this great mass of people. The European invaders—Spanish, Dutch, English, Portuguese, and French—simply killed off millions and millions to safeguard their conquest of the land and provide the disposable slave labor they needed to launch their “New World”. Conservative Western historical estimates show that the Spanish “reduced” the Indian population of their colonies from some 50 million to only 4 million by the end of the 17th Century.(12)

And from the 10 million Indians that once inhabited North America, after four centuries of settler invasion and rule there were in 1900 perhaps 200,000-300,000 surviving descendants in the U.S.A.(13) That was the very substantial down-payment towards the continuing blood price that Third-World nations have to pay to sustain the Euro-Amerikan way of life.

So when we hear that the settlers “pushed out the Indians” or “forced the Indians to leave their traditional

hunting grounds”, we know that these are just code-phrases to refer politely to the most barbaric genocide imaginable. It could well be the greatest crime in all of human history. Only here the Adolph Eichmanns and Heinrich Himmlers had names like Benjamin Franklin and Andrew Jackson.

The point is that genocide was not an accident, not an “excess”, not the unintended side-effect of virile European growth. **Genocide was the necessary and deliberate act of the capitalists and their settler shock-troops.** The “Final Solution” to the “Indian Problem” was so widely expected by whites that it was openly spoken of as a commonplace thing. At the turn of the century a newspaper as “respectable” as the *New York Times* could editorially threaten that those peoples who opposed the new world capitalist order would “be extinguished like the North American Indian.”(14) Only a relative handful of Indians survived the time of the great extermination campaigns. You see, the land wasn’t “empty” after all—and for Amerika to exist the settlers had to deliberately *make* the land “empty”.

The second aspect of Colonial Amerika’s foundation was, of course, slavery. It is hardly necessary to repeat here the well-known history of that exploitation. What is necessary is to underline how universally European capitalist life was dependent upon slavery, and how **this exploitation dictated the very structure of Euro-Amerikan society.**

The mythology of the white masses pretends that

\* The first government of the new U.S.A., that of the Articles of Confederation, was totally unlike any in autocratic Europe, and had been influenced by the Government of the Six-Nation Iroquois Confederation.



**Dutch and English settlers unite to slaughter the Pequots--1637**

while the evil planter and the London merchant grew fat on the profits of the slave labor, the "poor white" of the South, the Northern small farmer and white worker were all uninvolved in slavery and benefited not at all from it. The mythology suggests that slavery even *lowered* the living standard of the white masses by supposedly holding down wages and monopolizing vast tracts of farmland. Thus, it is alleged, slavery was not in the interests of the white masses.\*

Yet Karl Marx observed: "Cause slavery to disappear and you will have wiped America off the map of nations." (15) Marx was writing during the zenith of the cotton economy of the mid-1800s, but this most basic fact is true from the bare beginnings of European settlement in Amerika. Without slave labor there would have been no Amerika. It is as simple as that. Long before the cotton economy of the South flourished, for example, Afrikan slaves literally built the City of New York. Their work alone enabled the original Dutch settlers to be fed and sheltered while pursuing their drinking, gambling, fur-trading and other non-laboring activities. Afrikans were not only much of early New York's farmers, carpenters, and blacksmiths, but also comprised much of the City's guards.

The Dutch settlers were so dependent on Afrikan labor for the basics of life that their Governor finally had to grant some Afrikan slaves both freedom and land in return for their continued food production. The Afrikan-owned land on Manhattan included what is now known as Greenwich Village, Astor Place, and Herald Square. Later, the English settlers would pass laws against Afrikan land ownership, and take these tracts from the free Afrikans. Manhattan was thus twice stolen from oppressed peoples. (16)

Indian slavery was also important in supporting the settler invasion beachhead on the "New World". From New England (where the pious Pilgrims called them "servants") to South Carolina, the forced labor of Indian slaves was essential to the very survival of the young Colonies. In fact, the profits from the Indian slave trade were the economic mainstay of the settler invasion of the Carolinas. In 1708 the English settlements in the Carolinas had a population of 1,400 Indian slaves and 2,900 Afrikan slaves to 5,300 Europeans. Indian slaves were common throughout the Colonies—in 1730 the settlers of Kingston, Rhode Island had 223 Indian slaves (as well as 333 Afrikan slaves). As late in 1740 we know that some 14,000 Indian slaves labored in the plantations of South Carolina. (17)

The recorded number of Indian slaves within Colonial English settlements was only a small indication of the larger picture, since most Indian slaves were sold to Jamaica, Barbados and other West Indian colonies. One reason for the depopulation of the once numerous Indian peoples of the Southern Colonies was the unrestrained ravages of the slave trade. In the first five decades of the English settlement of the Carolinas, it appears that the

**main cash export item was Indian slaves.** Armed expeditions, made up largely of Indian puppet soldiers already addicted to rum and other capitalist consumer goods, scoured the countryside for Indians to capture and sell. The total sold away is unknown, but large. We do know that in just six years after 1704, some 12,000 Indian slaves were sold out of Charleston to the West Indies. (18)

Additional uncounted thousands of Indian slaves were exported from the other settlements of the Middle and New England Colonies. Indian slaves in large numbers were very difficult to deal with, since the settlers were trying to hold them on terrain that was more theirs than the invaders. Usually, the minimum precaution would be to in effect swap Indian slaves around, with New England using slaves from Southern Colonies—and vice-versa. In most cases the slave catchers killed almost all the adult Indian men as too dangerous to keep around, only saving the women and children for sale. (19)

But by 1715 the "divers conspiracies, insurrections..." of rebellious Indian slaves had reached the point where all the New England Colonies barred any further imports of Indian slaves. (20) The Pilgrims of New England had seen that the most profitable and safe use of their Indian slaves was to sell them abroad. Indeed, the wife and nine year-old son of "King Philip", the great leader of the 1675 Indian uprising, were sold into West Indian captivity (as was even then customary with many captured Indians).

Thus, the early settlers were not just the passive beneficiaries of a far-off Afrikan slave trade—they bankrolled their settlements in part with the profits of their own eager explorations into Native slave trading. The point is that White Amerika has never been self-sufficient, has never completely supported itself. Indian slavery died out, and was gradually lost in the great river of Afrikan slavery, only because the settlers finally decided to exterminate the heavily depopulated Indian nations altogether.

The essence is not the individual ownership of slaves, but rather the fact that world capitalism in general and Euro-American capitalism in specific had forged a slave-based economy in which all settlers gained and took part. Historian Samuel Eliot Morison, in his study of *The European Discovery of America*, notes that after repeated failures the Europeans learned that North American settler colonies were not self-sufficient; to survive they needed large capital infusions and the benefits of sustained trade with Father Europe. (21) But why should the British aristocracy and capitalists invest in small family farms—and how great a trade is possible when what the settlers themselves produced was largely the very raw materials and foodstuffs they themselves needed? Slavery throughout the "New World" answered these questions. It was the unpaid, expropriated labor of millions of Indian and Afrikan captive slaves that created the surpluses on which the settler economy floated and Atlantic trade flourished.

So all sections of white settler society—even the artisan, worker, and farmer—were totally dependent upon Afrikan slave labor: the fisherman whose low-grade, "refuse fish" was dried and sold as slave meal in the Indies; the New York farmer who found his market for surpluses in the Southern plantations; the forester

\* Similar arguments relative to today are advanced by the "Don't-Divide-The-Working-Class" revisionists, who want to convince us that the Euro-American masses are "victims of imperialism" just like us.

whose timber was used by shipyard workers rapidly turning out slave ships; the clerk in the New York City export house checking bales of tobacco awaiting shipment to London; the master cooper in the Boston rum distillery; the young Virginia overseer building up his "stake" to try and start his own plantation; the immigrant German farmer renting a team of five slaves to get his farm started; and on and on. While the cream of the profits went to the planter and merchant capitalists, the entire settler economy was raised up on a foundation of slave labor, slave products, and the slave trade.

Nor was it just slavery within the thirteen Colonies alone that was essential. The commerce and industry of these Euro-Amerikan settlers was interdependent with their fellow slave-owning capitalists of the West Indies, Central and Southern America. Massachusetts alone, in 1774, distilled 2.7 million gallons of rum—distilled from the molasses of the West Indies slave plantations.(22) Two of the largest industries in Amerika were shipbuilding and shipping, both creatures of the slave trade. Commerce with the slave colonies of not only England, but also Holland, Spain and France, was vital to the young Amerikan economy. Eric Williams, Walter Rodney and others have shown how European capitalism as a whole literally capitalized itself for industrialization and world empire out of Afrikan slavery. It is important to see that all classes of Euro-Amerikan settlers were equally involved in building a new bourgeois nation on the back of the Afrikan colonial proletariat.

By the time of the settler War of Independence, the Afrikan nation made up over 20% of the non-Indian population — one Afrikan colonial subject for every four settlers. Afrikan slaves, although heavily concentrated in the plantation Colonies, were still represented throughout the settler territories. Their proportion in the non-Indian population ranged from 2-3% in upper New England to 8% in Rhode Island, to 14% in New York, and to 41% and 60% respectively in Virginia and South Carolina. (23) While they mainly labored as the agricultural proletariat, Afrikan labor played a crucial role in all the major trades and industries of the times. The colonized Afrikan nation, much more than the new Euro-Amerikan settler nation, was a complete nation — that is, possessing among its people a complete range of applied sciences, practical crafts and productive labor. Both that colonized nation and the Indian nations were self-sufficient and economically whole, while the Euro-Amerikan invasion society was parasitic. While the class structure of the new Afrikan nation was still in a formative stage, distinct classes were visible within it well before the U.S. War of Independence.

In Virginia, it appears that an overwhelming majority of the skilled workers—carpenters, ship pilots, coopers, blacksmiths, etc.—were Afrikans. Nor was it just nonmarket production for direct use on the plantation; Afrikan artisans produced for the commercial market, and were often hired out by their masters. For example, we know that George Washington was not only a planter but also what would today be called a contractor—building structures for other planters with his gang of Afrikan slave carpenters (the profits were split between "The Father of Our Country" and his slave overseer).(24) The Afrikan presence in commerce and industry was widespread and all-pervasive, as one labor historian has summarized:

"Some of the Africans who were brought to America in chains were skilled in woodcarving, weaving, construction, and other crafts. In the South, Black slaves were not only field hands; many developed a variety of skills that were needed on a nearly self-sufficient plantation. Because skilled labor of whatever color was in great demand, slaves were often hired out to masters who owned shops by the day, month, or year for a stipulated amount. Some were hired out to shipmasters, serving as pilots and managers of ferries. Others were used in the maritime trades as shipcaulkers, longshoremen, and sailmakers. A large number of slaves were employed in Northern cities as house servants, sailors, sailmakers, and carpenters. New York had a higher proportion of skilled slaves than any other Colony—coopers, tailors, bakers, tanners, goldsmiths, cabinetmakers, shoemakers, and glaziers. Both in Charleston and in the Northern cities, many artisans utilized slave labor extensively."(25)

Afrikans were the landless, propertyless, permanent workers of the U.S. Empire. They were not just slaves — the Afrikan nation as a whole served as a proletariat for the Euro-Amerikan oppressor nation. This Afrikan colony supported on its shoulders the building of a Euro-Amerikan society more "prosperous," more "egalitarian," and yes, more "democratic" than any in semi-feudal Old Europe. The Jeffersonian vision of Amerika as a pastoral European democracy was rooted in the national life of small, independent white landowners. Such a society had no place of a proletariat within its ranks — yet, in the age of capitalism, could not do without the labor of such a class. Amerika imported a proletariat from Afrika, a proletariat permanently chained in an internal colony, laboring for the benefit of all settlers. Afrikan workers might be individually owned, like tools and draft animals, by some settlers and not others, but in their colonial subjugation they were as a whole owned by the entire Euro-Amerikan nation.

### 3. Euro-Amerikan Social Structure

When we point out that Amerika was the most completely bourgeois nation in world history, we mean a four-fold reality: 1. Amerika had no feudal or communal past, but was constructed from the ground up according to the nightmare vision of the bourgeoisie. 2. Amerika began its national life as an oppressor nation, as a colonizer of oppressed peoples. 3. Amerika not only has a capitalist ruling class, but all classes and strata of Euro-Amerikans are bourgeoisified, with a preoccupation for petty privileges

and property ownership the normal guiding star of the white masses. 4. Amerika is so decadent that it has no proletariat of its own, but must exist parasitically on the colonial proletariat of oppressed nations and national-minorities. Truly, a Babylon "whose life was death".

The settler masses of Colonial Amerika had a situation totally unlike their cousins back in Old Europe. For the privileges of conquest produced a nonproletarian

society of settlers. The large majority of settlers were of the property-owning middle classes (insofar as classes had yet become visible in the new society): tradesmen, self-employed artisans, and land-owning farmers. Every European who wanted to could own land. Every white settler could be a property owner. No wonder emigration to the "New World" (newly conquered, newly enslaved) was so popular in Old Europe. No wonder life in Amerika was spoken of almost as a fable by the masses of Old Europe. Young Amerika was capitalism's real-life Disneyland.

The Euro-Amerikan class structure at the time of the 1775 War of Independence was revealing:

80% bourgeois & petit-bourgeois	{	10% - Capitalists: Great Planters, large merchants, etc.
		20% - Large farmers, professionals, tradesmen & other upper-middle elements.
		40% - Small land-owning farmers
		10% - Artisans: blacksmiths, coopers, carpenters, shipwrights, etc.
		15% - Temporary workers, usually soon moving upwards into the ranks of the small farmers
		5% - Laborers(26)

Not only was the bourgeois class itself quite large, but some **70% of the total population of settlers were in the various, propertied middle classes.** The overwhelming majority were landowners, including many of the artisans and tradesmen, and an even larger portion of the Euro-Amerikans were self-employed or preparing to be. The small "poor" element of lumpen and permanent laborers was only 5% of the settler population, and without influence or cohesion in such a propertied society. We can see why Virginia's Gov. Fauquier complained in 1759, while bemoaning his inability to attract settler recruits for the militia: *"Every man in this colony has land, and none but Negroes are laborers."* (U.S. imperialism still has this same problem of white military recruitment today.)(27)

The plantation areas, which were obviously the most dominated by a small elite owning a disproportionate share of the wealth, showed no lesser degree of general settler privilege and unification. South Carolina was the state with the highest degree of large plantation centralization; yet there, too, no settler working class development was evident. The South Carolina settler class structure shows only an intensification of the same bourgeois features evident at the national level:

86% bourgeois & petit-bourgeois	{	3% - Great Planter elite (above 1,000 acres landholding)
		15% - planters (500-999 acres)
		8% - merchants & shopowners
		5% - Professionals
		42% - Middle & small farmers (under 500 acres)
		10% - Artisans
		14% - Laborers (majority only temporary)

When we speak of the small, land-owning farmer as the largest single element in settler society, it is important to see what this means. An example is Rebecca

Royston of Calvert County, Maryland, who died in 1740 with an estate worth 81 £ (which places her well in the middle of the small-medium farmers). That sum represented the value of 200 acres of farmland, 31 head of cattle, 15 of sheep, 29 pigs, 1,463 lbs. of tobacco stored for market, 5 feather beds, 2 old guns, assorted furniture, tools and kitchen utensils, and the contract of an 8 year-old indentured child servant. No wealth, no luxury, but a life with some small property, food, shelter, and a cash crop for market.(28) Certainly a far reach upwards from the bitter, bare existence of the colonial Afrikan proletariat (or, for that matter, the British or French proletariat of the period).

Although there were Euro-Amerikan craftsmen and workers they never coalesced into a proletariat because they were too privileged and transitory in condition. It is important to grasp firmly that the mere presence of settler craftsmen and workers doesn't automatically mean that they were a conscious class. With their extra-proletarian living standard and their future in the propertied middle classes, most settler workmen had no reason to develop a proletarian consciousness. Further, the rapid turnover of settlers in these strata left no material basis for the formation of a class.

We can see this more clearly when we examine the details of work and wages. Rather than the mass-production factory, the Colonial-era workshop was a setting for the highly-skilled, piece-by-piece, hand production of a few craftsmen. Even a shipyard customarily only employed five to ten artisans and workers of all types, total. The workshop was a business owned and managed by the Master artisan, who might employ in his workshop one or two journeymen artisans and several apprentices, servants or slaves.(29) It is easy to grasp how, in small settler communities, social and class lines were blurred and still unformed. For example, most of the settler artisans were also small farmers who grew some or all of their own food.

While some artisans never advanced, others were already becoming small capitalists, since the historic extension of the craft workshop was capitalist manufacture. The most famous Colonial-era settler artisan, Paul Revere, was not only a silversmith and an artist-engraver, but also a dentist and the small capitalist operator of a copper foundry. In the Colonial era the majority of Euro-Amerikan artisans and wage-laborers eventually bought farmland and/or business property and rose into the middle strata.

The special and non-proletarian character of settler artisans and workers (which has been so conveniently forgotten about by today's Euro-Amerikan radicals) was well known a century ago by Europeans such as Marx and Engels. In 1859 Marx wrote of *"...the United States of North America, where, though classes already exist, they have not yet become fixed, but continually change and interchange their elements in constant flux..."*(30) What Marx saw in this class fluidity was the ultimate privilege of settler society—the privilege of having no proletariat at all. He later pointed out: *"Hence the relatively high standard of wages in the United States. Capital may there try its utmost. It cannot prevent the labor market from being continuously emptied by the continuous conversion of wages laborers into independent, self-sustaining peasants. The*

position of wages laborer is for a very large part of the American people but a probational state, which they are sure to leave within a shorter or longer term.”(27) And Marx was writing not about a momentary or temporary phase, but about basic conditions that were true for well over two centuries in Amerika.

Those settlers never had it so good! And those Europeans who chose or were forced to work for wages got the highest wages in the capitalist world. The very highest. Tom Paine, the revolutionary propagandist, boasted that in Amerika a “common laborer” made as much money as an English shopkeeper!(32) We know that George Washington had to pay his white journeyman carpenter £ 40 per year, plus 400 lbs. of meat, 20 bushels of corn, and the use of a house and vegetable garden. Journeymen tailors in Virginia earned £ 26-32 per year, plus meals, lodging, laundry service, and drink.(33)

In general, it’s commonly agreed that Euro-Amerikan workers earned at least *twice* what their British kinfolk made—some reports say the earnings gap was *five or six times* what Swedish or Danish workers earned.(34) Even a whole century later, the difference was still so large that Marx commented:

“Now, all of you know that the average wages of the American agricultural laborer amount to more than double that of the English agricultural laborer, although the prices of agricultural produce are lower in the United States than in the United Kingdom...”(35)

It was only possible for settler society to afford this best-paid, most bourgeoisified white work force because they had also obtained the least-paid, most proletarian Afrikan colony to support it.

Many of those settler laborers were indentured servants, who had signed on to do some years of unpaid labor (usually four) for a master in return for passage across the Atlantic. It is thought that as many as half of all the pre-1776 Europeans in Amerika went through this temporarily unfree status. Some settler historians dwell on this phenomenon, comparing it to Afrikan slavery in an attempt to obscure the rock of national oppression at the base of Amerika. Harsh as the time of indenture might be, these settlers would be free—and Afrikan slaves would not. More to the national difference between oppressor and oppressed, white indentured servants could look hopefully toward the possibility of not only being free, but of themselves becoming landowners and slavemasters.

For this initiation, this “dues” to join the oppressor nation, was a rite of passage into settler citizen-

ship. For example, as early as 1629 almost one member out of six of Virginia’s House of Burgesses was a former indentured servant. Much of Pennsylvania’s prosperous German farming community originally emigrated that way.(36) Christopher Hill, the British Marxist historian, directly relates the European willingness to enter servitude to the desire for land ownership, describing it as “a temporary phase through which one worked one’s way to freedom and land-ownership.”(37)

This is important because it was only this bottom layer of settler society that had the potential of proletarian class consciousness. In the early decades of Virginia’s tobacco industry, gangs of white indentured servants worked the fields side-by-side with Afrikan and Indian slaves, whom in the 1600s they greatly outnumbered. This was an unstable situation, and one of the results was a number of joint servant-slave escapes, strikes and conspiracies. A danger to the planter elite was evident, particularly since white servants constituted a respectable proportion of the settler population in the two tobacco Colonies—accounting for 16% in Virginia in 1681 and 10% in Maryland in 1707.(38)

The political crisis waned as the period of bound white plantation labor ended. First, the greater and more profitable river of Afrikan labor was tapped to the fullest, and then the flow of British indentured servants slacked off. The number of new European servants entering Virginia fell from 1,500-2,000 annually in the 1670s to but 91 in 1715.(39) However, the important change was not in numbers but in social role.

Historian Richard Morris, in his study of Colonial-era labor, says of European indentured servants on the plantations: “...but with the advent of Negro slavery they were gradually supplanted as field workers and were principally retained as overseers, foremen or herdsman.”(40) In other words, even the very lowest layer of white society was lifted out of the proletariat by the privileges of belonging to the oppressor nation.

Once these poor whites were raised off the fields and given the chance to help boss and police captive Afrikans, their rebellious days were over. The importance of this experience is that it shows the material basis for the lack of class consciousness by early Euro-Amerikan workers, and how their political consciousness was directly related to how much they shared in the privileges of the larger settler society. Further, the capitalists proved to their satisfaction that dissent and rebelliousness within the settler ranks could be quelled by *increasing* the colonial exploitation of other nations and peoples.



## II. STRUGGLES & ALLIANCES

The popular political struggles of settler Amerika—the most important being the 1775-83 War of Independence—gave us the first experience of alliances between Euro-Amerikan dissenters and oppressed peoples. What was most basic in these alliances was their purely tactical nature. Not unity, but the momentary convergence of the fundamentally differing interests of some oppressors and some of the oppressed. After all, the national division between settler citizens of emerging Amerika and their colonial Afrikan subjects was enormous—while the distance between the interests of Indian nations and that of the settler nation built on their destruction was hardly any less. While tactical alliances would bridge this chasm, it is important to recognize how calculated and temporary these joint efforts were.

We emphasize this because it is necessary to refute the settler propaganda that Colonial Amerika was built out of a history of struggles “for representative government”, “democratic struggles” or “class struggles”, in which common whites and Afrikans joined together. No one, we note, has yet summoned up the audacity to maintain that the Indians too wished to fight and die for settler “democracy”. Yet that same claim is advanced for Afrikan prisoners (slaves), as though they either had more common interests with their slavemasters, or were more brainwashed. To examine the actual conflicts and conditions under which alliances were reached totally rips apart these lies.

A clear case is Bacon's Rebellion, one of the two major settler uprisings prior to the War of Independence. In this rebellion an insurgent army literally seized state power in the Virginia Colony in 1676. They defeated the loyalist forces of the Crown, set the capital city on fire, and forced the Governor to flee. Euro-Amerikans of all classes as well as Afrikan slaves took part in the fighting, the latter making up much of the hard core of the rebellion's forces at the war's end.

Herbert Aptheker, the Communist Party USA's expert on Afrikans, has no hesitation in pointing to this rebellion as a wonderful, heroic example for all of us. He clearly loves this case of an early, anti-capitalist uprising where “whites and Blacks” joined hands:

“...But, the outstanding example of popular uprising, prior to the American Revolution itself, is Bacon's Rebellion of 1676...a harbinger of the greater rebellion that was to follow it by exactly a century. The Virginia uprising was directed against the economic subordination and exploitation of the colony by the English rulers, and against the tyrannical and corrupt administrative practices in the colony which were instituted for the purpose of enforcing that subordination. Hence, the effort, led by the young planter, Nathaniel Bacon, was multi-class, encompassing in its ranks slaves, indentured servants, free farmers and many planters; it was one in which women were, as an anti-Baconite contemporary 12

noted, ‘great encouragers and assisters’, and it was one in which demands for political reform along democratic lines formed a central feature of the movement.”(1)



**Bacon challenges Gov. Berkeley**

It makes you wonder how a planter came to be leading such an advanced political movement? Aptheker is not the only Euro-Amerikan radical to point out the important example in this uprising. To use one other case: In 1974 a paper dealing with this was presented at a New Haven meeting of the “New Left” Union of Radical Political Economists (U.R.P.E.). It was considered important enough to be published in the Cambridge journal *Radical America*, and then to be reprinted as a pamphlet by the New England Free Press. In this paper Theodore W. Allen says of early Virginia politics:

“...The decisive encounter of the people against the bourgeoisie occurred during Bacon's Rebellion, which

began in April, 1676 as a difference between the elite and sub-elite planters over 'Indian policy', but which in September became a civil war against the Anglo-American ruling class. ...The transcendent importance of this record is that there, in colonial Virginia, one hundred and twenty-nine years before William Lloyd Garrison was born, the armed working class, black and white, fought side by side for the abolition of slavery."(2)

Aptheker and Allen, as two brother settler radicals, clearly agree with each other that Bacon's Rebellion was an important revolutionary event. But in Allen's account we suddenly find, without explanation, that a dispute over "Indian policy" between some planters transformed itself into an armed struggle by united white and Afrikan workers to end slavery! That is a hard story to follow. Particularly since Bacon's Rebellion is a cherished event in Southern white history, and Bacon himself a notable figure. There is, in fact, an imposing "Memorial Tablet" of marble and bronze in the Virginia State Capital, in the House of Delegates, which singles out Bacon as "*A Great Patriot Leader of the Virginia People*".(3) So even Virginia's segregationist white politicians agreed with Aptheker and Allen about this "democratic" rebellion. This truly is a unity we should not forget.

Behind the rhetoric, the real events of Bacon's Rebellion have the sordid and shabby character we are so familiar with in Euro-American politics. It is, however, highly instructive for us. The story begins in the summer of 1675. The settlers of Virginia Colony were angry and tense, for the alarms of "King Philip's Rebellion"—the famed Indian struggle—had spread South from Massachusetts. Further, the Colony was in an economic depression due to both low tobacco prices and a severe drought (which had cut crop yields down by as much as three-quarters).(4)

One of the leading planters on the Colony's frontier was Nathaniel Bacon, Jr., the newest member of the Colony's elite. Bacon had emigrated just the year before, swiftly purchasing two plantations on the James River. He and his partner, William Byrd (founder of the infamous Virginia planter family), had also obtained commissions from Governor Berkeley to engage in the lucrative Indian fur trade. All this was not difficult for Bacon, for he came from a wealthy English family—and was cousin to both Governor Berkeley's wife and to Nathaniel Bacon, Sr. (a leading planter who was a member of Virginia's Council of State).

In the Spring of that year, 1675, Governor Berkeley honored young Bacon by giving him an appointment to the Council of State. As events were to prove, Bacon's elite lifestyle and rapid political rise did but throw more fuel on the fires of his arrogance and unlimited ambition.

In July of 1675 war broke out between the settlers and the Susquehannock Indians. As usual, the war was started by settler harassment of Indians, climaxing in a militia raid which mistakenly crossed the border into Maryland—and mistakenly attacked the Susquehannock, who were allied to the settlers. The Susquehannock resisted, and repelled the Virginians' attack. Angry that the Indians had dared to resist their bullying intrusion, the

Virginia militia returned in August with reinforcements from the Maryland militia. This new settler army of 1,100 men surrounded the Susquehannock fort. Five Susquehannock leaders were lured out under pretense of a parley and then executed.

Late one night all the besieged Susquehannock—men, women and children—silently emptied out their town and slipped away. On their way out they corrected five settler sentries. From then on the Susquehannock took to guerrilla warfare, traveling in small bands and ambushing isolated settlers. Nathaniel Bacon, Jr. was an avid "hawk", whose lust for persecuting Indians grew even greater when Indian guerrillas killed one of his slave overseers. To Bacon that was one injury too many.

At that time the Virginia settlers had become polarized over "Indian policy", with Bacon leading the pro-war faction against Governor Berkeley. Established English policy, which Governor Berkeley followed, called for temporary alliances with Indian nations and temporary restraints on settler expansionism. This was not due to any Royal humanitarianism, but was a recognition of overall strategic realities by the English rulers. The Indian nations held, if only for a historical moment, the balance of power in North America between the rival British, French and Spanish empires. Too much aggression against Indian territories by English settlers could drive the Indians into allying with the French. It is also true that temporary peace with nearby Indians accomplished three additional ends: The very profitable fur trade was uninterrupted; Indians could be played off against each other, with some spying and fighting for the settlers; Indian pledges could be gotten to return runaway Afrikan slaves (although few were ever returned). So under the peace treaty of 1646 (after Indian defeats in the 1644-46 war), nineteen Indian tribes in Virginia accepted the authority of the British Crown. These subject Indians had to abide by settler law, and were either passive or active allies in settler wars with Indians further West.

By the time Bacon's overseer was corrected by the no-longer friendly Susquehannock, the political dispute between Bacon and Governor Berkeley had boiled over into the public view. Earlier, Bacon and Byrd had secretly suggested to Governor Berkeley that they be given a monopoly on the Indian fur trade.(5) Corrupt as the planters were, this move was so crudely self-serving that it was doomed to rejection. Berkeley dismissed their greedy proposal. Then, Bacon was wiped out of the fur trade altogether. In March, 1676, the Virginia Assembly, reacting to rumors that some traders were illegally selling guns to the Indians, permanently suspended all the existing traders and authorized commissioning a wholesale replacement by new traders. Bacon was outraged, his pride and pocketbook stung, his anger and ambition unleashed.

The dispute between Bacon and Governor Berkeley was very clear-cut. Both favored war against the formerly-allied Susquehannock. Both favored warring on any Indians opposing settler domination. But Berkeley believed in the usefulness of keeping some Indian subjects—as he said: "*I would have preservd those Indians that I knew were hourelly at our mercy to have beene our spies and intelligence to find out the more bloudy Ennemies.*" Bacon disagreed, scorning all this as too meek,

... in short what wee did in that short time and poor condition wee were in was to destroy the King of the Susquahannocks and the King of Oconogee [i.e., Occaneechee] and the Manakin King with a 100 men, besides what [was?] unknown to us. The King's daughter wee took Prisonner with some others and could have brought more, But in the heat of the Fight wee regarded not the advantage of the Prisoners nor any plunder, but burn't and destroid all. And what we reckon most materiall is That wee have left all nations of Indians [where wee have bin] ingaged in a civill warre amongst themselves, soe that with great ease wee hope to manadge this advantage to their utter Ruine and destruction.

## --from Nathaniel Bacon's report on the 1676 expedition against the Indians

too soft, almost treasonous; he believed in wiping out *all* Indians, including allied and subject Indians. As he put it in his "Manifesto": "*Our Design*" was "*to ruin and extirpate all Indians in General*". Thus did Bacon's Rebellion define its main program. This was a classic settler liberal-conservative debate, which still echoes into our own times, like that between Robert F. Kennedy vs. George Wallace, O.E.O. vs. KKK, C.I.A. vs. F.B.I., and so on.

Bacon had been denied a militia officer's commission by Gov. Berkeley on the grounds that he refused to follow British policy. But in May, 1676, Bacon refused to be blocked by Gov. Berkeley any longer. He had become a charismatic leader among the frontier settlers, and he and his neighbors were determined to reach a "Final Solution" to their Indian problem. This was an increasingly popular program among the settler masses, since it also promised to end their economic depression by a new round of looting Indian lands and goods. Nothing raises more enthusiasm among Euro-American settlers than attacking people of color—they embrace it as something between a team sport and a national religion. Thus did the Rebellion win over the settler masses.

In May, 1676, word came to the settlers on the frontier from their Occaneechee Indian allies that a band of Susquehannock had camped near the Occaneechee fort on the Roanoke River. Bacon and his friends formed a vigilante group, against government orders, and promptly rode off to begin their war against all Indians. **This marks the beginning of Bacon's Rebellion.**

When Bacon and his men arrived at the Occaneechee fort they were exhausted, out of food, and clearly in no shape to fight. The fawning Occaneechee treated the settlers to a festive dinner. They even proposed that

Bacon's force should rest while the Occaneechee would defeat the Susquehannock for them. Naturally, Bacon agreed. Using treachery the Occaneeche overran the Susquehannock, killing some thirty of them. The surviving prisoners were either publicly executed or given to Bacon as slaves.

But this did not end the battle, for Bacon and his vigilante band had really come to kill and enslave all the Indians. The Occaneeche were rumored to have a store of beaver furs worth some £ 1,000. At least some of Bacon's men later confessed "that the great designe was to gett the beaver..." In any case, Bacon demanded that the Occaneeche give him all the loot from the Susquehannock camp plus additional friendly Indians as slaves. Even at that, the servile Occaneeche leader tried to temporize, offering to give him hostages. Suddenly Bacon's force assaulted the unprepared Occaneeche. Most of the Indians inside the fort were killed, although they did stand off the settler assault. The surprised Occaneeche outside their fort were helpless, however. As Bacon proudly reported, his heroic settler comrades "*fell upon the men, woemen and children without, disarmed and destroid them all...*" Bacon's Rebellion had won its first important victory, and he and his men marched homeward, loaded with loot and new slaves, as heroes.

Bacon was now the most popular figure in the Virginia Colony, famed and respected as an Indian killer. Berkeley's refusal to grant him a military commission meant nothing, for Bacon was acclaimed as "The Peoples' General". He, much more than any Governor or Councilor, commanded the loyalty of the settler masses. Nor did he find any trouble attracting armed volunteers to do his bidding. Wiping out and looting all the Indians around was a program many whites could relate to, particularly

since Governor Berkeley, under popular pressure, had forced the subject Indians to turn in their muskets and disarm. Killing disarmed oppressed people is much more satisfying to Euro-Amerikans than having to face armed foes. In fact, as one historian pointed out: *"Bacon and his men did not kill a single enemy Indian but contented themselves with frightening away, killing, or enslaving most of the friendly neighboring Indians, and taking their beaver and land as spoils."*

Now Bacon was on the offensive against Governor Berkeley and his clique as well. Over and over he publicly damned Berkeley as a traitor to settlers. Bacon was swinging from his heels, aiming at nothing less than state power. His big gun against the Governor was the charge that Berkeley was a secret "friend" to the Indians. No charge could have been more damaging. As we all know, when Euro-Amerikans really get serious about fighting each other the most vicious accusation they can hurl at one another is that of "nigger-lover" or "Indian-lover" or some such.

Bacon charged that the Governor was literally a traitor who had secretly sold the Indians guns so that they could attack the settlers. We can see the parallels to the 1960's, when white liberals were widely charged with giving Third-World militants money, legal aid, and even weapons so that they could kill whites. Berkeley, charged Bacon, had so intimidated the settlers "that no man dare to destroy the Indians...until I adventured to cutt the knott, which made the people in generall look upon mee as the countries friend." Bacon's wife, whose ardent support for the Rebellion led some of today's Euro-Amerikan radicals to see feminist stirrings in it, cried "Thanks bee to God" that her husband "did destroy a great many of the Indians..."(6) Killing, enslaving and robbing was the exact central concern of this movement—which Euro-Amerikans tell us is an example of how we should unite with them! There's a message there for those who wish to pick it up.

Bacon had been proscribed as a lawbreaker and rebel, but he still easily won election to the Assembly which was to meet on June 5, 1676. He typically chose to ensure his control of the Henrico County elections by capturing the site with his vigilantes. Even though Bacon was for repealing the 1670 Assembly decision denying propertyless freeman voting rights, these votes and assemblies were just window-dressing to his dictatorial ambitions.

On June 7, 1676 the Rebellion suffered its first reverse. Bacon was captured as he and fifty of his armed band tried to slip into Jamestown, the capital of Virginia Colony. Then began a dizzying series of maneuvers, coups and countercoups. Preferring shame to execution, Bacon begged Gov. Berkeley's pardon on bended knee in front of the crowded Assembly. He was quickly pardoned—and even restored to his position on the Council of State. Young Bacon just as quickly fled Jamestown, returning on June 23, 1676 with over 500 armed supporters. He easily captured the capital, Governor and all. But now he in turn had to release Gov. Berkeley and his loyal supporters, for they invoked their settlers' right to return home to defend their plantations and women against the Indians.

It was at that point that we find white indentured 15

servants entering the scene. Without an army, with almost all of the planters turned against him, an exiled Gov. Berkeley outbids Bacon for support. Berkeley promises freedom to white indentured servants of the Baconites, if they will desert their masters and take arms with the loyalist forces of the Crown. He also authorizes looting, with every white servant sharing in the confiscated estates of the Baconites. Aided by the lucky recapture of three armed ships, Gov. Berkeley soon rebuilt his military forces.

On Sept. 7 1676 the loyalists arrived at Jamestown. Gov. Berkeley shrewdly offered a general pardon to all rebel settlers except Bacon and his two chief lieutenants. Although they still commanded the fortified capital, Bacon's men abandoned their positions in immediate flight, without any pretense of battle. Most eagerly took up Berkeley's offer of pardon.

Now it was Bacon's turn to find himself virtually armyless, deserted by many of his followers. It appears as though a good number of settlers rallied to and deserted from the various sides depending on how the tide of fortune was running. They had an opportunistic regard for their immediate gain as the main contour in their minds. Just one month before, Bacon had been confidently sketching out how sister rebellions could easily be ignited in Maryland and South Carolina, and how if London refused their demands then an independent nation could be formed. This, incidentally, is why Jefferson and the other 1776 patriots considered Bacon one of the first architects of the United States.(7) But now his situation was perilous.

In his extreme need, refusing to swallow the bitter dose of either compromise or defeat, Bacon followed Gov. Berkeley's example—but did him one better. Bacon recruited not only the white servants of his opponents, but also their Afrikan slaves. Hundreds of new recruits flocked to his army. On Sept. 19, 1676, Baconite forces recaptured Jamestown. Once again there was no battle. Berkeley's forces deserted him as swiftly as Bacon's had, and the fortified capital was abandoned. Bacon, ever the master psychologist, had skillfully barricaded his besieging ramparts with the bodies of both his new Indian slaves and the captured wives of loyalists. That night he triumphantly ordered Jamestown put to the torch, and the fires that consumed the capital were dramatic evidence that he was once again master of Virginia.

But then Bacon died suddenly from an unexpected illness. His successor as "General" of the Rebellion lost heart, and made a secret deal with the Crown to disarm the rebel forces. The last die-hards were some 80 Afrikan slaves and 20 white servants, who refused to surrender to a fate they knew all too well. They were tricked into coming aboard a ship, taken out to the middle of the river, and forced to disarm at cannonpoint. As quickly as it had begun, Bacon's Rebellion was over.

Out of the debris of this chaotic dispute we can pick out the central facts. First, that there was no democratic political program or movement whatsoever. Bacon's Rebellion was a popular movement, representing a clear majority of the settlers, to resolve serious economic and social problems by stepping up the exploitation of oppressed peoples. Far from being "democratic", it was

more nearly fascistic. Bacon was the diseased mind of the most reactionary faction of the planters, and in his ambitious schemes the fact that a few more freemen or ex-slaves had paper voting rights meant little. Far from fighting to abolish slavery, the Rebellion actually hoped to add to the number of slaves by Indian conquest.

And, finally, there was no "Black and White unity" at all. Needing fighting bodies, Bacon at the very end offered a deal to his opponents' slaves. He paid in the only coin that was meaningful—a promise of freedom for them if he won. Those Afrikans who signed up in his army didn't love him, trust him, view him as their leader, or anything of the kind. They were tactically exploiting a contradiction in the oppressor ranks, maneuvering for their freedom. It is interesting to note that those Indians who did give themselves up to unity with the oppressors, becoming the settlers' lackeys and allies, were not protected by it, but were destroyed.

We can also see here the contradiction of "democratic" reforms within the context of settler capitalism. Much has been made of the reforms of "Bacon's Assembly" (the June, 1676 session of the Virginia Assembly, which was so named because of its newly elected majority of Baconites and their sympathizers). Always singled out for praise by Euro-Amerikan historians was "Act VII" of the Assembly, which restored voting rights to property-less freemen. The most eminent Euro-Amerikan radical labor historian, Philip S. Foner, has written how:

"...the rebellion...gained a number of democratic rights for the people. The statute preventing propertyless freemen from electing members to the House of Burgesses was repealed. Freeholders and freemen of every parish gained the right to elect the vestries of the church. None of these democratic reforms remained after the revolt was crushed, yet their memories lived on. Bacon was truly the 'Torchbearer of the Revolution', and for generations after any leader of the common people was called a 'Baconist'." (8)

It is easy to see how contemptible these pseudo-Marxist, white supremacist lies are. When we examine the entire work of that legislature of planter reforms, we find that the first three acts passed *all involved furthering the genocidal war against the Indians*. Act III legalized the settler seizure of Indian lands, previously guaranteed by treaty, "deserted" by Indians fleeing from Bacon's attacks.

How meaningful is a "democratic" extension of voting rights amidst the savage expansion of a capitalist society based on genocide and enslavement? Would voting rights for white ranchers have been the "democratic" answer at Wounded Knee? Or "free speech" for prison guards the answer at Attica?

The truth is that Euro-Amerikans view these bourgeois-democratic measures as historic gains because to them they are. But not to us. The inner content, the essence of these reforms was the consolidation of a new settler nation. Part of this process was granting full citizenship in the settler society to all strata and classes of Euro-Amerikans; as such, these struggles were widespread in Colonial Amerika, and far more important to settlers than mere wage disputes.

The early English settlers of Virginia Colony, for example, were forced to import German, Polish and Armenian craftsmen to their invasion beachhead, in order to produce the glass beads used in the fur trade (as well as pitch used in shipbuilding, etc.). Since these "foreign" craftsmen were not English, they were considered subjects and not members of the Colony. So in 1619 those European artisans went on strike, quickly winning full citizenship rights—"as free as any inhabitant there whatsoever." (9)

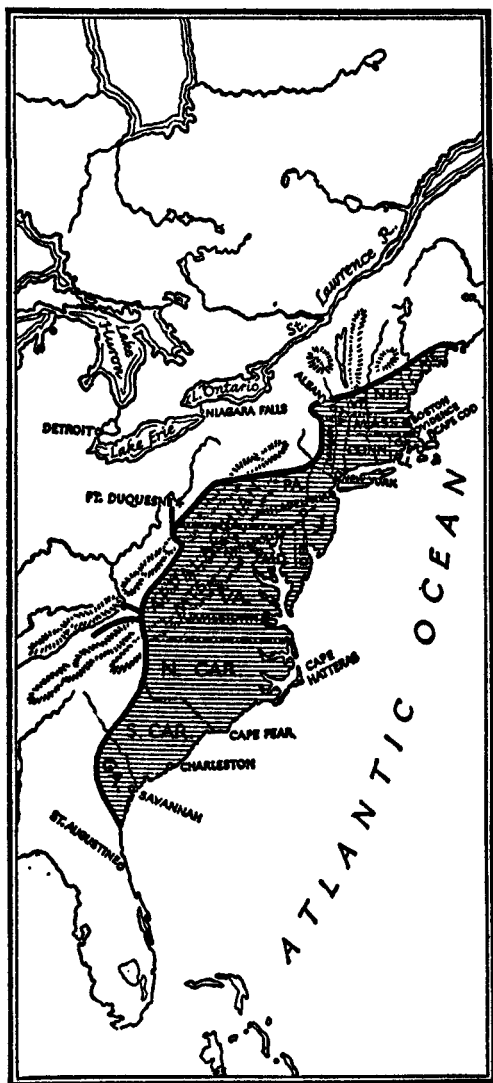
Similar struggles took place throughout the Colonial Era, in both North and South. In 1689 Leisler's Rebellion (led by a German immigrant merchant) in New York found the settler democrats ousting the British garrison from Albany, and holding the state capital for several years. The New York State Assembly has its origins in the settler legislature granted by the Crown as a concession after the revolt had been ended. The Roosevelt family first got into settler politics as supporters of Leisler. (10)

We need to see the dialectical unity of democracy and oppression in developing settler Amerika. The winning of citizenship rights by poorer settlers or non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans is democratic in form. The enrollment of the white masses into new, mass instruments of repression—such as the formation of the infamous Slave Patrols in Virginia in 1727—is obviously anti-democratic and reactionary. Yet these opposites in form are, in their essence, united as aspects of creating the new citizenry of Babylon. This is why our relationship to "democratic" struggles among the settlers has not been one of simple unity.



This was fully proven in practice once again by the 1776 War of Independence, a war in which most of the Indian and Afrikan peoples opposed settler nationhood and the consolidation of Amerika. In fact, the majority of oppressed people gladly allied themselves to the British forces in hopes of crushing the settlers.

This clash, between an Old European empire and the emerging Euro-American empire, was inevitable decades before actual fighting came. The decisive point came when British capitalism decided to clip the wings of the new Euro-American bourgeoisie—they restricted emigration, hampered industry and trade, and pursued a long-range plan to confine the settler population to a controllable strip of territory along the Atlantic seacoast. They proposed, for their own imperial needs, that the infant Amerika be permanently stunted. After all, the European conquest of just the Eastern shores of North America had already produced, by the time of Independence, a population almost one-third as large as that of England and Ireland. They feared that unchecked, the Colonial tail might someday wag the imperial dog (as indeed it has).



APPROXIMATE FRONTIER LINE OF THE COLONIES IN 1774

While some patriots, such as Samuel Adams, had for many years been certain of the need for settler independence from England, the settler bourgeoisie was, in the main, conservative and uncertain about actual war. **It was the land question that in the end proved decisive in swaying the doubtful among the settler elite.**

By first the Proclamation Act of 1763 and then the Quebec Act of 1773, the British capitalists kept trying to reserve for themselves alone the great stretches of Indian land West of the Alleghenies. This was ruinous to the settler bourgeoisie, who were suffering from the first major Depression in American history. Then as now, real estate speculation was a mania, a profitable obsession to the Euro-American patriots. Ben Franklin, the Whartons and other Philadelphia notables tried to obtain vast acreages for speculation. George Washington, together with the Lees and Fitzhughs, formed the Mississippi Company, which tried to get 2.5 million acres for sale to new settlers. Heavily in debt to British merchant-bankers, the settler bourgeoisie had hoped to reap great rewards from seizing new Indian lands as far West as the Mississippi River.(11)

The British Quebec Act of 1773, however, attached all the American Midwest to British Canada. The Thirteen Colonies were to be frozen out of the continental land grab, with their British cousins doing all the looting. And as for the Southern planter bourgeoisie, they were faced with literal bankruptcy as a class without the profits of new conquests and the expansion of the slave system. It was this one issue that drove them, at the end, into the camp of rebellion.(12)

Historian Richard G. Wade, analyzing the relation of frontier issues to the War of Independence, says of British restrictions on settler land-grabbing: "...settlers hungered to get across the mountains and resented any efforts to stop them. The Revolution was fought in part to free the frontier from this confinement."(13)

Like Bacon's Rebellion, the "liberty" that the American Revolutionists of the 1770's fought for was in large part the freedom to conquer new Indian lands and profit from the commerce of the slave trade, without any restrictions or limitations. In other words, the bourgeois "freedom" to oppress and exploit others. The successful future of the settler capitalists demanded the scope of independent nationhood.

But as the first flush of settler enthusiasm faded into the unhappy realization of how grim and bloody this war would be, the settler "sunshine soldiers" faded from the ranks to go home and stay home. Almost one-third of the Continental Army deserted at Valley Forge. So enlistment bribes were widely offered to get recruits. New York State offered new enlistments 400 acres each of Indian land. Virginia offered an enlistment bonus of an Afrikan slave (guaranteed to be not younger than age ten) and 100 acres of Indian land. In South Carolina, Gen. Sumter used a share-the-loot scheme, whereby each settler volunteer would get an Afrikan captured from Tory estates. Even these extraordinarily generous offers failed to spark any sacrificial enthusiasm among the settler masses.(14)

It was Afrikans who greeted the war with great enthusiasm. But while the settler slavemasters sought

“democracy” through wresting their nationhood away from England, their slaves sought liberation by overthrowing Amerika or escaping from it. Far from being either patriotic Amerikan subjects or passively enslaved neutrals, the Afrikan masses threw themselves daringly and passionately into the jaws of war on an unprecedented scale—that is, into their own war, *against slave Amerika and for freedom*.

The British, short of troops and laborers, decided to use both the Indian nations and the Afrikan slaves to help bring down the settler rebels. This was nothing unique; the French had extensively used Indian military alliances and the British extensively used Afrikan slave recruits in their 1756-63 war over North America (called “The French & Indian War” in settler history books). But the Euro-Amerikan settlers, sitting on the dynamite of a restive, nationally oppressed Afrikan population, were terrified—and outraged.

This was the final proof to many settlers of King George III’s evil tyranny. An English gentlewoman traveling in the Colonies wrote that popular settler indignation was so great that it stood to unite rebels and Tories again. (15) Tom Paine, in his revolutionary pamphlet *Common Sense*, raged against “...that barbarous and hellish power which hath stirred up Indians and Negroes to destroy us.” (16) But oppressed peoples saw this war as a wonderful contradiction to be exploited in the ranks of the European capitalists.

Lord Dunmore was Royal Governor of Virginia in name, but ruler over so little that he had to reside aboard a British warship anchored offshore. Urgently needing reinforcements for his outnumbered command, on Nov. 5, 1775 he issued a proclamation that any slaves enlisting in his forces would be freed. Sir Henry Clinton, commander of British forces in North America, later issued an even broader offer:

“I do most strictly forbid any Person to sell or claim Right over any Negroe, the property of a Rebel, who may claim refuge in any part of this Army; And I do promise to every Negroe who shall desert the Rebel Standard, full security to follow within these Lines, any Occupation which he shall think proper.” (17)

Could any horn have called more clearly? By the thousands upon thousands, Afrikans struggled to reach British lines. One historian of the Exodus has said: “*The British move was countered by the Americans, who exercised closer vigilance over their slaves, removed the able-bodied to interior places far from the scene of the war, and threatened with dire punishment all who sought to join the enemy. To Negroes attempting to flee to the British the alternatives ‘Liberty or Death’ took on an almost literal meaning. Nevertheless, by land and sea they made their way to the British forces.*” (18)

The war was a disruption to Slave Amerika, a chaotic gap in the European capitalist ranks to be hit hard. Afrikans seized the time—not by the tens or hundreds, but by the many thousands. Amerika shook with the tremors of their movement. The signers of the Declaration of Independence were bitter about their personal losses: Thomas Jefferson lost many of his slaves; Virginia’s



FROM THE PAINTING BY E. H. CORBOULD.  
Amerikan propaganda—Indians allied to the British “murder” a settler woman

Governor Benjamin Harrison lost thirty of “my finest slaves”; William Lee lost sixty-five slaves, and said two of his neighbors “lost every slave they had in the world”; South Carolina’s Arthur Middleton lost fifty slaves. (19)

Afrikans were writing their own “Declaration of Independence” by escaping. Many settler patriots tried to appeal to the British forces to exercise European solidarity and expel the Rebel slaves. George Washington had to denounce his own brother for bringing food to the British troops, in a vain effort to coax them into returning the Washington family slaves. (20) Yes, the settler patriots were definitely upset to see some real freedom get loosed upon the land.

To this day no one really knows how many slaves freed themselves during the war. Georgia settlers were said to have lost over 10,000 slaves, while the number of Afrikan escaped prisoners in South Carolina and Virginia was thought to total well over 50,000. Many, in the disruption of war, passed themselves off as freemen and relocated in other territories, fled to British Florida and Canada, or took refuge in Maroon communities or with the Indian nations. It has been estimated that 100,000 Afrikan prisoners—some 20% of the slave population—freed themselves during the war. (21)

The thousands of rebellious Afrikans sustained the British war machinery. After all, if the price of refuge from the slavemaster was helping the British throw down the settlers, it was not such a distasteful task. Lord Dunmore had an “Ethiopian Regiment” of ex-slaves (who went into battle with the motto “Liberty to Slaves” sewn on their jackets) who helped the British capture and burn Norfolk, Va. on New Years Day, 1776. (22) That must have been sweet, indeed. Everywhere, Afrikans appeared with the British units as soldiers, porters, road-builders, guides and intelligence agents. Washington declared that unless the slave escapes could be halted the British Army would inexorably grow “like a snowball in rolling”. (23)

It was only under this threat—not only of defeat, but defeat in part by masses of armed ex-slaves—that the settlers hurriedly reversed their gears and started recruiting Afrikans into the Continental U.S. Army. The whole contradiction of arming slaves and asking them to defend their

slavemasters was apparent to many. Fearing this disruption of the concentration camp culture of the plantations—and fearing even more the dangers of arming masses of Afrikans—many settlers preferred to lose to their British kith and kin rather than tamper with slavery. But that choice was no longer fully theirs to make, as the genie was part-way out of the bottle.

On Dec. 31, 1775, Gen. Washington ordered the enlistment of Afrikans into the Continental Army, with the promise of freedom at the end of the war. Many settlers sent their slaves into the army to take their place. One Hessian mercenary officer with the British said: "The Negro can take the field instead of the master; and therefore, no regiment is to be seen in which there are not Negroes in abundance..." Over 5,000 Afrikans served in the Patriot military, making up a large proportion of the most experienced troops (settlers usually served for only short enlistments—90 days duty being the most common term—while slaves served until the war's end or death).(24)

For oppressed peoples the price of the war was paid in blood. Afrikan casualties were heavy (one-half of the Afrikans who served with the British in Virginia died in an epidemic).(25) And the Indian nations allied to the Crown suffered greatly as the tide of battle turned against their side. The same was true of many Afrikans captured in British defeats. Some were sold to the West Indies and others were executed. A similar heavy fate fell on those recaptured while making their way to British lines. The settler mass community organizations, such as the infamous "Committees of Correspondence" in New York and Massachusetts, played the same role up North that the Slave Patrols played in the South, of checking and arresting rebellious Afrikans.(26)

Even those who had allied with the victorious settlers did not necessarily find themselves winning anything. Many Afrikans were disarmed and put back into chains at the war's end, despite solemn settler promises. John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, may have presented Afrikan U.S. troops with a banner — which praised them as "The Bucks of America" — but that didn't help Afrikans such as Captain Mark Starlin. He was the first Afrikan captain in the Amerikan naval forces, and had won many honors for his near-suicidal night raids on the British fleet (which is why the settlers let him and his all-Afrikan crew sail alone). But as soon as the war ended, his master simply reclaimed him. Starlin spent the rest of

his life as a slave. He, ironically enough, is known to historians as an exceptionally dedicated "patriot", super-loyal to the new settler nation.(27)

What was primary for the Afrikan masses was a strategic relationship with the British Empire against settler Amerika. To use an Old European power against the Euro-Amerikan settlers—who were the nearest and most immediate enemy—was just common sense to many. **65,000 Afrikans joined the British forces—over ten for every one enlisted in the Continental U.S. ranks.**(28) As Lenin said in discussing the national question: "*The masses vote with their feet*". And in this case they voted against Amerika.

Secondarily, on an individual level Afrikans served with various forces in return for release from slavery. There was no real "political unity" or larger allegiance involved, just a quid pro quo. On the European sides as well, obviously. If the British and Patriot sides could have pursued their conflict without freeing any slaves or disrupting the slave system, they each gladly would have done so. Just as the slave enlistments in Bacon's Rebellion demonstrated only the temporary and tactical nature of alliances between oppressed and oppressor forces, so the alignment of forces in the settler War of Independence only proved that **the national patriotic struggle of Euro-Amerikans was opposite to the basic interests and political desires of the oppressed.**

Even in the ruins of British defeat, the soundness of this viewpoint was born out in practice. While the jubilant Patriots watched the defeated British army evacuate New York City in 1783, some 4,000 Afrikans swarmed aboard the departing ships to escape Amerika. Another 4,000 Afrikans escaped with the British from Savannah, 6,000 from Charleston, and 5,000 escaped aboard British ships prior to the surrender. (29) Did these brothers and sisters "lose" the war—compared to those still in chains on the plantations?

Others chose neither to leave nor submit. All during the war Indian and Afrikan guerrillas struck at the settlers. In one case, three hundred Afrikan ex-slaves fought an extended guerrilla campaign against the planters in both Georgia and South Carolina. Originally allied to the British forces, they continued their independent campaign long after the British defeat. They were not overcome until 1786, when their secret fort at Bear Creek was discovered and overwhelmed. This was but one front in the true democratic struggle against Amerika.



# III. THE CONTRADICTIONS OF NATION & CLASS

## 1. Crisis Within the Slave System

The slave system had served Amerika well, but as the settler nation matured what once was a foundation stone increasingly became a drag on the growth of the new Euro-Amerikan Empire. The slave system, once essential to the life of white society, now became worse than an anachronism; it became a growing threat to the well-being of settler life. While the settler masses and their bourgeois leaders still intended to exploit the oppressed to the fullest extent, increasingly they came to believe that *one specific form* of exploitation—Afrikan slavery—had to be shattered.

Nothing is gained without a price. As “natural” and “Heaven-sent” as the great production of Afrikan slave labor seemed to the planters, this wealth was bought at the cost of mounting danger to settlers as a whole. For the slave system imported and concentrated a vast, enemy army of oppressed right in the sinews of white society. This was the fatal contradiction in the “Slave Power” so clearly seen by early settler critics of slavery. Benjamin Franklin, for example, not only gave up slave-owning himself, but in 1755 wrote that slavery should be banned and only Europeans permitted to live in North America.(1) Twenty years later, as the Articles of Confederation were being debated, South Carolina’s Lynch stated that since Afrikans were property they shouldn’t be taxed any more than sheep were. Franklin acidly replied: “Sheep will never make insurrection!”(2)

Thomas Jefferson of Virginia probably personified this contradiction more visibly than any other settler. He is well-known in settler history books as the liberal planter who constantly told his friends how he agonized over the immorality of slavery. He is usually depicted as an exceptional human being of great compassion and much intellect. What was pushing and pressuring his capitalist mind was the contradiction between his greed for the easy life of the slave-master, and his fear for the safety of his settler nation.(3)

He knew that successful revolution against settler rule was a possibility, and that in a land governed by ex-slaves the fate of the former slave-masters would be hard. As he put it: “...a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events...” That is why, as U.S. President in 1791, he viewed the great Haitian Revolution led by Toussaint L’Ouverture as a monstrous danger. His Administration quickly appropriated relief funds to subsidize the French planters fleeing that island.

Jefferson’s agile mind came up with a theoretical solution to their “Negro problem”—gradual genocide. He estimated that returning all slaves to Afrika would cost Amerika \$900 Million in lost capital and transportation expenses—a sum 45 times the annual export earnings of the settler economy at the time! This was an impossible cost, 20

one that would have bankrupted not only the planters but the entire settler society as well.

President Jefferson’s solution to this dilemma was to take all Afrikan children away from their parents for compact shipment to the West Indies and Afrika, while keeping the adults enslaved to support the Amerikan economy for the rest of their lives.\* This would theoretically generate the necessary profits to prop up the capitalist economy, while still moving towards an all-white Amerika. Jefferson mused: “...the old stock would die off in the ordinary course of nature...until its final disappearance.” The President thought this Hitlerian fantasy both “practicable” and “blessed”.

It is easy to understand why this fantastic plan never became reality: the oppressor will never willingly remove his claws from the oppressed so long as there are still more profits to be wrung from them. Jefferson himself actively bought more and more slaves to maintain his pseudo-Grecian lifestyle. As President he signed the 1808 bill allegedly banning the importation of new slaves in part, we suspect, because this only raised the price he could obtain from his slave-breeding business.

Jefferson gloated over the increase in his wealth from the birth of new slaves: “...I consider the labor of a breeding woman as no object, and that a child raised every two years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man.” It sums matters up to note that President Jefferson, who believed that the planters should restrict and then wipe out entirely the Afrikan colony, ended his days owning more slaves than he started with.(4)

The Northern States had slowly begun abolishing slavery as early as Vermont in 1777, in the hopes that the numbers of Afrikans could be kept down. It was also widely believed by settlers that in small numbers the “child-like” ex-slaves could be kept docile and easily ruled. The explosive growth of the number of Afrikans held prisoner within the slave system, and the resultant eruptions of Afrikan struggles in all spheres of life, blew this settler illusion away.

The Haitian Revolution of 1791 marked a decisive point in the politics of both settler and slave. The news from Santo Domingo that Afrikan prisoners had risen and successfully set up a new nation electrified the entire Western Hemisphere. When it became undeniably true that Afrikan peoples armies, under the leadership of a 50 year-old former field hand, had in protracted war outmaneuvered and outfought the professional armies of the

\* Although Jefferson never admitted it, most of these children would probably never survive.



Toussaint L'Ouverture

Old European Powers, the relevancy of the lesson to Amerika was intense. Intense.

The effect of Haiti's great victory was felt immediately. Haitian slaves forcibly evacuated from that island with their French masters helped spread the word that Revolution and Independence were possible. The new Haitian Republic proudly offered citizenship to any Indians and Afrikans who wanted it, and thousands of free Afrikans emigrated. This great breakthrough stimulated rebellion and the vision of national liberation among the oppressed, while hardening the resolve of settler society to defend their hegemony with the most violent and naked terror.

The Virginia insurrection led by Gabriel some nine years later, in which thousands of Afrikans were involved, as well as that of Nat Turner in 1831, caused discussions within the Virginia legislature on ending slavery. The 1831 uprising, in which sixty settlers died, so terrified them that public rallies were held in Western Virginia to demand an all-white Virginia. Virginia's Governor Floyd publicly endorsed the total removal of all Afrikans out of the state.(5) If such proposals could be entertained in the heartland of the slave system, we can imagine how popular that must have been among settlers in the Northern States.

The problem facing the settlers was not limited to potential uprisings on the plantations. Everywhere Afrikan prisoners were pressing beyond the colonial boundaries set

for them. The situation became more acute as the developing capitalist economy created trends of urbanization and industrialization. In the early 1800s the Afrikan population of many cities was rising faster than that of Euro-Amerikans. In 1820 Afrikans comprised at least 25% of the total population of Washington, Louisville, Baltimore, and St. Louis; at least 50% of the total population in New Orleans, Richmond, Mobile, and Savannah. The percentage of whites owning slaves was higher in the cities than it was in the countryside. *In cities such as Louisville, Charleston, and Richmond, some 65-75% of all Euro-Amerikan families owned Afrikan slaves.* And the commerce and industry of these cities brought together and educated masses of Afrikan colonial proletarians—in the textile mills, mines, ironworks, docks, railroads, tobacco factories, and so on.(6).

**In such concentrations, Afrikans bent and often broke the bars surrounding them. Increasingly, more and more slaves were no longer under tight control. Illegal grog shops (white-owned, of course) and informal clubs flourished on the back streets. Restrictions on even the daily movements of many slaves faltered in the urban crowds.**

Contemporary white travelers often wrote of how alarmed they were when visiting Southern cities at the large numbers of Afrikans on the streets. One historian writes of New Orleans: "It was not unusual for slaves to gather on street corners at night, for example, where they challenged whites to attempt to pass...nor was it safe to accost them, as many went armed with knives and pistols in flagrant defiance of all the precautions of the Black Code."(7) A Louisville newspaper editorial complained in 1835 that "Negroes scarcely realize the fact that they are slaves...insolent, intractable..."(8)

It was natural in these urban concentrations that slave escapes (prison breaks) became increasingly common. The Afrikan communities in the cities were also human forests, partially opaque to the eye of the settler, in which escapees from the plantations quietly sought refuge. During one 16 month period in the 1850's the New Orleans settler police arrested 982 "runaway slaves"—*a number equal to approximately 7% of the city's slave population.* In 1837 the Baltimore settler police arrested almost 300 Afrikans as proven or suspected escapees—a number equal to over 9% of that city's slave population.(9)

And, of course, these are just those who were caught. Many others evaded the settler law enforcement apparatus. Frederick Douglass, we remember, had been a carpenter and shipyard worker in Baltimore before escaping Northward to pursue his agitation. At least 100,000 slaves did escape to the North and Canada during these years.

**Nor should it be forgotten that some of the largest armed insurrections and conspiracies of the period involved the urban proletariat.** The Gabriel uprising of 1800 was based on the Richmond proletariat (Gabriel himself was a blacksmith, and most of his lieutenants were other skilled workers). So many Afrikans were involved in that planned uprising that one Southern newspaper declared that prosecutions had to be halted lest it bankrupt the Richmond capitalists by causing "the annihilation of the Blacks in this part of the country".(10)

The Charleston conspiracy of 1822, led by Denmark Vesey (a free carpenter), was an organization of urban proletarians—stevedores, millers, lumberyard workers, blacksmiths, etc.. Similarly, the great conspiracy of 1856 was organized among coal mine, mill and factory workers across Kentucky and Tennessee. In its failure, some 65 Afrikans were killed at Senator Bell's iron works alone. It was particularly alarming to the settlers that those Afrikans who had been given the advantages of urban living, and who had skilled positions, just used their relative mobility to strike at the colonial system all the more effectively.(11)

From among the ranks of free Afrikans outside the South came courageous organizers, who moved through the South like guerrillas leading their brethren to freedom. And not just a few exceptional leaders, such as Harriet Tubman; in 1860 we know that five hundred underground organizers went into the South from Canada alone. On the plantations the Afrikan masses resisted in a conscious, political culture. A letter from a Charleston, S.C. plantation owner in 1844 tells how all the slaves in the area secretly celebrated every August 1st — the anniversary of the end of slavery in the British West Indies.(11)

Abolishing slavery was the commonly proposed answer to this increasing instability in the colonial system. The settler bourgeoisie, however, which had immense capital tied up in slaves, could hardly be expected to take such a step willingly. One immediate response in the 1830's was to break up the Afrikan communities in the cities. In

the wake of the Vesey conspiracy, for instance, the Charleston City Council urged that the number of male Afrikans in the city "be greatly diminished".(12) And they were.

Throughout the South much of the Afrikan population was gradually shipped back to the plantations, declining year after year until the Civil War. In New Orleans the drop was from 50% to 15% of the city population; in St. Louis from 25% to only 2% of the city population.(13) The needs of the new industrial economy were far less important to the bourgeoisie than breaking up the dangerous concentrations of oppressed, and regaining a safe, Euro-American physical domination over the key urban centers.

One Northern writer traveling through the South noted in 1859 that the Afrikans had been learning too much in the cities: *"This has alarmed their masters, and they are sending them off, as fast as possible, to the plantations where, as in a tomb, no sight or sound of knowledge can reach them."*(14) In addition to the physical restrictions, the mass terror, etc. that we all know were imposed, it is important to see that settler Amerika reacted to the growing consciousness of Afrikans by attempting to isolate and physically break up the oppressed communities. It is a measure of how strongly the threat of Revolution was rising in the Afrikan nation that the settlers had to restructure their society in response. The relative backwardness of the Southern economy was an expression of the living contradictions of the slave system.

## 2. Slavery vs. Settlerism

Slavery had become an obstacle to both the continued growth of settler society and the interests of the Euro-American bourgeoisie. It was not that slavery was unprofitable itself. It was, worker for worker, much more profitable than white wage-labor. Afrikan slaves in industry cost the capitalists less than one-third the wages of white workingmen. Even when slaves were rented from another capitalist, the savings in the factory or mine were still considerable. For example, in the 1830's almost one-third of the workers at the U.S. Navy shipyard at Norfolk were Afrikans, rented at only two-thirds the cost of white wage-labor.(15)

But the American capitalists needed to greatly expand their labor force. While the planters believed that importing new millions of Afrikan slaves would most profitably meet this need, it was clear that this would only add fuel to the fires of the already insurrectionary Afrikan colony. Profit had to be seen not in the squeezing of a few more dollars on a short-term, individual basis, but in terms of the needs of an entire Empire and its future. And it was not just the demand for labor alone that outmoded the slave system.

**Capitalism needed giant armies of settlers, waves and waves of new European shock-troops to help conquer and hold new territory, to develop it for the bourgeoisie, and garrison it against the oppressed. The Mississippi Valley, the Plains, the Northern territories of Mexico, the Pacific West—a whole continent of land and resources**

**awaited, that could only be held by millions of loyal settlers. After Haiti, it was increasingly obvious that a "thin, white line" of a few soldiers, administrators and planters could not safely hold down whole oppressed nations. Only the weight of masses of oppressors could provide the Euro-American bourgeoisie with the Empire they desired. This was a fundamental element in the antagonistic, but symbiotic, relationship of the white masses to their rulers.**

The slave system had committed the fatal sin of restricting the white population, while massing great numbers of Afrikans. In the 1860 Census we can see the disparity of the settler populations of North and South. Excluding the border States of Delaware and Maryland, the slave States had a median population density of a bare 18 whites per sq. mile. The most heavily populated slave State—Kentucky—had a population of only 31 whites per sq. mile. In sharp contrast, Northern States such as Ohio, New Jersey, and Massachusetts had populations of 59, 81, and 158 whites per sq. mile respectively.(16) This disparity was not only large, but was qualitatively significant for the future of the Euro-American Empire.

It is no surprise that the planter bourgeoisie viewed society far differently than did the New York banker or Massachusetts mill owner. The thought of an Amerika crowded with millions and millions of poverty-stricken European laborers, all sharing citizenship with their mansion-dwelling brothers, horrified the planter elite. They viewed themselves as the founders of a future

Amerika that would become a great civilization akin to Greece and Rome, a slave Empire led by the necessarily small elite of aristocratic slave-owners.

These retrogressive dreams had definite shape in plans for expansion of the "Slave Power" far beyond the South. After all, if the Spanish Empire had used armies of Indian slaves to mine the gold, silver and copper of Peru and Mexico, why could not the Southern planter bourgeoisie colonize the great minefields of New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and California, with millions of Afrikan helots sending the great mineral wealth of the West back to Richmond and New Orleans? These superprofits might finance a new world Empire, just as they once did for semi-feudal Spain.

Why could not the plantation system be extended—not just to Texas, but to swallow up the West, Mexico, Cuba, and Central America? If masses of Afrikans already sweated so profitably in the factories, mills and mines of Birmingham and Richmond, why couldn't the industrial process be an integral part of a new slave Empire that would bestride the world (as Rome once did Europe and North Afrika)?

The planter capitalists who tantalized themselves with these bloody dreams had little use for great numbers of pennyless European immigrants piling up on their doorstep. While Northerners saw the increasing dangers of a slave economy, with its mounting, captive armies of Afrikans, the planters saw the same dangers in importing a white proletariat. The creation of such an underclass

would inevitably, they thought, divide white society, since the privileged life of settlerism could only stretch so far. Or in other words, too many whites meant an inevitable squabble over dividing up the loot.

In 1836 Thomas R. Dew of William & Mary College warned his Northern cousins that importing Europeans who were meant to stay poor could only lead to class war: "Between the rich and the poor, the capitalist and the laborer...When these things shall come—when the millions, who are always under the pressure of poverty, and sometimes on the verge of starvation, shall form your numerical majority, (as is the case now in the old countries of the world) and universal suffrage shall throw the political power into their lands, can you expect that they will regard as sacred the tenure by which you hold your property?"(17)

These were prophetic words, but in any case the deadlock between these two factions of the settler bourgeoisie meant that both sides carried out their separate policies during the first half of the 1800s. While the merchant and industrial capitalists of the North recruited the dispossessed of Europe, the Southern planters fought to expand the "Slave Power". Edmund Ruffin, the famous Virginia planter, smugly boasted that: "One of the greatest benefits of the institution of African slavery to the Southern states is its effect in keeping away from our territory, and directing to the North and Northwest, the hordes of immigrants now flowing from Europe."(18) Such is the blindness of doomed classes.



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# IV. SETTLER TRADE- UNIONISM

## 1. The Rise of White Labor

Settler Amerika got the reinforcements it needed to advance into Empire from the great European immigration of the 19th Century. Between 1830-1860 some 4.5 Million Europeans (two-thirds of them Irish and German) arrived to help the settler beachhead on the Eastern shore push outward.(1) The impact of these reinforcements on the tide of battle can be guessed from the fact that they numbered more than the total settler population of 1800. At a time when the young settler nation was dangerously dependent on the rebellious Afrikan colony in the South, and on the continental battleground greatly outnumbered by the various Indian, Mexican and Afrikan nations, these new legions of Europeans played a decisive role.

The fact that this flood of new Europeans also helped create contradictions within the settler ranks has led to honest confusions. Some comrades mistakenly believe that a white proletariat was born, whose trade-union and socialist activities placed it in the historic position of a primary force for revolution (and thus our eventual ally). The key is to see what was *dominant* in the material life and political consciousness of this new labor stratum, then and now.

The earlier settler society of the English colonies was relatively "fluid" and still unformed in terms of class structure. After all, the original ruling class of Amerika was back in England, and even the large Virginia planter capitalists were seen by the English aristocracy as mere middle-men between them and the Afrikan proletarians who actually created the wealth. To them George Washington was just an overpaid foreman. And while there were great differences in wealth and power, there was a shared privilege among settlers. Few were exploited in the scientific socialist sense of being a wage-slave of capital; in fact, wage labor for another man was looked down upon by whites as a mark of failure (and still is by many). Up until the mid-1800's settler society then was characterized by the unequal but general opportunities for land ownership and the extraordinary fluidity of personal fortunes by Old European standards.

This era of early settlerism rapidly drew to a close as American capitalism matured. Good Indian land and cheap Afrikan slaves became more and more difficult for ordinary settlers to obtain. In the South the ranks of the planters began tightening, concentrating as capital itself was. One historian writes:

"During the earlier decades, when the lower South was being settled, farmers stood every chance of becoming planters. Until late in the fifties (1850's—ed.) most planters or their fathers before them started life as yeomen, occasionally with a few slaves, but generally without any hands except their own. The heyday of these poor people lasted as long as land and slaves were cheap, enabling them to realize their ambition to be planters and

slaveowners as so many succeeded in doing...But the day of the farmer began to wane rapidly after 1850. If he had not already obtained good land, it became doubtful he could ever improve his fortunes. All the fertile soil that was not under cultivation was generally held by speculators at mounting prices."(2)

While in the cities of the North, the small, local business of the independent master craftsman (shoemaker, blacksmith, cooper, etc.) was giving way step by step to the large merchant, with his regional business and his capitalist workshop/factory. This was the inevitable casualty list of industrialism. At the beginning of the 1800's it was still true that *every* ambitious, young Euro-Amerikan apprentice worker could expect to eventually become a master, owning his own little business (and often his own slaves). There is no exaggeration in saying this. We know, for example, that in the Philadelphia of the 1820's craft masters actually outnumbered their journeymen employees by 3 to 2—and that various tradesmen, masters and professionals were an absolute majority of the Euro-Amerikan male population.(3)

But by 1860 the number of journeymen workers compared to masters had tripled, and a majority of Euro-Amerikan men were now wage-earners.(4) Working for a master or merchant was no longer just a temporary stepping-stone to becoming an independent landowner or shopkeeper. This new white workforce for the first time had little prospect of advancing beyond wage-slavery. Unemployment and wage-slashing were common phenomena, and an increasing class strife and discontent entered the world of the settlers.

In this scene the new millions of immigrant European workers, many with Old European experiences of class struggle, furnished the final element in the hardening of a settler class structure. The political development was very rapid once the nodal point was reached: From artisan guilds to craft associations to local unions. National unions and labor journals soon appeared. And in the workers' movements the championing of various socialist and even Marxist ideas was widespread and popular, particularly since these immigrant masses were salted with radical political exiles (Marx, in the Inaugural Address to the 1st International in 1864, says: "...crushed by the iron hand of force, the most advanced sons of labor fled in despair to the transatlantic Republic...")

All this was but the *outward form* of proletarian class consciousness, made all the more convincing because those white workers subjectively believed that they were proletarians—"the exploited", "the creators of all wealth", "the sons of toil", etc. etc. In actuality this was clearly untrue. While there were many exploited and poverty-stricken immigrant proletarians, these new Euro-Amerikan workers as a whole were a privileged labor

*stratum*. As a labor aristocracy it had, instead of a proletarian, revolutionary consciousness, a *petit-bourgeois* consciousness that was unable to rise above reformism.

This period is important for us to analyze, because here for the first time we start to see the modern political form of the Euro-Amerikan masses emerge. Here, at the very start of industrial capitalism, are trade-unions, labor electoral campaigns, "Marxist" organizations, nationwide struggles by white workers against the capitalists, major proposals for "White and Negro" labor alliance.

What we find is that this new class of white workers was indeed angry and militant, but so completely dominated by petit-bourgeois consciousness that they always ended up as the pawns of various bourgeois political factions. Because they clung to and hungered after the petty privileges derived from the loot of empire, they *as a stratum* became rabid and reactionary supporters of conquest and the annexation of oppressed nations. The "trade-union unity" deemed so important by Euro-Amerikan radicals (then and now) kept falling apart and was doomed to failure. Not because white workers were racist (although they were), but because this alleged "trade-union unity" was just a ruse to divide, confuse and stall the oppressed until new genocidal attacks could be launched against us, and completely drive us out of their way.

This new stratum, far from possessing a revolutionary potential, was unable to even take part in the *democratic* struggles of the 19th century. When we go back and trace the Euro-Amerikan workers' movements from their early stages in the pre-industrial period up thru the end of the 19th Century, this point is very striking.

In the 1820's-30's, before white workers had even developed into a class, they still played a major role in the political struggles of "Jacksonian Democracy". At that time the "United States" was a classic bourgeois democracy—that is, direct "democracy" for a handful of capitalists. Even among settlers, high property qualifications, residency laws and sex discrimination limited the vote to a very small minority. So popular movements, based among angry small farmers and urban workingmen, arose in state after state to strike down these limitations—and thus force settler government to better share the spoils of empire.

In New York State, for example, one liberal landmark was the "Reform Convention" of 1821, where the supporters of Martin Van Buren swept away the high property qualifications that had previously barred white workingmen from voting. This was a significant victory for them. Historian Leon Litwack has pointed out that the 1821 Convention "has come to symbolize the expanded democracy which made possible the triumph of Andrew Jackson seven years later." Van Buren became the hero of the white workers, and was later to follow Jackson into the White House.(5)

Did this national trend "for the extension and not the restriction of popular rights" (to quote the voting rights committee of the Convention) involve the unity of Euro-Amerikan and Afrikan workers? No. In fact, the free Afrikan communities in the North **opposed these**

**reform movements** of the settler masses. The reason is easy to grasp: Everywhere in the North, the pre-Civil War popular struggles to enlarge the political powers of the settler masses also had the program of taking away civil rights from Afrikans. These movements had the public aim of driving all Afrikans out of the North. The 1821 New York "Reform Convention" gave all white workingmen the vote, while simultaneously *raising* property qualifications for Afrikan men so high that it effectively disenfranchised the entire community. By 1835 it was estimated that only 75 Afrikans out of 15,000 in that state had voting rights.(6)

This unconcealed attack on Afrikans was in point of fact a compromise, with Van Buren restraining the white majority which hated even the few, remaining shreds of civil rights left for well-to-do Afrikans. Van Buren paid for this in his later years, when opposing politicians (such as Abraham Lincoln) attacked him for letting any Afrikans vote at all. For that matter, this new, expanded settler electorate in New York turned down bills to let Afrikans vote for many years thereafter. In the 1860 elections while Lincoln and the G.O.P. were winning New York by a 32,000 vote majority, only 1,600 votes supported a bill for Afrikan suffrage. Frederick Douglass pointed out that civil rights for Afrikans was supported by "neither Republicans nor abolitionists".(7)

These earlier popular movements of settler workmen found significant expression in the Presidency of Andrew Jackson, the central figure of "Jacksonian Democracy". This phrase is used by historians to designate the rabble-rousing, anti-elite reformism he helped introduce into settler politics. His role in the early political stirrings of the white workers was so large that even today some Euro-Amerikan "Communist" labor historians proudly refer to "*the national struggle for economic and political democracy led by Andrew Jackson.*"(8)

Jackson did indeed lead a "national struggle" to enrich not only his own class (the planter bourgeoisie) but his entire settler nation of oppressors. He stood at a critical point in the great expansion into Empire. During his two administrations he personally led the campaigns to abolish the National Bank (which was seen by many settlers as protecting the monopolistic power of the very few top capitalists and their British and French backers) and to ensure settler prosperity by annexing new territory into the Empire. In both he was successful.

The boom in slave cotton and the parallel rise in immigrant European labor was tied to the removal of the Indian nations from the land. After all, the expensive growth of railroads, canals, mills and workshops was only possible with economic expansion—an expansion that could only come from the literal expansion of Amerika through new conquests. And the fruits of new conquests were very popular with settlers of all strata, North and South. The much-needed expansion of cash export crops (primarily cotton) and trade was being blocked as the settled land areas ran up against the Indian-U.S. Empire borders. In particular, the so-called "Five Civilized Nations" (Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles), Indian nations that had already been recognized as sovereign territorial entities in U.S. treaties, held much of the South: Northern Georgia, Western North Carolina, Southern Tennessee, much of Alabama and two-



Cherokee Nation on "Trail of Tears"--1838

thirds of Mississippi.(9)

The settlers were particularly upset that the Indian nations of the Old Southwest showed no signs of collapsing, "dying out" or trading away their land. All had developed stable and effective agricultural economies, with considerable trade. Euro-Americans, if anything, thought that they were too successful. The Cherokee, who had chosen a path of adopting many Western societal forms, had a national life more stable and prosperous than that of the Euro-American settlers who eventually occupied those Appalachian regions after they were forced out. A Presbyterian Church report in 1826 records that the Cherokee nation had: 7,600 houses, 762 looms, 1488 spinning wheels, 10 sawmills, 31 grain mills, 62 blacksmith shops, 18 schools, 70,000 head of livestock, a weekly newspaper in their own language, and numerous libraries with "thousands of good books". The Cherokee national government had a two-house legislature and a supreme court.(10)

Under the leadership of President Jackson, the U.S. Government ended even its limited recognition of Indian sovereignty, and openly encouraged land speculators and local settlers to start seizing Indian land at gunpoint. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding Cherokee sovereignty vs. the state of Georgia was publicly ridiculed by Jackson, who refused to enforce it. In 1830 Jackson finally got Congress to pass the Removal Act, which authorized him to use the army to totally relocate or exterminate all Indians east of the Mississippi River. The whole Eastern half of this continent was now to be completely cleared of Indians, every square inch given over to the needs of Euro-

pean settlers. In magnitude this was as sweeping as Hitler's grand design to render continental Europe "free" of Jews. Under Jackson's direction, the U.S. Army committed genocide on an impressive scale. The Cherokee Nation, for instance, was dismantled, with **one-third of the Cherokee population dying in the Winter of 1838** (from disease, famine, exposure and gunfire as the U.S. Army marched them away at bayonet point on "The Trail of Tears").(11)

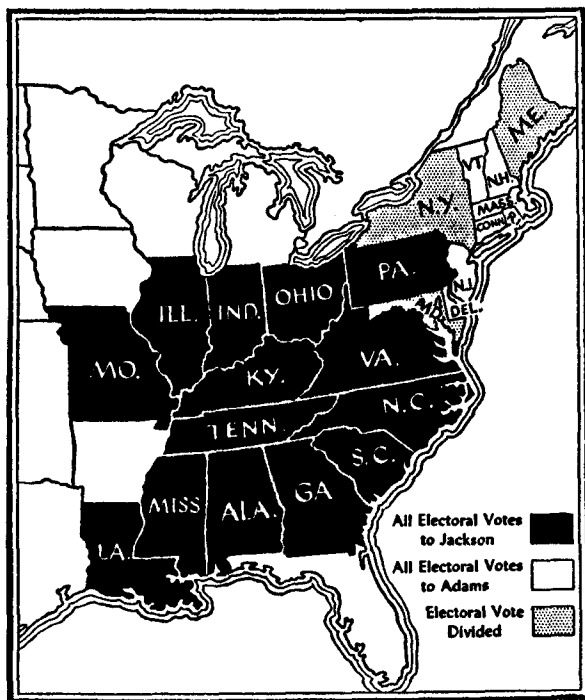
So the man who led the settler's "national struggle for economic and political democracy" was not only a bourgeois politician, but in fact an apostle of annexation and genocide. The President of "The Trail of Tears" was a stereotype frontiersman—a fact which made him popular with poorer whites. After throwing away his inheritance on drinking and gambling, the young Jackson moved to the frontier (at that time Nashville, Tenn.) to "find his fortune". That's a common phrase in the settler history books, which only conceals the reality that the only "fortune" on the frontier was from genocide. Jackson eventually became quite wealthy through speculating in Indian land (like Washington, Franklin and other settlers before him) and owning a cotton plantation with over one hundred Afrikan slaves. The leader of "Jacksonian Democracy" had a clear, practical appreciation of how profitable genocide could be for settlers.

First as a land speculator, then as slavemaster, and finally as General and then President, Jackson literally spent the whole of his adult life *personally* involved in genocide. During the Creek War of 1813-14 Jackson and his fellow frontiersmen slaughtered hundreds of unarmed women and children—afterwards skinning the bodies to

make souvenirs\*.(12) Naturally, Jackson had a vicious hatred of Indians and Afrikans. He spent the majority of his years in public office pressing military campaigns against the Seminole in Florida, who had earned special enmity by sheltering escaped Afrikans. U.S. military campaigns in Florida against first the Spanish and then the Seminole, were in large part motivated by the need to eliminate this land base for independent Afrikan regroupment.

The Seminole Wars that went on for over 30 years began when Jackson was an army officer and ended after he had retired from the White House—though he still sent Washington angry letters of advice on the war from his retirement. They were as much Afrikan wars as Indian wars, for the escaped Afrikans had formed liberated Afrikan communities as a semi-autonomous part of the sheltering Seminole Nation.(13)

The first attacks on these Afrikan-Seminole took place in 1812-14, when Georgia vigilantes invaded to enslave the valuable Afrikans. Afrikan forces wiped out almost all of the invaders (including the commanding Georgia major and a U.S. General). Two years later, in 1816, U.S. naval gunboats successfully attacked the Afrikan Ft. Appalachicola on the Atlantic Coast; two hundred defenders were killed when a lucky shot touched off the Afrikan ammunition stores. The next year, in 1817, army troops under Jackson's command invaded Florida in the First Seminole War. The Afrikans and Seminoles evaded Jackson's troops and permanently withdrew deeper into Central Florida.



SWEEP OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRACY. THE ELECTORAL VOTE IN 1828

The decisive Second Seminole War began in 1835 when the Seminole Nation, under the leadership of the great Osceola, refused to submit to U.S. removal to Oklahoma. A key disagreement was that the settlers insisted on their right to separate the Seminole from their Afrikan co-citizens, who would then be reenslaved and put on the auction block. When the Seminole refused, Jackson angrily ordered the Army to go in and "eat (Osceola) and his few". Fighting a classic guerrilla war, 2000 Seminole and 1000 Afrikan fighters inflicted terrible casualties on the invading U.S. Army. Even capturing Osceola in a false truce couldn't give the settlers victory.

Finally, U.S. Commanding General Thomas Jesup conceded that none of the Afrikans would be reenslaved, but all could relocate to Oklahoma as part of the Seminole Nation. With this most of the Seminole and Afrikan forces surrendered and left Florida.\* Those who refused to submit simply retreated deeper into the Everglades and kept ambushing any settlers who dared to follow. In 1843 the U.S. gave up trying to root the remaining Seminole guerrillas out of the swamps.

The settlers lost some 1,600 soldiers killed and additional thousands wounded or disabled through disease. The war—which Gen. Jesup labelled "a Negro, not an Indian, war"—cost the U.S. some \$30 Million. That was *eighty times* what President Jackson had promised Congress he would spend in getting rid of *all* Indians East of the Mississippi. By the time he left office, Jackson was infuriated that the Seminole and Afrikans were resisting the armed might of the Empire year after year. He urged that the Army concentrate on finding and killing all the enemy women, in order to put a final, biological end to this stubborn Nation. He boasted that he had used this strategy quite successfully in his own campaigns against Indians.(14)

Time and again Jackson made it clear that he favored a "Final Solution" of total genocide for all Indians. In his second State of the Union Address, Jackson reassured his fellow settlers that they should not feel guilty when they "tread on the graves of extinct nations", since the wiping out of all Indian life was just as "natural" as the passing of generations! Could anyone miss the point? After years and decades soaked in aggression and killing, could any Euro-American *not know* what Jackson stood for? Yet he was the chosen hero of the Euro-American workers of that day.

While Hitler never won an election in his life—and had to use the armed power of the state to violently crush the German workers and their organizations—Jackson was swept into power by the votes of Euro-American workmen and small farmers. His jingoistic expansionism was popular with all sectors of settler society, in particular with those who planned to use Indian land to help solve settler economic troubles. Northern workers praised him for his opposition to the old colonial elite of the Federalist Party, his stand on the National Bank, and his famous "Equal Protection Doctrine". The later piously declaimed that government's duty was not to favor the rich, but through

\* While some of Hitler's Death Camp officers are said to have made lampshades out of the skins of murdered Jews, the practicalities of frontier life led Jackson and his men to make bridle reins out of their victim's skins.

27 \* Even in the Oklahoma Territory, repeated outbreaks of guerrilla campaigns by Afrikan-Seminole forces were reported as late as 1842.

taxation and other measures to give aid "alike on the high and low, the rich and the poor..." of settler society.(15)

Jackson was the historic founder of today's Democratic Party; not only in organization, but in first welding together the electoral coalition of Southern planters and Northern "ethnic" workers. He was the first President to claim that he was born in a log cabin, of lowly circumstances. This "redneck" posture, enhanced by his bloody military adventures, was very popular with the mass of small slave-owners in his native South—and with Northern workers as well! Detailed voting studies confirm that in both the 1828 and 1832 elections, Jackson received the overwhelming majority of the votes of immigrant Irish and German workers in the North.(16) White workmen joined his Democratic Party as a new crusade for equality among settlers. In the New York mayoral election of 1834, organized white labor marched in groups to the polls singing:

*"Mechanics, cartmen, laborers  
Must form a close connection,  
And show the rich Aristocrats,  
Their powers at this election..."*

*"Yankee Doodle, smoke 'em out  
The Proud, the banking faction.  
None but such as Hartford Feds  
Oppose the poor and Jackson..."*(17)

Underneath the surface appearance of militant popular reform, of workers taking on the wealthy, these movements were only attempts to more equally distribute the loot and privileges of Empire among its *citizens*. That's why the oppressed colonial *subjects* of the Empire had no place in these movements.

The line between oppressors and oppressed was unmistakably drawn. Afrikan and Indian alike opposed this "Jacksonian Democracy". The English visitor Edward Abdy remarked that he "never knew a man of color that was not an anti-Jackson man".(18) On their side, the white workingmen of the 1830's knowingly embraced the architects of genocide as their heroes and leaders. Far from *joining* the democratic struggles around the rights of the oppressed, the white workers were firmly committed to *crushing* them.

Even as they were gradually being pressed downward by the emerging juggernaut of industrial capitalism — faced with wage cuts, increasing speed-up of machine-powered production, individual craft production

disappearing in the regimented workshop, etc.—those Euro-American workers saw their hope for salvation in non-proletarian special privileges and a desperate clinging to petit-bourgeois status. At a time when the brute labor of the Empire primarily rested on the backs of the unpaid, captured Afrikan proletariat, the white workers of the 1830's were only concerned with winning the Ten-Hour Day for themselves. In the 1840's as the Empire annexed the Northern 40% of Mexico and by savage invasion reduced truncated Mexico to a semi-colony, the only issue to the white workingmen's movement was how large would their share of the looting be? It is one thing to be bribed by the bourgeoisie, and still another to demand, organize, argue and beg to be bribed.

The dominant political slogan of the white workers movement of the 1840's was "*Vote Yourself A Farm*". This expressed the widespread view that it was each settler's *right* to have cheap land to farm, and that the ideal lifestyle was the old colonial-era model of the self-employed craftsmen who also possessed the security of being part-time farmers. The white labor movement, most particularly the influential newspaper, *Working Man's Advocate* of New York, called for new legislation under which the Empire would guarantee cheap tracts of Indian and Mexican land to all European settlers (and impoverished workmen in particular).\*(19) The white workers literally demanded their traditional settler right to be petit-bourgeois—"little bourgeois", petty imitators who would annex their small, individual plots each time the real bourgeoisie annexed another oppressed nation. It should be clear that the backwardness of white labor is not a matter of "racism", of "mistaken ideas", of "being tricked by the capitalists" (all idealistic instead of materialist formulations); rather, it is a class question and a national question.

This stratum came into being with its feet on top of the proletariat and its head straining up into the petit-bourgeoisie. It's startling how narrow and petty its concerns were in an age when the destiny of peoples and nations was being decided, when the settler Empire was trying to take into its hands the power to decree death to whole nations. We keep coming back to genocide, the inescapable center of settler politics in the 19th Century. So to fully grasp the politics of emerging white labor, we must penetrate to the connection between their class viewpoint and genocide.

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\* The Homestead Act of 1851 was one result of this campaign.

## 2. The Popular Appeal of Genocide

By 1840 most of the Indian nations of the East had been swept away, slaughtered or relocated. By 1850 the Empire had consolidated its grip on the Pacific Coast, overrunning and occupying Northern Mexico. The Empire had succeeded in bringing the continent under its control. These victories produced that famous "opportunity" that the new waves of European immigrants were coming for. But these changes also brought to a nodal point the con-

traditions within the fragmented settler bourgeoisie, between planter and mercantile/industrial capital—contradictions which were reflected in all facets of settler society. The tremendous economic expansion of the conquests was a catalyst.

The ripping open of the "New South" to extend the plantation system meant a great rise of Afrikan slaves

on the Western frontier. These new cotton areas became primarily Afrikan in population. And the ambitious planter bourgeoisie started seeding slave labor enterprises far outward, as tentacles of the "Slave Power". So at a salt mine in Illinois, a gold mine in California, a plantation in Missouri, aggressive planters appeared with their "moveable factories" of Afrikan slaves. Southern adventurers even briefly seized Nicaragua in 1856 in a premature attempt to annex all of Central Amerika to the "Slave Power".

If the clearing away of the Indian nations had unlocked the door to the spread of the slave system, so too it had given an opportunity to the settler opponents of the planters. And their vision was not of a reborn Greek slaveocracy, but of a brand-new European empire, relentlessly modern, constructed to the most advanced bourgeois principles with the resources of an entire continent united under its command. This new Empire would not only dwarf any power in Old Europe in size, but would be secured through the power of a vast, occupying army of millions of loyal settlers. This bourgeois vision could hardly be considered crackpot, since 20th Century Amerika is in large part the realization of it, but the vision was of an all-European Amerika, an all-white continent.

We can only understand the deep passions of the slavery dispute, the flaring gunfights in Missouri and "Bloody Kansas" between pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers, and lastly the grinding, monumental Civil War of 1861-1865, as the final play of this greatest contradiction in the settler ranks. It was not freedom for Afrikans that motivated them. No, the reverse. It was their own futures, their own fortunes. Gov. Morton of Ohio called on his fellows to realize their true interests: "We are all personally interested in this question, not indirectly and remotely as in a mere political abstraction—but directly, pecuniarily, and selfishly. *If we do not exclude slavery from the Territories, it will exclude us.*"

To millions of Euro-Amerikans in the North, the slave system had to be halted because it filled the land with masses of Afrikans instead of masses of settlers. To be precise: In the 19th Century a consensus emerged among the majority of Euro-Amerikans that just as the Indian nations before them, the dangerous Afrikan colony had to be at first contained and then totally eliminated, so that the land could be filled by the loyal settler citizens of the Empire.

This was a strategic view endorsed by the majority of Euro-Amerikans. It was an explicit vision that required genocide. How natural for a new Empire of conquerors believing that they had, like gods, totally removed from the earth one family of oppressed nations, to think nothing of wiping out another. The start was to confine Afrikans to the South, to drive them out of the "Free" states in the North. Indeed, in the political language of 19th Century settler politics, the word "Free" also served as a codephrase that meant "non-Afrikan."

The movement to confine Afrikans to the Slave South took both governmental and popular forms. Four frontier states—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Oregon—passed "immigration" clauses in their constitutions which barred Afrikans as "aliens" from entering the state.(20) It's 29



"HANGING A NEGRO IN CLARKSON STREET"

interesting that the concept of Afrikans as foreign "immigrants"—a concept which tacitly admits separate Afrikan nationality—keeps coming to the surface over and over. Legal measures to force Afrikans out by denying them the vote, the right to own land, use public facilities, practice many professions and crafts, etc. were passed in many areas of the North at the urging of the white mobs. White labor not only refused to defend the democratic rights of Afrikans, but played a major role in these new assaults.

Periodic waves of mass terror also were used everywhere against Afrikan communities in the North. The Abolitionist press records 209 violent mob attacks in the North between 1830-1849. These violent assaults were not the uncontrolled outpouring of blind racism, as often suggested. Rather, they were carefully organized offensives to achieve definite goals. These mobs were usually led by members of the local ruling class (merchants, judges, military officers, bankers, etc.), and made up of settlers from all strata of society.(21) The three most common goals were: 1) To reverse some local advance in Afrikan organization, education or employment 2) To destroy the local Abolitionist movement 3) To reduce the Afrikan population. In almost every case the mobs, representing both the local ruling class and popular settler opinion, were successful. In almost no cases did any significant number of Euro-Amerikans interfere with the mobs, save to "restore order" or to nobly protect a few lives *after* the violence had gained its ends.

But to most settlers in the North these attacks were just temporary measures. To them the heart of the matter was the slave system. They thought that without the powerful self-interest of the planters to "protect" Afrikans, that Afrikans as a whole would swiftly vanish from this continent. Today it may sound fantastic that those 19th Century Euro-Amerikans expected to totally wipe out the Afrikan population. Back then it was taken as

gospel truth by most settlers that in a "Free" society, where Afrikans would be faced with "competition" (their phrases) from whites, they as inferiors must perish. The comparison was usually made to the Indians—who "died out" as white farmers took their land, as whole villages were wiped out in unprovoked massacres, as hunger and disease overtook them, as they became debilitated with addiction to alcohol, as the survivors were simply driven off to concentration camps at gunpoint. Weren't free Afrikans losing their jobs already? And weren't there literally millions of new European farmers eager to take the farmland that Afrikans had lived on and developed?

Nor was it just the right-wingers that looked forward to getting rid of "The Negro Problem" (as all whites referred to it). All tendencies of the Abolitionists contained not only those who defended the human rights of Afrikans, but also those who publicly or privately agreed that Afrikans must go. Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the major abolitionist journal *National Era*, promised his white readers that after slavery was ended all Afrikans would leave the U.S. The North's most prominent theologian, Rev. Horace Bushnell, wrote in 1839 that emancipation would be "one bright spot" to console Afrikans, who were "doomed to spin their brutish existence downward into extinction..." That extinction, he told his followers, was only Divine Will, and all for the good. Rev. Theodore Parker was one of the leading spokesmen of radical abolitionism, one who helped finance John Brown's uprising at Harper's Ferry, and who afterwards defended him from the pulpit. Yet even Parker believed in an all-white Amerika; he firmly believed that: *"The strong replaces the weak. Thus, the white man kills out the red man and the black man. When slavery is abolished the African population will decline in the United States, and die out of the South as out of Northampton and Lexington."*(22)

While many settlers tried to hide their genocidal longings behind the fictions of "natural law" or "Divine Will", others were more honest in saying that it would happen because Euro-Amerikans were determined to make it happen. Thus, even during the Civil War, the House of Representatives issued a report on emancipation that strongly declared: "...the highest interests of the white race, whether Anglo-Saxon, Celt, or Scandinavian, require that the whole country should be held and occupied by these races alone." In other words, they saw no contradiction between emancipation and genocide. The leading economist George M. Weston wrote in 1857 that: "When the white artisans and farmers want the room which the African occupies, they will not take it by rude force, but by gentle and gradual and peaceful processes. The Negro will disappear, perhaps to regions more congenial to him, perhaps to regions where his labor can be more useful, perhaps by some process of colonization we may yet devise; but at all events he will disappear."(23)

National political movements were formed by settlers to bring this day about. The Colonization movement, embodied in the American Colonization Society, organized hundreds of local chapters to press for national legislation whereby Afrikans would be removed to new colonies in Afrika, the West Indies or Central America. U.S. Presidents from Monroe in 1817 to Lincoln in 1860 endorsed the society, and the semi-colony of Liberia was started as a trial. Much larger was the Free Soil Party, which 30

fought to reserve the new territories and states of the West for Europeans only. This was the main forerunner of the Republican party of 1854, the first settler political party whose platform was the defeat of the "Slave Power".

The Republican Party itself strongly reflected this ideology of an all-White Amerika. Although most of its leaders supported limited civil rights for Afrikans, they did so only in the context of the temporary need for Empire to treat its subjects humanely. Sen. William Seward of New York was the leading Republican spokesman before the Civil War (during which he served as Lincoln's Secretary of State). In his famous Detroit speech during the 1860 campaign, he said: *"The great fact is now fully realized that the African race here is a foreign and feeble element, like the Indian incapable of assimilation..."* Both would, he promised his fellow settlers, *"altogether disappear."* Lincoln himself said over and over again during his entire political career that all Afrikans would eventually have to disappear from North America. The theme of Afrikan genocide runs like a dark thread, now hidden and now visible in the violent weaving of the future, throughout settler political thought of that day.

It should be remembered that while most Northern settlers opposed Afrikan slavery for these reasons by the 1860's, even after the Civil War settlers promoted Indian, Mexicano and Chinese enslavement when it was useful to colonize the Southwest and West. One settler account of the Apache-U.S. wars in the Southwest reveals the use of slavery as a tool of genocide:

"More than anything else, it was probably the incessant kidnapping and enslavement of their women and children that gave Apaches their mad-dog enmity toward the whites... It was officially estimated that 2,000 Indian slaves were held by the white people of New Mexico and Arizona in 1866, after 20 years of American rule — unofficial estimates placed the figure several times higher... 'Get them back for us,' Apaches begged an Army officer in 1871, referring to 29 children just stolen by citizens of Arizona; 'our little boys will grow up slaves, and our little girls, as soon as they are large enough, will be diseased prostitutes, to get money for whoever owns them...' Prostitution of captured Apache girls, of which much mention is made in the 1860's and 1870's, seemed to trouble the Apaches exceedingly."(24)

So that at the same time that the U.S. was supposedly ending slavery and "Emancipating" Afrikans, the U.S. Empire was using slavery of the most barbaric kind in order to genocidally destroy the Apache. It was colonial rule and genocide that were primary.



### 3. White Labor Against the Oppressed

The great democratic issues of that time could only grow out of this intense, seething nexus of Empire and colony, of oppressor nation and oppressed nations. Nothing took place that was not a factor on the battleground of Empire and oppressed. Nothing. Everyone was caught up in the war, however dimly they understood their own position. The new millions of immigrant European workers were desperately needed by the Empire. By 1860 half of the populations of New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh and St. Louis were new immigrant Europeans. These reinforcements were immediately useful in new offensives against the Indian, Afrikan and Mexicano peoples. While the settler economy was still absolutely dependent upon the forced labor of the Afrikan proletariat (cotton alone accounted for almost 60% of U.S. export earnings in 1860), the new reinforcements provided the means to reverse the

dangerous concentrations of Afrikans in the metropolitan centers.

Frederick Douglass said in 1855: "Every hour sees us elbowed out of some employment to make room perhaps for some newly arrived immigrants, whose hunger and color are thought to give them a title to especial favor. White men are becoming house-servants, cooks and stewards, common laborers and flunkys to our gentry..." The Philadelphia newspaper *Colored American* said as early as 1838 that free Afrikans "have ceased to be hackney coachmen and draymen\*", and they are now almost displaced as stevedores. They are rapidly losing

\*carriers—those who hauled goods around the city for a fee.

their places as barbers and servants." In New York City Afrikaners were the majority of the house-servants in 1830, but by 1850 Irish house-servants outnumbered the entire Afrikan population there.(25) The Empire was swiftly moving to replace the rebellious and dangerous Afrikan proletariat by more submissive and loyal Europeans.

Even in the Deep South, urban Afrikan proletarians were increasingly replaced by loyal European immigrants. In New Orleans the draymen were all Afrikan in 1830, but by 1840 were all Irish.(26) One historian points out: "Occupational exclusion of Blacks actually began before the Civil War. In an unpublished study, Weinbaum has demonstrated conclusively such exclusion and decline (of skilled Afrikan workers—ed.) for Rochester, New York, Blacks between 1840 and 1860. My own work shows a similar decline in Charleston, S.C., between 1850 and 1860. And these trends continued in Southern cities during Reconstruction. A crucial story has yet to be told. The 1870 New Orleans city directory, Woodward pointed out, listed 3,460 Black carpenters, cigarmakers, painters, shoemakers, coopers, tailors, blacksmiths, and foundry hands. By 1904, less than 10 per cent of that number appeared even though the New Orleans population had increased by more than 50 per cent."(27) Beneath the great events of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the **genocidal restructuring of the oppressed Afrikan nation continued year after year.**

This was clearly the work of the capitalists. But where did the new stratum of Euro-American workers stand on this issue? The defeat of the Slaveocracy, the political upheavals of the great conflict, and the enormous expansion of European immigration had stirred and heartened white labor. In both North and South local unions revived and new unions began. New attempts emerged to form effective national federations of all white workers. Between 1863-73 some 130 white labor newspapers began publication.(28) The Eight Hour Day movement "ran with express speed" from coast to coast in the wake of the war. During the long and bitter Depression of 1873-78, militant struggles broke out, ending in the famous General Strike of 1877. In this last strike the white workers won over to their side the troops sent by the government or defeated them in bloody street fighting in city after city. White labor in its rising cast a long shadow over the endless banquet table of the bourgeoisie.

Truly, white labor had become a giant in size. Even in a Deep South state such as Louisiana, by the 1860 census white laborers made up one-third of the total settler population.(29) In St. Louis (then the third-largest manufacturing center in the Empire) the 1864 census showed that slightly over one-third of that city's 76,000 white men were workers (rivermen, factory laborers, stevedores, etc.). In the Boston of the 1870's fully one-half of the total white population were workers and their families, mostly Irish.(30) In some Northern factory towns the proportion was even higher.

The ideological head on this giant body, however, still bore the cramped, little features of the old artisan/farmer mentality of previous generations. When this giant was aroused by the capitalists' cuts and kicks, its angry flailings knocked over troops and sent shock-waves of fear and uncertainty spreading through settler society. 32

But its petit-bourgeois confusions let the capitalists easily outmaneuver it, each time herding it back to resentful acquiescence with skillful applications of "the carrot and the stick".

What was the essence of the ideology of white labor? Petit-bourgeois annexationism. Lenin pointed out in the great debates on the National Question that the heart of national oppression is annexation of the territory of the oppressed nation(s) by the oppressor nation. There is nothing abstract or mystical about this. To this new layer of European labor was denied the gross privileges of the settler bourgeoisie, who annexed whole nations. Even the particular privileges that so comforted the earlier Euro-American farmers and artisans—most particularly that of "annexing" individual plots of land every time their Empire advanced—were denied these European wage-slaves. But, typically, their petit-bourgeois vision saw for themselves a special, *better* kind of wage-slavery. The ideology of white labor held that as loyal citizens of the Empire even wage-slaves had a right to special privileges (such as "white man's wages"), beginning with the right to monopolize the labor market.

We must cut sharply through the liberal camouflage concealing this question. It is insufficient—and *therefore misleading*—to say that European workers wished to "discriminate against" or "exclude" or were "prejudiced against" colored workers. It was the labor of Afrikan and Indian workers that created the economy of the original Amerika; likewise, the economy of the Southwest was distilled from the toil of the Indian/Mexicano workers, and that of Northern California and the Pacific Northwest was built by Mexicano and Chinese labor. Immigrant European workers proposed to enter an economy *they hadn't built, and "annex", so as to speak, the jobs that the nationally oppressed had created.*

Naturally, the revisionists always want to talk about it as a matter of white workers not *sharing* equally enough—as though when a robber enters your home and takes everything you've earned, the problem is that this thief should "share" your property better! Since the ideology of white labor was annexationist and predatory, it was of necessity also rabidly pro-Empire and, despite angry outbursts, fundamentally servile towards the bourgeoisie. It was not a proletarian outlook, but the degraded outlook of a would-be labor aristocracy.

We can grasp this very concretely actually investigating the political rising of European labor in that period in relation to the nationally oppressed. Even today few comrades know how completely the establishment of the Empire in the Pacific Northwest depended upon Chinese labor.\* In fact, the Chinese predate the American settler presence on the West Coast by many years.(31) When the famous Lewis & Clark expedition sent out by President Jefferson reached the Pacific in 1804, they arrived some sixteen years after the British established a major shipyard on Vancouver Bay—a shipyard manned by Chinese shipwrights and sailors.

For that matter, the Spanish further South in

\*As well as the later waves of Japanese, Filipino and Korean workers.



CHINESE FISH. VILLAGE  
MONTEREY, CAL. 1905

California had even earlier imported skilled Chinese workers. We know that Chinese had been present at the founding of Los Angeles in 1781. This is easy to understand when we see that California was closer to Asia than New York in practical terms; in travel time San Francisco was but 60 days sail from Canton—but six months by wagon train from Kansas City.

The settler capitalists used Chinese labor to found virtually every aspect of their new Amerikan economy in this region. The Mexicano people, who were an outright majority in the area, couldn't be used because the settlers were engaged in reducing their numbers so as to consolidate U.S. colonial conquest. During the 1830's, '40s and '50s the all-too-familiar settler campaign of mass terror, assassination, and land-grabbing was used against the Mexicanos. Rodolfo Acuna summarizes: *"During this time, the Chinese were used as an alternative to the Chicanos as California's labor force. Chicanos were pushed to the southern half of the state and were literally forced out of California in order to escape the lynching, abuses, and colonized status to which they had been condemned."*(32) Thus, the Chinese were not only victims of Amerika, but their very presence was a part of genocidal campaign to dismember and colonize the Mexican Nation. In the same way, decades later Mexicano labor—now driven from the land and reduced to colonial status—would be used to replace Chinese labor by the settlers.

The full extent of Chinese labor's role is revealing. The California textile mills were originally 70-80% Chinese, as were the garment factories. As late as 1880, Chinese made up 52% of all shoe makers and 44% of all brick makers in the state, as well as one-half of all factory workers in the city of San Francisco.(33) The fish canneries were so heavily manned by Chinese—over 80%—that when a mechanical fish cleaner was introduced it was 33

popularly called *"the Iron Chink"*. The fish itself (salmon, squid, shrimp, etc.) was often caught and brought in by Chinese fishermen, who pioneered the fishing industry in the area. Chinese junks were then a common sight in California harbors, and literally thousands of Chinese seamen lived in the numerous all-Chinese fishing villages that dotted the coast from San Diego up to Oregon. As late as 1888 there were over 20 Chinese fishing villages just in San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, while 50% of the California fishing industry was still Chinese. Farms and vineyards were also founded on Chinese labor: in the 1870's when California became the largest wheat growing state in the U.S. over 85% of the farm labor was Chinese.

Chinese workers played a large part as well in bringing out the vast mineral wealth that so accelerated the growth of the U.S. in the West. In 1870 Chinese made up 25% of all miners in California, 21% in Washington, 58% in Idaho, and 61% in Oregon. In California the special monthly tax paid by each Chinese miner virtually supported local government for many years—accounting for 25-50% of all settler government revenues for 1851-70. Throughout the area Chinese also made up a service population, like Afrikans and Mexicanos in other regions of the Empire, for the settlers. Chinese cooks, laundrymen, and domestic servants were such a common part of Western settler life in the mines, cattle ranches and cities that no Hollywood *"Western"* movie is complete without its stereotype Chinese cook.

But their greatest single feat in building the economy of the West was also their undoing. Between 1865 and 1869 some 15,000 Chinese laborers carved the far Western stretch of the Transcontinental rail line out of the hostile Sierra and Rocky Mountain ranges. Through severe weather they cut railbeds out of rock mountainsides, blasted tunnels, and laid the tracks of the Central Pacific Railroad some 1,800 miles East to Ogden, Utah. It was and

is a historic engineering achievement, every mile paid for in blood of the Chinese who died from exposure and avalanches. The reputation earned by Chinese workers led them to be hired to build rail lines not only in the West, but in the Midwest and South as well. This Transcontinental rail link enabled the minerals and farm produce of the West to be swiftly shipped back East, while giving Eastern industry ready access to Pacific markets, not only of the West Coast but all of Asia via the port of San Francisco.

The time-distance across the continent was now cut to two weeks, and cheap railroad tickets brought a flood of European workers to the West. There was, of course, an established settler tradition of terrorism towards Chinese. The *Shasta Republican* complained in its Dec. 12, 1856 issue that: "*Hundreds of Chinamen have been slaughtered in cold blood in the last 5 years...the murder of Chinamen was of almost daily occurrence.*" Now the new legions of immigrant European workers demanded a qualitative increase in the terroristic assaults, and the 1870's and 1880's were decades of mass bloodshed.

The issue was very clear-cut—jobs. By 1870, some 42% of the whites in California were European immigrants. With their dreams of finding gold boulders lying in the streams having faded before reality, these new crowds of Europeans demanded the jobs that Chinese labor had created.(34) More than demanded, they were determined to "annex", to seize by force of conquest, all that Chinese workers had in the West. In imitation of the bourgeoisie they went about plundering with bullets and fire. In mining camps and towns from Colorado to Washington, Chinese communities came under attack. Many Chinese were shot down, beaten, their homes and stores set afire and gutted. In Los Angeles Chinese were burned alive by the European vigilantes, who also shot and tortured many others.

In perverse fashion, the traditional weapons of trade unionism were turned against the Chinese workers in this struggle. Many manufacturers who employed Chinese were warned that henceforth all desirable jobs must be filled by European immigrants. Boycotts were threatened, and in some industries (such as wineries and cigar factories) the new white unions invented the now-famous "union label"—printed tags which guaranteed that the specific product was produced solely by European unions. In 1884, when one San Francisco cigar manufacturer began replacing Chinese workers (who then made up 80-85% of the industry there) with European immigrants, the Chinese cigarmakers went on strike. Swiftly, the San Francisco white labor movement united to help the capitalists break the strike. Scabbing was praised, and the Knights of Labor and other European workers' organizations led a successful boycott of all cigar companies that employed Chinese workers. Boycotts were widely used in industry after industry to seize Chinese jobs.(35)

In the political arena a multitude of "Anti-Coolie" laws were passed on all levels of settler government. Special taxes and "license fees" on Chinese workers and tradesmen were used both to discourage them and to support settler government at their expense. Chinese who carried laundry deliveries on their backs in San Francisco had to pay the city a sixty-dollar "license 34



fee" each year.(36) Many municipalities passed laws ordering all Chinese to leave, enforced by the trade union mobs.

The decisive point of the Empire-wide campaign to plunder what the Chinese had built up in the West was the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Both Democratic and Republican parties supported this bill, which barred all Chinese immigration into the U.S. and made Chinese ineligible for citizenship. The encouragement offered by the capitalist state to the anti-Chinese offensive shows the forces at work. In their frenzy of petty plundering, European labor was being permitted to do the dirty work of the bourgeoisie. The Empire needed to promote and support this flood of European reinforcements to help take hold of the newly conquered territories. As California Gov. Henry Haight (whose name lives on in a certain San Francisco neighborhood) said in 1868: "No man is worthy of the name of patriot or statesman who countenances a policy which is opposed to the interests of the free white laboring and industrial classes...What we desire for the permanent benefit of California is a population of white men...We ought not to desire an effete population of Asiatics..."The national bourgeoisie used the "Anti-Coolie" movement and the resulting legislation to force individual capitalists to follow Empire policy and discharge Chinese in favor of Europeans. Now that the Chinese had built the economy of the Pacific Northwest, it was time for them to be stripped and driven out.

The passage of the 1882 Act was taken as a "green-light", a "go-ahead" signal of approval to immigrant European labor from Congress, the White House and the majority of Euro-Americans. It was taken as a license to kill, a declaration of open looting season on Chinese. Terrance Powderly, head of the Knights of Labor (which boasted that it had recruited Afrikan workers to help European labor) praised the victory of the Exclusion Act by saying that now the task for trade unionists was to finish the job—by eliminating all Chinese left in the U.S within the year!(36)

The settler propaganda kept emphasizing how pure, honest Europeans had no choice but "defend" themselves against the dark plots of the Chinese. Wanting to seize ("annex") Chinese jobs and small businesses, European immigrants kept shouting that they were only "defending" themselves against the vicious Chinese who were trying to steal the white man's jobs! And in case any European worker had second thoughts about the coming lynch mob, a constant ideological bombardment surrounded him by trade union and "socialist" leaders, bourgeois journalists, university professors and religious figures, politicians of all parties, and so on. Having decided to "annex" the fruits of the Chinese development of the Northwest, the unusual settler propaganda about "defending" themselves was put forth.

Nor was Euro-American racial-sexual hate propaganda neglected, just as bizarre and perverted as it is about Afrikans. In 1876, for example, the *New York Times* published an alleged true interview with the Chinese operator of a local opium den. The story has the reporter asking the "Chinaman" about the "handsome but squalidly dressed young white girl" he sees in the opium den. The "Chinaman" allegedly answers: "Oh, hard time in New York. Young girl hungry. Plenty come here.



A WORD OF CAUTION TO OUR FRIENDS, THE CIGAR-MAKERS.  
Through the smoke it is easy to see the approach of Chinese cheap labor.



THE ARGUMENT OF NATIONALITY.  
Excited Mob—"We don't want any cheap-labor foreigners intruding upon us native-born citizens."

Chinaman always have something to eat, and he like young white girl, He! He!”\* A woman’s magazine warned their readers to never leave little white girls alone with Chinese servants. The settler public was solemnly alerted that the Chinese plot was to steal white workers’ job and thus force the starving wives to become their concubines. The most telling sign of the decision to destroy the Chinese community was the settler realization that these Chinese looked just like Afrikans in “women’s garments”!

The ten years after the passage of the Exclusion Act saw the successful annexation of the Chinese economy on the West Coast. Tacoma and Seattle forced out their entire Chinese populations at gunpoint. In 1885 the infamous Rock Springs, Wyoming massacre took place, where over 20 Chinese miners were killed by a storm of rifle-fire as European miners enforced their take-over of all mining. Similar events happened all over the West. In 1886 some 35 California towns reported that they had totally eliminated their Chinese populations.

On the coast Italian immigrants burned Chinese ships and villages to take over most of the fishing industry by 1890. By that same year most of the Chinese workers in the vineyards had been replaced by Europeans. By 1894 the bulk of Chinese labor on the wheat and vegetable farms had been forced out. Step by step, as fast as they could be replaced, the Chinese who once built the foundation of the region’s economy were being driven out.

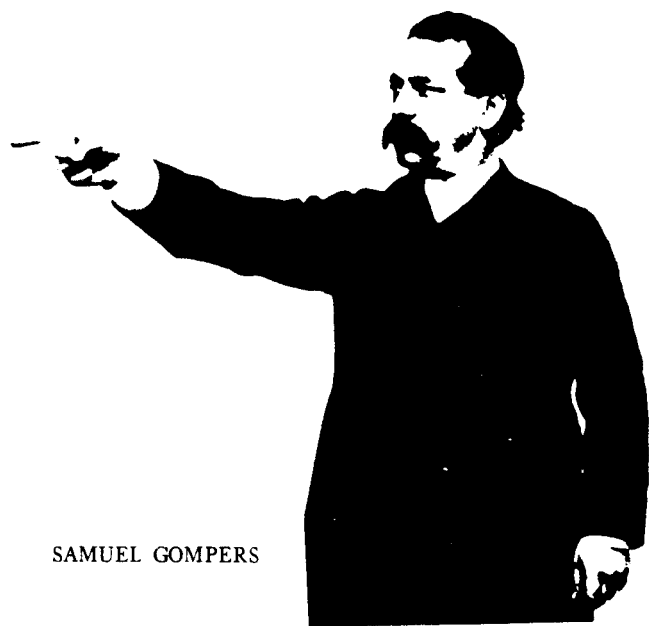
Who took part in this infamous campaign? Virtually the whole of the Euro-Amerikan labor movement in the U.S., including “socialists” and “Marxists”. Both of the two great nationwide union federations of the 19th Century, the National Labor Union and the later Knights of Labor, played an active role.(37) The Socialist Labor Party was involved. The leading independent white labor newspaper, the *Workingman’s Advocate* of Chicago, was edited by A. C. Cameron. He was a leader of the National Labor Union, a respected printing trades unionist, and the delegate from the N.L.U. to the 1869 Switzerland conference of the Communist First International. His paper regularly printed speeches and theoretical articles by Karl Marx and other European Communists. Yet he loudly called in his newspaper for attacks on the immigrant “Chinamen, Japanese, Malays, and Monkeys” from Asia. Even most “Marxists” who deplored the crude violence of the labor mobs, such as Adolph Doubai (one of the leading German Communist immigrants), agreed that the Chinese had to be removed from the U.S.(38) It is easy to predict that if even European “Marxists” were so strongly pulled along by the lynch mobs, the bourgeois trade union leaders had to be running like dogs at the head of the hunt. Andrew Furuseth, the founder of the Seafarers International Union, AFL-CIO, Pat McCarthy, leader of the San Francisco Building Trades Council, Sam Gompers, leader of the cigarmakers union and later founder of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), were just a few of the many who openly led and incited the settler terror.(39)

\*Similar “news” stories are very popular today, reminding the white masses about all the runaway white teenagers who become “captives” of Afrikan “pimps and dope dealers”. When we see such themes being pushed in the bourgeois media, we should know what’s behind it.

When we say that the petit-bourgeois consciousness of European immigrant labor showed that it was a degraded stratum seeking extra-proletarian privileges, we aren’t talking about a few nickels and dimes; the issue was genocide, carrying out the dirty work of the capitalists in order to reap some of the bloody fruits of national oppression. It is significant that the organizational focus of the early anti-Chinese campaign was the so-called Working Men’s Party of California, which was organized by an Irish immigrant confidence-man named Dennis Kearney. Kearney was the usual corrupt, phrase-making demagogue that the white masses love so well (“*I am the voice of the people. I am the dictator... I owe the people nothing, but they owe me a great deal.*”)\*

This sleazy party, built on the platform of wiping out Chinese labor and federal reforms to aid white workers and farmers, attracted thousands of European workers—including most of the European “socialists” in California. Before falling apart from corruption, thugism and factionism, Kearney’s party captured seats in the State Assembly, the mayoralty in Sacramento, and controlled the Constitutional Convention which reformed the California Constitution. Even today settler historians, while deploring Kearney’s racism, speak respectfully of the party’s role in liberal reforms! Even revisionist CPUSA historians apparently feel no shame in praising this gang of degenerates for “arousing public support for a number of important labor demands...forcing old established parties to listen more attentively to the demands of the common people.”(40) What this shows is that if the “respectable” Euro-Amerikan trade-unionists and “Marxists” were scrabbling on their knees before the bourgeoisie along with known criminals such as Kearney, then they must have had much in common (is it so different today?).

The monopoly on desirable jobs that European labor had won in the West was continually “defended” by new white supremacist assaults. The campaign against Chinese was continued long into the 20th century, particularly so that its momentum could be used against



SAMUEL GOMPERS

Japanese, Filipino and other Asian immigrant labor. The AFL played a major role in this. Gompers himself, a Jewish immigrant who became the most powerful bourgeois labor leader in the U.S., co-authored in 1902 a mass-distributed racist tract entitled: *Some Reasons For Chinese Exclusion: Meat vs. Rice, American Manhood vs. Asiatic Coolieism—Which Shall Survive?* In this crudely racist propaganda, the respected AFL President comforted white workers by pointing out that their cowardly violence toward Asians was justified by the victim's immoral and dangerous character: "The Yellow Man found it natural to lie, cheat and murder". Further, he suggested, in attacking Asian workers, whites were just nobly protecting their own white children, "thousands" of whom were supposed to be opium-addicted "prisoners" kept in the unseen back rooms of neighborhood Chinese laundries: "What other crimes were committed in those dark, fetid places, when those little innocent victims of the Chinamen's wiles were under the influence of the drug are too horrible to imagine..."(41) What's really hard "to imagine" is how anyone could believe this fantastical porno-propaganda; in truth, settlers will eagerly swallow *any* falsehoods that seem to justify their continuing crimes against the oppressed.

The Empire-wide campaign against the Chinese national minority played a major role in the history of

Euro-American labor; it was a central rallying issue for many, a point around which immigrant European workers and other settlers could unite. It was a campaign in which *all* the major Euro-American labor federations, trade-unions and "socialist" organizations joined together. The annexation of the Chinese economy of the West during the later half of the 19th Century was but another expression of the same intrusion that Afrikans met in the South and North. **All over the Empire immigrant European labor was being sent against the oppressed, to take what little we had.**

At times even their bourgeois masters wished that their dogs were on a shorter leash. Many capitalists saw, even as we were being cut down, that it would be useful to preserve us as a colonial labor force to be exploited whenever needed; but the immigrant white worker had no use for us whatsoever. Therefore, in the altered geometry of forces within the Empire, the new Euro-American working masses became willing pawns of the most vicious elements in the settler bourgeoisie, seeing only advantages in every possibility of our genocidal disappearance. And in this scramble upwards those wretched immigrants shed, like an old suit of clothes, the proletarian identity and honor of their Old European past. Now they were true Americans, real settlers who had done their share of the killing, annexing and looting.

## 4. The Test of Black Reconstruction

If Euro-American labor's attitude towards Chinese labor was straightforward and brutal, towards the Afrikan colony it was more complex, more tactical. Indeed, the same Euro-American labor leaders who sponsored the murderous assaults on Chinese workers kept telling Afrikan workers how "the unity of labor" was the first thing in their hearts!

Terrance Powderly, the Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor (who had personally called for wiping out all Chinese in North America within one year), suddenly became the apostle of brotherhood when it came to persuading Afrikans to support his organization: "The color of a candidate shall not debar him from admission; rather let the coloring of his mind and heart be the test."(42) This apparent contradiction arose from the unique position of the Afrikan colony. Where the Chinese workers had been a national minority whose numbers at any one time probably never exceeded 100,000 (roughly two-thirds of the Chinese returned to Asia), Afrikans were an entire colonized Nation; on their National Territory in the South they numbered some 4 millions. This was an opponent Euro-American labor had to engage more carefully.

The relationship between Euro-American labor and Afrikan labor cannot be understood just from the world of the mine and mill. Their relationship was not separate from, but a part of, the general relation of oppressor nation to colonized oppressed nation. And at that time the struggle over the Afrikan colony was the storm center of all politics in the U.S. Empire. The end of the Civil War and the end of chattel Afrikan slavery were not

the resolution of bitter struggle in the colonial South, but merely the opening of a whole new stage.

We have to see that there were two wars going on, and that both were mixed in the framework of the Civil War. The first conflict was the fratricidal, intra-settler war between Northern industrial capitalists and Southern planter capitalists. We use the phrase "Civil War" because it is the commonly known name for the war. It is more accurate to point out that the war was between two settler nations for ownership of the Afrikan colony — and ultimately for ownership of the continental Empire. The second was the protracted struggle for liberation by the colonized Afrikan Nation in the South. Neither struggle ended with the military collapse of the Confederacy in 1865. For ten years, a long heartbeat in history, both wars took focus around the Reconstruction governments.

The U.S. Empire faced the problem that its own split into two warring settler nations had provided the long-awaited strategic moment for the anti-colonial rising of the oppressed Afrikan Nation. Just as in the 1776 War of Independence, both capitalist factions in the Civil War hoped that Afrikans would remain docilely on the sidelines while Confederate Amerika and Union Amerika fought it out. But the rising of millions of Afrikans, striking off their chains, became the decisive factor in the Civil War. As DuBois so scathingly points out:

"Freedom for the slave was the logical result of a crazy attempt to wage war in the midst of four million black slaves, and trying the while sublimely to ignore the interests of those slaves in the outcome of the fighting.

While marching through a region, the black troops would sometimes pause at a plantation, ascertain from the slaves the name of the "meanest" overseer in the neighborhood, and then, if he had not fled, "tie him backward on a horse and force him to accompany them." Although a few masters and overseers were whipped or strung up by a rope in the presence of their slaves, this appears to have been a rare occurrence. More commonly, black soldiers preferred to appropriate the contents of the plantation and the Big House among those whose labor had made them possible, singling out the more "notorious" slaveholders and systematically ransacking and demolishing their dwellings. "They gutted his mansion of some of the finest furniture in the world," wrote Chaplain Henry M. Turner, in describing a regimental action in North Carolina. Having been informed of the brutal record of this slaveholder, the soldiers had resolved to pay him a visit. While the owner was forced to look on, they went to work on his "splendid mansion" and "utterly destroyed every thing on the place." Wielding their axes indiscriminately, they shattered his piano and most of the furniture and ripped his expensive carpets to pieces. What they did not destroy they distributed among his slaves.

--Leon F. Littwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*

Yet, these slaves had enormous power in their hands. Simply by stopping work, they could threaten the Confederacy with starvation. By walking into the Federal camps, they showed to doubting Northerners the easy possibilities of using them as workers and as servants, as farmers, and as spies, and finally, as fighting soldiers. And not only using them thus, but by the same gesture depriving their enemies of their use in just these fields. It was the fugitive slave who made the slaveholders face the alternative of surrendering to the North, or to the Negroes."

Judge John C. Underwood of Richmond, Virginia, testified later before Congress that: "I had a conversation with one of the leading men in that city, and he said to me that the enlistment of Negro troops by the United States was the turning point of the rebellion; that it was the heaviest blow they ever received. He remarked that when the Negroes deserted their masters, and showed a general disposition to do so and join the forces of the United States, intelligent men everywhere saw that the matter was ended."(43)

The U.S. Empire took advantage of this rising against the Slave Power to conquer the Confederacy — but now its occupying Union armies had to not only watch over the still sullen and dangerous Confederates, but had to prevent the Afrikan masses from breaking out. Four millions strong, the Afrikan masses were on the move

politically. Unless halted, this rapid march could quickly lead to mass armed insurrection against the Union and the formation of a New Afrikan government in the South. Events had suddenly moved to that point.

The most perceptive settlers understood this very well. The Boston capitalist Elizur Wright said in 1865: "...the blacks must be enfranchised or they will be ready and willing to fight for a government of their own." Note, "a government of their own." For having broken the back of the Confederacy, having armed and trained themselves contrary to settler expectations, the Afrikan masses were in no mood to passively submit to reenslavement. And they desired and demanded Land, the national foundations that they themselves had created out of the toil of three hundred years. DuBois tells us: "*There was continual fear of insurrection in the Black Belt.* This vague fear increased toward Christmas, 1866. The Negroes were disappointed because of the delayed division of lands. There was a natural desire to get possession of firearms, and all through the summer and fall, they were acquiring shotguns, muskets, and pistols, in great quantities."

All over their Nation, Afrikans had seized the land that they had sweated on. Literally millions of Afrikans were on strike in the wake of the Confederacy's defeat. The Southern economy — now owned by Northern Capital — was struck dead in its tracks, unable to operate at all



against the massive, stony resistance of the Afrikan masses. This was the greatest single labor strike in the entire history of U.S. Empire. It was not done by any AFL-CIO-type official union for higher wages, but was the monumental act of an oppressed people striking out for Land and Liberation. Afrikans refused to leave the lands that were now theirs, refused to work for their former slavemasters.

U.S. General Rufus Saxon, former head of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, reported to a Congressional committee in 1866 that Afrikan field workers in that state were arming themselves and refusing to "*submit quietly*" to the return of settler rule. Even the pro-U.S. Afrikan petit-bourgeoisie there, according to Saxon, was afraid they were losing control of the masses: "*I will tell you what the leader of the colored Union League...said to me: they said that they feared they could not much longer control the freedmen if I left Charlestown...they feared the freedmen would attempt to take their cause in their own hands.*"(44)

The U.S. Empire's strategy for reenslaving their Afrikan colony involved two parts: 1. The military repression of the most organized and militant Afrikan communities. 2. Pacifying the Afrikan Nation by neo-colonialism, using elements of the Afrikan petit-bourgeoisie to lead their people into embracing U.S. 39

citizenship as the answer to all problems. Instead of nationhood and liberation, the neo-colonial agents told the masses that their democratic demands could be met by following the Northern settler capitalists (i.e. the Republican Party) and looking to the Federal Government as the ultimate protector of Afrikan interests.

So all across the Afrikan Nation the occupying Union Army — supposedly the "saviors" and "emancipators" of Afrikans — invaded the most organized, most politically conscious Afrikan communities. In particular, all those communities where the Afrikan masses had seized land in a revolutionary way came under Union Army attack. In those areas the liberation of the land was a collective act, with the workers from many plantations holding meetings and electing leaders to guide the struggle. Armed resistance was the order of the day, and planter attempts to retake the land were rebuffed at rifle point. The U.S. Empire had to both crush and undermine this dangerous development that had come from the grass roots of their colony.

In August, 1865 around Hampton, Virginia, for example, Union cavalry were sent to dislodge 5,000 Afrikans from liberated land. Twenty-one Afrikan leaders were captured, who had been "armed with revolvers, cutlasses, carbines, shotguns." In the Sea Islands off the South Carolina coast some 40,000 Afrikans were forced

off the former plantations at bayonet point by Union soldiers. While the Afrikans had coolly told returning planters to go — and pulled out weapons to emphasize their orders — they were not able to overcome the U.S. Army. In 1865 and 1866 the Union occupation disarmed and broke up such dangerous outbreaks. *The special danger to the U.S. Empire was that the grass-roots political drive to have armed power over the land, to build economically self-sufficient regions under Afrikan control, would inevitably raise the question of Afrikan sovereignty.*

Afrikan soldiers who had learned too much for the U.S. Empire's peace of mind were a special target (of both Union and Confederate alike). Even before the War's end a worried President Lincoln had written to one of his generals: *"I can hardly believe that the South and North can live in peace unless we get rid of the Negroes. Certainly they cannot, if we don't get rid of the Negroes whom we have armed and disciplined and who have fought with us, I believe, to the amount of 150,000 men. I believe it would be better to export them all..."*

Afrikan U.S. army units were hurriedly disarmed and disbanded, or sent out of the South (out West to serve as colonial troops against the Indians, for example). The U.S. Freedmen's Bureau said in 1866 that the new, secret white terrorist organizations in Mississippi placed a special priority on murdering returning Afrikan veterans of the Union Army. In New Orleans some members of the U.S. 74th Colored Infantry were arrested as "vagrants" the day after they were mustered out of the army. Everywhere in the occupied Afrikan Nation an emphasis was placed on defusing or wiping out the political guerrillas and militia of the Afrikan masses.

The U.S. Empire's second blow was more subtle. The Northern settler bourgeoisie sought to convince Afrikans that they could, and should want to, become citizens of the U.S. Empire. To this end the 14th Amendment to the Constitution involuntarily made all Afrikans here paper U.S. citizens. This neo-colonial strategy offered Afrikan colonial subjects the false democracy of paper citizenship in the Empire that oppressed them and held their Nation under armed occupation.

While the U.S. Empire had regained its most valuable colony, it had major problems. The Union Armies militarily held the territory of the Afrikan Nation. But the settlers who had formerly garrisoned the colony and overseen its economy could no longer be trusted; even after their attempted rival empire had been ended, the Southern settlers remained embittered and dangerous enemies of the U.S. bourgeoisie. The Afrikan masses, whose labor and land provided the wealth that the Empire extracted from their colony, were rebellious and unwilling to peacefully submit to the old ways. The Empire needed a loyalist force to hold and pacify the colony.

The U.S. Empire's solution was to turn their Afrikan colony into a neo-colony. This phase was called Black Reconstruction.\* Afrikans were promised democracy, human rights, self-government and popular ownership of the land — but only as loyal "citizens" of the U.S. Empire. Under the neo-colonial leadership of some petit-bourgeois elements, Afrikans became the loyalist social base. Not only were they enfranchised en masse, but

Afrikans were participants and leaders in government: Afrikan jurors, judges, state officials, militia captains, Governors, Congressmen and even several Afrikan U.S. Senators were conspicuous.

This regional political role for Afrikans produced results that would be startling in the Empire today, and by the settler standards of a century ago were totally astonishing. The white supremacist propagandist James Pike reports angrily of state government in South Carolina, the state with the largest Afrikan presence in government:

"The members of the Assembly issued forth from the State House. About three-quarters of the crowd belonged to the African race. They were such a looking body of men as might pour out of a market-house or a courthouse at random in any Southern state. Every Negro type and physiognomy was here to be seen, from the genteel serving-man, to the rough-hewn customer from the rice or cotton field. Their dress was as varied as their countenances. There was the second-hand, black frockcoat of infirm gentility, glossy and threadbare. There was the stovepipe hat of many ironings and departed styles. There was also to be seen a total disregard of the proprieties of costume in the coarse and dirty garments of the field.

"The Speaker is black, the Clerk is black, the doorkeepers are black, the little pages are black, the Chairman of the Ways and Means is black, and the chaplain is coal black. At some of the desks sit colored men whose types it would be hard to find outside the Congo. It was not all sham, nor all burlesque. They have a genuine interest and a genuine earnestness in the business of the assembly which we are bound to recognize and respect... They have an earnest purpose, born of conviction that their conditions are not fully assured, which lends a sort of dignity to their proceedings."

This dramatic reversal outraged the Confederate masses — who saw their former "property" now risen over them. The liberal Reconstruction governments swept away the social garbage of centuries, releasing modern reforms throughout Southern life: public school systems, integrated juries, state highway and railroad systems, protective labor reforms, divorce and property rights for women, and so on.

What was most apparent about Black Reconstruction was its impossible contradictions. Now we can say that while it was a bold course for the Empire to embark upon, it so went against the structure of settler society that it could only have been temporary. Afrikans were organized politically into the loyalist Union Leagues (which were often armed), organized militarily into state militia companies, and all for the purpose of holding down some Euro-American settlers both for themselves and for the U.S. Empire. Yet, at the same time the Empire wanted Afrikans disarmed and disorganized. This neo-colonial bourgeois government of Black Reconstruction was doomed from its first day, since it promised that Afrikans would share the land and the power with settlers.

The Afrikan petit-bourgeois leadership in government made every effort to stabilize relations with the

former planter ruling class, and, in fact, to cement relations with all classes of settlers. They openly offered themselves as allies of the planters in return for settler acceptance of the new neo-colony. But in vain.

The Reconstruction politicians hoped for a bourgeois democratic reconciliation, wherein the Northern industrialists, they and even the former slave-masters could all harmoniously unite to prosper off the labor of the Afrikan proletariat. Beverly Nash, one of the Afrikan leaders in the South Carolina legislature, told his people: "We recognize the Southern white man as the true friend of the black man...It is not our desire to be a discordant element in the community, or to unite the poor against the rich... The white man has the land, the black man has the labor, and labor is worth nothing without capital." Nash promised the banned ex-Confederates that he would fight to not only get their voting rights restored, but to get "our first men" (the former Confederate leaders) back in their customary places in Congress and the judges' bench. This desire to be accepted by the planter elite was far too common. Henry Turner, the "most prominent" Afrikan politician in Georgia, opposed seizing tax-delinquent planter estates and campaigned to free Jefferson Davis from prison!

But Reconstruction fell, its foundations eroded away by the ever-growing mass terror against the Afrikan population by settler reaction. It was militarily overthrown by the secret planter para-military groups of the Ku Klux Klan, White Caps, White Cross, White Legion and so on. In town after town, county and parish one after another, then in state after state, Reconstruction was broken in bloody killings.

During the 1868 elections in Louisiana, for example, some 2,000 Afrikans were thought to have been killed or wounded, with many more forced to flee. In Shreveport a gang of Italian fishermen and market venders called "The Innocents" roamed the streets for ten days before the elections, literally killing every Afrikan they could find. Some 297 Afrikans were murdered in New Orleans. In Bossier Parish "One hundred and twenty corpses were found in the woods or were taken out of the Red River after a 'Negro' hunt..." Although it took ten years for Reconstruction to be finally defeated (and another twenty years before its advances were all erased), the guerrilla war between planter and Afrikan forces was disastrously one-sided. The war could only have had one end, since Afrikans were disarmed militarily and politically.

By 1874 only four states—Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida—still remained in the hands of Reconstruction. The end was in sight. Secret conferences of the planter leadership mapped out the final drive to tear out the heart of Black Reconstruction, and to begin the long, hundred-year night of absolute, terroristic rule. The White League was organized as the armed united front of the KKK and all the other planter organizations. Within months it had 40,000 members. The white violence intensified.

Even at this late date the Afrikan petit-bourgeois leaders of Reconstruction remained true to their loyalty to the Empire. In 1876 there was a militant strike wave among the Afrikan plantation laborers in South Carolina. 41

Scabs were beaten and taken prisoner, and even the local police were overpowered by the armed strikers. But the Afrikan U.S. Congressman Robert Smalls led the state militia in and pacified the angry workers, ending the strike. In Mississippi when the armed planter takeover drowned the 1876 elections in a sea of blood, Afrikan U.S. Congressman John Lynch (who had just lost his seat through vote fraud at gunpoint) reminded everyone to remain loyal to the Empire:

"You certainly cannot expect...to resort to mob law and brute force, or to use what may be milder language, inaugurate a revolution. My opinion is that revolution is not the remedy to be applied in such cases. Our system of government is supposed to be one of law and order...there is patriotism enough in this country and sufficient love of justice and fair play in the hearts of the American people..."

In 1876-77, the final accommodation between Northern Capital and the Southern planters was reached in the "Hayes-Tilden deal". The South promised to accept the dominance of the Northern bourgeoisie over the entire Empire, and to permit the Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes to succeed Grant in the U.S. Presidency. In return, the Northern bourgeoisie agreed to let the planters have regional hegemony over the South, and to withdraw the last of the occupying Union troops so that the Klan could take care of Afrikans as they wished. While the guarded remnants of Reconstruction held out here and there for some years (Afrikan Congressmen were elected from the South until 1895), the critical year of 1877 marked their conclusive defeat.

During these fateful years, when the *central* political issue in the Empire was the war in the Afrikan colony, the white labor movement lined up on the side of the KKK terror — and against the Afrikan masses. Even the neo-colonial society of Black Reconstruction was hated by white labor, since it involved giving Afrikans at least an outward form of democratic rights and government power. Even neo-colonialism was too good for Afrikans in the opinion of white labor.

Some may consider it unusual that white workers opposed Black Reconstruction; particularly since Black Reconstruction not only bent over backwards to treat the entire white community, from planters to poor whites, with great respect, but introduced social reforms which gave a real boost upwards to poor whites. Poor whites were able to send their children to the new public schools, and for the first time in much of the South they were able to vote and hold minor public offices (during the "Slave Power" reign stiff property qualifications barred many whites from having political rights). These gifts failed to win the gratitude of poor whites.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels saw that the "mean whites" (as they called them) of the South were hopeless politically. They felt that nothing could be done with them but to render them powerless until they died out of old age. This was not a unique observation. Wendell Phillips, the great Radical abolitionist, bluntly pleaded in 1870: "*Now is the time...to guarantee the South against the possible domination or the anger of the white race. We adhere to our opinion that nothing, or not much, except*

*hostility, can be expected of two-thirds of the adult white men. They will go to their graves unchanged. No one of them should ever again be trusted with political rights. And all the elemental power of civilization should be combined and brought into play to counterwork the anger and plots of such foes.”(45)*

No sooner had the planter Confederacy been struck down, then poor whites began responding to the appeals of the KKK and the other planter guerrilla organizations. This was a mass phenomena. Their motivation was obvious: they desired to keep Afrikans as *colonial subjects below even wage-labor*. DuBois relates:

“When, then, he faced the possibility of being himself compelled to compete with a Negro wage laborer, while both were hirelings of a white planter, his whole soul revolted. He turned, therefore, from war service to guerrilla warfare, particularly against Negroes. He joined secret organizations, like the Ku Klux Klan, which fed his vanity by making him co-worker with the white planter, and gave him a chance to maintain his race superiority by killing and intimidating ‘niggers’; and even in secret forays of his own, he could drive away the planter’s black help,

leaving the land open to white labor. Or he could murder too successful freedmen.”

North or South, East or West, Euro-American workingmen were intent on driving out or pushing further down all subject labor—whether Afrikan, Mexicano or Chinese. In fact, despite the divisions of the Civil War there were few qualitative differences between Northern and Southern white labor. In part this is because there was considerable merging through migration within the Empire.

So when Euro-American labor, greatly revived by the massive reinforcements immigrating from Old Europe, reorganized itself during the Civil War, it was not any strengthening of democratic forces; rather, it added new formations of oppressors, new blows being directed against the oppressed. Just as the petit-bourgeois workmen’s movements of the 1840’s and 1850’s, these were “white unions” for settlers only. So that when the representatives from eight craft trades met in Louisville in 1864 to form the short-lived “International Industrial Assembly of North America”, there was no mention of the emancipation of Afrikan labor.



Similarly, when the National Labor Union was formed in 1866, most of its members and leaders clearly intended to simply push aside Afrikan labor. The N.L.U. was the first major labor federation of white workers, the forerunner of today's AFL-CIO. Delegates from 59 trade unions and craft organizations took part in its first Baltimore meeting, with observers from much of the rest of the settler craft unions joining into the heady talking and planning. The most "advanced" settler unionists strongly argued for "unity" with Afrikan workers. It was repeatedly pointed out how the capitalists had used Afrikan workers to get around strikes and demands for higher wages by white workmen. Rather than let Afrikans compete in the job market against settlers, it was urged to restrain them by taking them into the N.L.U.

As DuBois pointed out: "Here was a first halting note. Negroes were welcome to the labor movement, not because they were laborers but because they might be competitors in the market, and the logical conclusion was either to organize them or guard against their actual competition by other methods. It was to this latter alternative that white American labor almost unanimously turned." In other words, settler trade-unionists preferred to limit job competition between whites and Afrikans *by driving the latter out of the labor market*. All motions to admit Afrikans to the N.L.U. were defeated, as the settler trade-unionists continued following the capitalists' long-range plan to use them to replace Afrikan labor. It should be remembered that in all these deeds, Euro-Amerikan labor, no matter how much it huffed and puffed itself up, was just servilely following the genocidal strategies of the industrial bourgeoisie—for which service the capitalists had imported them in the first place, rewarding their pawns with the customary mixture of table scraps and kicks.

But note, the radical/conservative difference of opinion within the ranks of settler unionism was just like that between Gov. Berkeley and Bacon; a difference between following cooptive strategies of genocide or seeking an immediate "final solution" through overwhelming force. These two opposites in the eternal settler debate are obviously inseparable and interwoven. By the National Labor Union's 1869 Convention the advocates of tactically embracing Afrikan workers had gained the upper hand, for there was serious trouble. Afrikan labor had gotten "out of control."

Throughout the Empire — but especially in their Nation — Afrikan workers were organizing their own unions, following their own leaders, launching their own strikes. In Richmond, Va. there were strikes by Afrikan stevedores and railroad workers and tobacco factory workers. On the heels of the 1867 strike wave throughout the South, Afrikan unions formed in city after city. In Savannah, Ga. the 1867 strike of Afrikan longshoremen forced the city government to lift a \$10 poll tax. In Charleston, S.C., they formed the powerful Colored Longshoremen's Protective Union Association, the strongest and most respected labor organization in that state. After winning a strike for better wages, the C.L.P.U.A. started helping other unions of Afrikan proletarians get organized. By 1869, state conventions of Afrikan unions were being held, following the call for the December, 1869, first convention of the National Colored Labor Union. This federation was intensely political, and 43

embraced Afrikan workers in all spheres of production, North and South. Longshoremen, carpenters, tenant farmers, printers, waiters, barbers, construction laborers, etc. were all united within it. Eventually it would have locals in 23 states.

Clearly, Euro-Amerikan labor was feeling the heat. Their colonial competitors were "out of control", building their *own* organizations to further their *own* interests. This had to be fought! The immediate decision was to warmly invite these Afrikan unions to join the white N.L.U., so that the settler unionists could mislead and undermine them. So at the 1869 N.L.U. Convention, for the first time, nine Afrikan union delegates were seated. As we might expect, the speeches and pledges of eternal brotherhood flowed like some intoxicating drink. In a scene reminiscent of the festive ceremonies that marked the signing of the early "peace" treaties between settlers and Indians, the convention became imbued with the spirit of unity. So much that an amazed *New York Times* reporter wrote:

"When a native Mississippian and an ex-confederate officer, in addressing a convention, refers to a colored delegate who has preceded him as 'the gentleman from Georgia', when a native Alabamian, who has for the first time crossed the Mason and Dixon line, and who was from boyhood taught to regard the Negro simply as chattel, sits in deliberate consultation with another delegate whose ebony face glistens with African sheen, and signs the report of his colored co-delegate, when an ardent and Democratic partisan (from New York at that\*) declares with a 'rich Irish brogue' that he asks for himself no privilege as a mechanic or a citizen that he is not willing to concede to every other man, white or black—when, I say, these things can be seen or heard at a national convention, called for any purpose, then one may indeed be warranted in asserting that time works curious changes."(46)

But the celebration of unity was short-lived. The white trade-unionists were, of course, only attempting to deceive Afrikan workers. Their invitation to "join" the N.L.U. simply meant that Afrikans would promise to honor all white strikes and organizing drives; in return, they would have the privilege of being consoled as white labor savagely and relentlessly annexed their jobs. The second aspect of this "unity" was that Afrikans would be expected to follow European labor in opposing democratic demands in the South and helping to restore the chains around their legs. The "integration" of the N.L.U. meant not only submission to European hegemony, but was virtually suicidal. Small wonder that Afrikans quickly parted ways with the N.L.U.(47)

While the N.L.U. had granted Afrikan organizations the privilege of affiliating with it as a federation, Afrikans themselves were barred out of the individual white trade-unions. **Every advance, therefore, of European trade-unionism meant the "clearing" of Afrikan workers out of another mill, factory, railroad, warehouse or dock.** The capitalist attack on Afrikan labor, begun in

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\* The reporter remarks on this because the Democratic Party was the pro-slavery party, and New York was infamous as the seat of some of the most vicious and violent anti-Afrikan mass sentiment.

the early 1830's, continued and gathered momentum. In the most celebrated single case, Lewis Douglass (the son of Frederick Douglass) was repeatedly denied admission to the Typographers' Union. A printer at the Government Printing Office, Douglass was not only denied by the local, but his appeals were turned down by two successive conventions of the Typographers' Union — and even by the entire N.L.U. convention.

It is important to realize how strongly and overwhelmingly Euro-American workers in the Civil War period supported the concept of a settler Empire—particularly as applied to guaranteeing white workers the right to annex the jobs that Afrikan, Chinese, Mexicano, and other oppressed labor had created. Of the 130 labor newspapers started between 1863-73, in the great upsurge of white labor, exactly one (1) supported even bourgeois democratic equality for Afrikans.(49) These insurgent journals represented the “best,” the most advanced trade-unionists in the settler Empire. Yet only one out of one-hundred-and-thirty supported democratic rights for Afrikans.

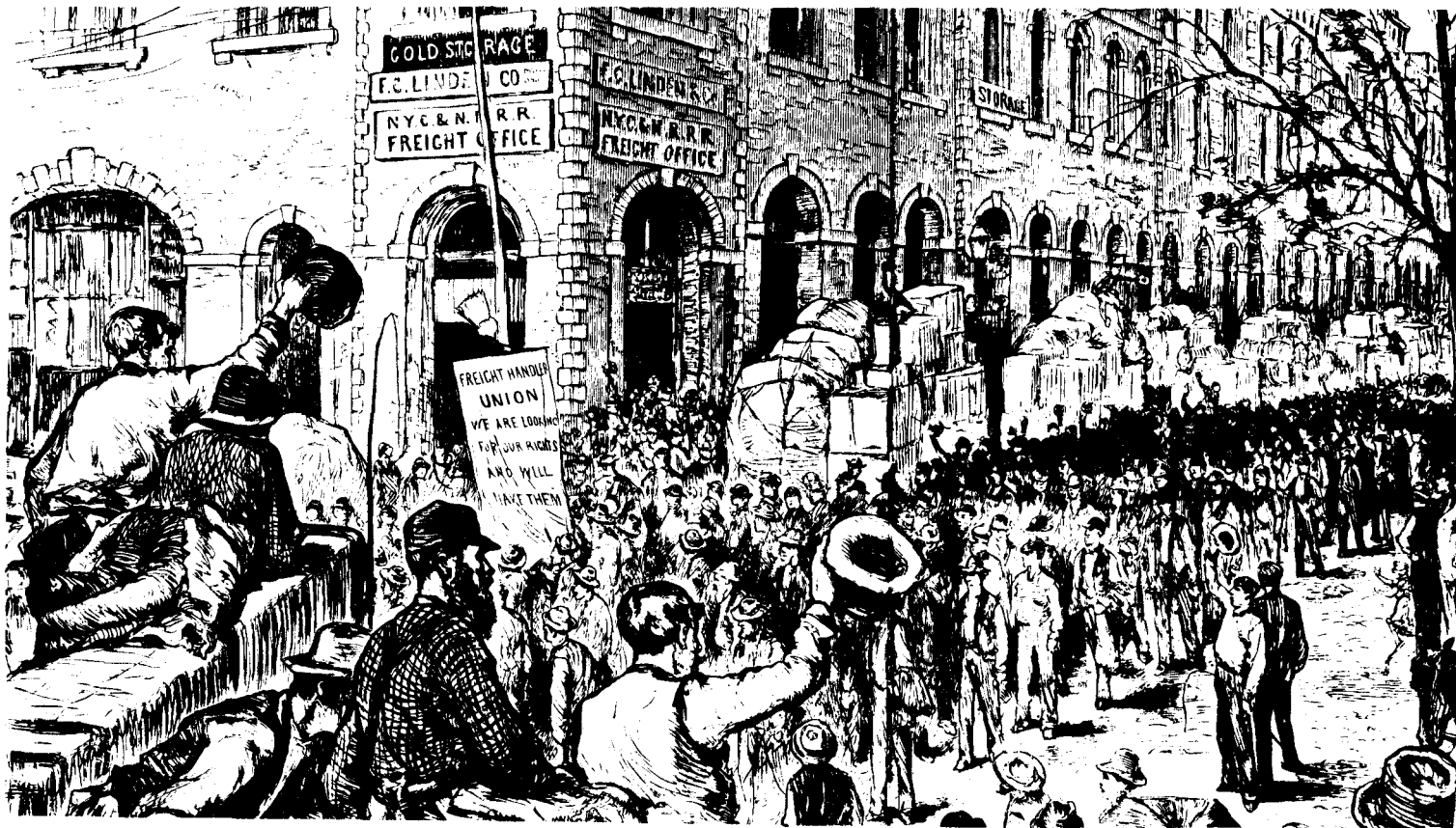
That lone journal, the *Boston Daily Evening Voice* of the Boston printing trades, opposed President Johnson, supported Afrikan admission to the unions, backed the demand for free land for Afrikans, and so on. Such principled views lost them so many subscribers that, in a last vain effort to stay afloat, the editors promised their readers that the newspaper would stop writing about Reconstruction

and the problems of Afrikans (saying that anyway that issue “is practically solved”).(50) Much more typical was the *St. Louis Daily Press*, again an alternative newspaper started by local printers during a strike. The *Press* was quite “progressive”; that is, it advocated the Eight-Hour Day, the Irish Revolution, equal rights for white women, the unity of European workers around the world—even printing long Marxist documents sent by the First International in Europe. It also opposed democratic rights for Afrikans, and called on white labor to drive “the niggers” out of all desirable jobs.(51)

No one is above the reality of history. Even the masses themselves are tested in the crucible, forged, tempered or broken in the class struggle. And not in side skirmishes or paper debates either, but in great battles upon which the future waits. The attempted rising of the Afrikan colonial masses — protracted, bitter, involving millions of desperate combatants — was such a pivotal event.

As the war raged on, carrying with it the hopes of whatever democratic forces existed within the Empire, thousands upon thousands of Afrikans gave their lives. In the growing defeats eventually the entire Afrikan Nation paid the blood price of reenslavement. How should we be impressed, then, when we learn that in that hour Northern white labor was trying to tell everyone that the *real, main issue was—a shorter work day!* If it were not so cowardly and treacherous, it would pass as comic relief.





## 5. The Contradictions of White Labor

The issue of a shorter work day spread enthusiastically among the white workers between 1866 and 1873. During these years the Eight-Hour Day struggle held first place in the activities of white labor. With considerable foresight, the leaders of the National Labor Union had seen the need for such a single issue to unite and discipline their immature followers. At the founding Convention of the N.L.U. in Baltimore, on August 20, 1866, the call was sent forth for all white workingmen in every region, trade and industry to combine on this one front: *"...the first and great necessity of the present to free the labor of this country from capitalistic slavery is the passing of a law by which eight hours shall be the normal working day in all states of the American union."*(52)

Throughout the '60s and early '70s the Eight-Hour Day Movement grew, with immigrant German socialists playing a leading role in organizing "Eight Hour Leagues" in all the major cities of the Empire.(53) Literally millions took part in the strikes, parades and rallies. By 1868 six states, led by California, a number of cities, and the Federal government had passed Eight-Hour Day laws (the last only applying to Federal employees). In 1872, when the New York City building trades won a three-month strike for the Eight-Hour Day, a festive parade of 150,000 white workmen took over the main streets of the city.(54)

But this campaign folded like wet cardboard during the Depression of 1873-78, when it turned out that the capitalists had no intention of honoring any promises, 45

agreements or laws. The white trade-unionists found their hours of toil increasing while their pay was steadily slashed. Not until the C.I.O. and New Deal in the 1930's would white workers attain their goal of the Eight-Hour Day.

Defeat, however, is not the same thing as failure; the Eight-Hour campaign was a success for white labor. It was a new stage of unity, the first, Empire-wide, coast-to-coast political campaign. As such it marked the historic point where the swelling settler masses emerged upwards from their earlier, pre-industrial, small craft consciousness—and entered the industrial age.

That campaign was the first time white labor actually achieved a broad, national unity in action. This was evident at the time. Alexander Kennady, head of the San Francisco Trades Assembly and a leader of both the Eight-Hour campaign and the National Labor Union, said: *"...By far the most important result of this eight hour agitation—to those who look forward to the day when labor, organized and effectively drilled, shall assume its legitimate sphere in the body politic—is visible in the marked improvement in the character of the men engaged in the movement. A few years ago the working population of California were in a chaotic state—disorganized, and at the mercy of the capitalists—with very rare exceptions. Today, nearly every branch of skilled industry has its own union, fixing its own rate of wages, and regulating its domestic differences. A spirit of independence, and a feeling of mutual confidence inspire its members..."*(55)



8-Hour Day Movement, New York--1872

Of course, when Kennady talks about "the working population" he isn't referring to Mexicanos, Chinese, Indians, or Afrikans—he is only discussing white settlers. When he proudly points out how "every branch of skilled industry has its own union", he means unions of white workers. While he refers to these new unions taking care of "domestic differences", it is interesting that he fails to mention the trade-union role in the primary labor conflict of the time—the drive by the white unions to annex the jobs of oppressed workers. This is a curiously right-wing result from such a supposedly "class-conscious" labor campaign.

This contradiction sums up the Eight-Hour struggle (and the great strike wave of 1873-77). The Eight-Hour demand was not only righteous, but it was a demand that hit home to working people across the widest variety of in-

dustries, trades, and nationalities—it became the first truly international campaign of European workers, as the First International spread it to England, France and all of Europe. The largest single Eight-Hour demonstration was not in Europe or the U.S., however, but was in Manila; Filipino workers defied the Spanish colonial authorities and struck in a massive rally of one million. Many Afrikan, Mexicano and Chinese workers responded militantly to the call for the Eight-Hour struggle, and in some areas Afrikan workers took an early lead in stirring up action. But the campaign, instead of *uniting* working people, furthered *disunity*.

It was no coincidence that no sooner had the early victories of the Eight-Hour campaign unified and strengthened white labor in California then they began *stepping up the attack against Chinese workers*. Nor is it true that the Eight-Hour campaign was the work of noble, class-conscious trade-unionists, while the anti-Chinese and anti-Afrikan campaigns were the work of some totally separate bands of declassed hoodlums and bigots. Both were the acts of the *same* hands. All of the individual craft unions, the large federations such as the National Labor Union and the Knights of Labor, the local trades assemblies, the labor press, the left organizations such as the Socialist Labor Party and the Communist-led General German Working Men's Association, were involved in these white supremacist offensives.

Unlike the experience of other nations, the Eight-Hour campaign in the U.S. Empire had an anti-democratic character, consolidating the settler masses around pro-capitalist politics. In regard to the pivotal struggle of Black Reconstruction, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the Eight-Hour Day activists were in the camp of the



Thomas Nast

Anti-Chinese cartoon by Thomas Nast, famous "reform" cartoonist--1870

enemy. While “only” a minority of a few hundreds of thousands were personally active in killing and reenslaving Afrikans, they committed their crimes *with the support of the rest* of their white kith and kin. Those “advanced” workers (particularly the German socialist and radical exiles) who loudly sympathized with the plight of the ex-slaves, didn’t stop for one hour in their headlong rush to unite with the white supremacist mobs. It was as if witness to a criminal attack were to loudly bemoan the injuries done to the victim—while trying to convince the criminals that they should become partners! The Eight-Hour campaign, the “Anti-Coolie” and anti-Afrikkan campaigns were not separate and unconnected events, **but linked chapters in the development of the same movement of white labor.**

This young movement, for all its anti-capitalist noises, was unable to resist being drawn deeper and deeper into bourgeois politics. As the National Labor Union was having its first convention and first issuing the call for the Eight-Hour campaign, five representatives of the new organization were meeting with President Andrew Johnson to solicit his support. And when he threw out a gesture towards white labor by ordering the workday for Government printers cut to eight hours, he was hailed as the true friend of the white masses. The leading union newspaper *National Workman* of New York City praised his “practical sympathy with labor”. The Philadelphia Trades Council described his administration as “...for the benefit of the working classes”. When the N.L.U. attacked Black Reconstruction, it was clearly carrying out its part of an unholy alliance with President Johnson—who was the newfound champion of the defeated planter class.(56)

If the National Labor Union had begun life with an uncertain attitude towards class struggle—and a desire for the quick “fix” of bourgeois political deals—by 1872 it was wholly given over to these illnesses. It completely abandoned mass struggle; instead, the N.L.U. promoted a “National Labor Reform Party” to compete with the Democrats and Republicans. This abortive party was so opportunistic and malformed that it nominated Charles O’Connor, a well-known advocate of slavery, as its Presidential candidate in the 1872 elections.(57) The N.L.U. itself perished in this fiasco. But the class outlook it represented continued and flourished.

In this period white labor, although still young, took definite shape. Euro-American labor increasingly found itself pressed to organize, to fight the employers, to demand from the bourgeois state some relief from exploitation and some democratic rights. At the same time, these white workingmen were also a part of settler society, and felt their welfare tied up with the supremacy of the Empire. Further, pressed downward by Capital, they sought to establish a stranglehold on jobs by ruthlessly degrading or eliminating colonial labor. This consciousness was very sharply manifested in the 1870’s, when these white workingmen became the eager tools of various factions in the bourgeoisie in the mass drives to reenslave Afrikans and drive out Chinese—at the same time engaging in the most vigorous and militant strike waves against the bourgeoisie.

This was a middle position—between the colonial proletariat and the settler bourgeoisie—and it had its 47

roots in the middle position of these white masses in the class structure. It is important to see why white labor could only unite on a petit-bourgeois and opportunistic basis.

While white labor had tacked together a precarious political unity based on the commonalities of wage-status and settlerism, it was as yet so divided that it did not even constitute a class. In brief, we can point to four main aspects of this: 1) White workingmen were sharply divided by nationality 2) The upper stratum of workmen, which contained most of the native-born Americans”, had a definite petit-bourgeois character 3) Even the bottom, most exploited layer—who were largely new European immigrants—were politically retarded by the fact that their wages were considerably higher than in Old Europe 4) Immigrant labor did not constitute a single, united proletarian class itself because they were part of separate national communities (German, Swedish, etc.) each headed by their own bourgeois leaders.

The “native-born” settlers, as the citizen descendants of the original English invasion force, still kept for themselves a high, general level of privileges. They still thought of themselves as the only true “Americans”, while considering the non-Anglo-Saxon, new immigrants as “foreigners” only a step better than Afrikans or Mexicans. Among these “native-born” settlers petit-bourgeois, property-owning and small tradesman status was the norm, and even wage-laborers confidently expected to move upwards once they mastered the knack of exploiting others. Engels noted in 1886:

*“There were two factors which for a long time prevented the inevitable consequences of the capitalist system in America from being revealed in their true light. These were the access to ownership of cheap land and the flood of immigrants. They enable the great mass of indigenous Americans, for years on end, to ‘retire’ from wage-labor at an early age and to become farmers, dealers, or even entrepreneurs, whereas the hard lot of the wage-laborer with his status of proletarian for life, fell mostly on the immigrant.”(58)*

Thus the Irish, Polish, Italian, etc. immigrants had the honor of replacing Afrikans, Mexicanos, Indians and Asians as the primary labor force of the U.S. Empire in the North. **But the position of “native-born”, Anglo-Saxon settlers changed little if at all. The “native-born” settler masses were still above the nationally-differentiated proletarians,** still small property-owners and small businessmen, still foremen, overseers, and skilled craftsmen.

The European immigrant workers, who were promoted to be the new, more loyal proletariat of the U.S. Empire, were themselves very divided and confused. Amerika as it entered the industrial age was a literal Tower of Babel. In the hellish brutality of the mines, mills and factories, the bourgeoisie had assembled gangs of workers from many different nations—torn away from their native lands, desperate, and usually not even speaking a common language with each other. Engels noted the importance of these national barriers:

*“...immigration...divides the workers into groups — native-and foreign-born, and the latter into: (1)*

Irish, (2) German, and (3) many small groups, the members of each of which can only understand one another, namely, Czechs, Poles, Italians, Scandinavians, etc. And then we must add the Negroes... Sometimes there is a powerful élan; however, the bourgeoisie need merely hold out passively for the heterogeneous elements of the working masses to fall apart again.”(59)

And as wretched and bitter as life in Amerika was for white workers on the bottom of settler society, it was *still far, far better* than life back in Old Europe. The Irish, for example, who became the bulk of the unskilled white labor, were used up under virtually inhuman conditions. Contemporary accounts of the 19th century usually emphasize how Irish laborers on the New York canals, the coal pits of Pennsylvania, the railroads across the Plains states, etc. were kept drunk on cheap whiskey by the labor contractors and overseers, so that they could endure their miserable lives. Along the Mississippi gangs of Irish laborers drained malarial swamps and built levees for one dollar per day and whiskey. An overseer explained: “It was much better to have the Irish do it, who cost nothing to the planter if they died, than to use up good field-hands in such severe employment.”(60) While it is hard for us today to imagine that this could be *better* than life in colonial Ireland, it was. In 1846 alone some *one million* Irish died from famine. Those who emigrated did so under sure sentence of death as the alternative.

Even for those on the bottom stratum of white wage-labor the actual wages were significantly higher than in Old Europe. Rural farm laborers, usually the worst-paid of workers, earned a much better wage in the U.S. Empire. Marx, as we remember, pointed out in this period that: “Now, all of you know that the average wages of the American agricultural laborer amount to more than double that of the English agricultural laborer...”

Further, as European immigrants or poor Euro-Amerikans they were still eligible for the privileges of settlerism—and if not for them, then for their children. While this was markedly true for poor whites in the South, it applied with a few modifications throughout the Empire. DuBois points out:

“It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them...”(61)

The other powerful moderating force upon the bottom, immigrant layers of white wage-labor is that they were part of immigrant, national-minority communities here in the “New World”. And these communities had their own culture, class structure and leadership. The German and Scandinavian immigrant communities were on the whole fairly prosperous, with a very high degree of

business- and property-ownership. The vast farming lands of the upper Midwest and the Plains states were in large measure settled by these two nationalities—the 1900 census revealed that there were 700,000 German- and Scandinavian-owned farms in the Empire then, more than *three times* the number owned by “native-born” Anglo-Saxon Amerikans.(62)

The question of the bourgeois leadership of immigrant workers is very clearly shown by the Irish here. Nor was this disconnected with settlerism. The community leaders of the Irish national minority here were not revolutionary proletarians, but ward politicians, police chiefs, mayors, the Roman Catholic Church, etc.. It is hardly a secret that during the mid-1800s the Irish workers of the North, under the leadership of the Church and other bourgeois elements, were surpassed by none in their vicious hatred of Afrikans. The Archdiocese of New York City, for example, publicly opposed Emancipation and undoubtedly helped create the anti-Afrikian riots that took thousands of lives during the Civil War.

It is interesting that Irish patriots, themselves engaged in the bloody armed struggle to throw off British colonialism, saw from across the Atlantic that their countrymen here were being led into taking the reactionary road. In 1841 some 70,000 Irish patriots signed a revolutionary petition to Irish-Amerikans: “Irishmen and Irishwomen, treat the colored people as your equals, as brethren. By all your memories of Ireland, continue to love Liberty—hate Slavery—*Cling by the Abolitionists*—and in America you will do honor to the name of Ireland.”(63) Despite mass meetings organized to generate support for this message of international solidarity, the full weight of the Catholic Church, and Irish ward politicians and trade-union leaders kept the Irish immigrant masses firmly loyal to reaction.

There was, of course, then as now a powerful national tie here towards their captive homeland. Twice the Fenian Brotherhood tried military invasions of Canada (in 1866 and 1870), trying to force loose the British deathgrip on Ireland.(64) Even after many defeats, Irish patriots and funds continued to pour into “the Cause”. The modern submarine, for example, was developed by the secret Irish Clan here, and only later turned over to the U.S. Navy. Irish P.O.W.s exiled to Australia were liberated in a spectacular raid across the Pacific. So wide-spread was the enthusiasm for this daring attempt in the Irish-American community here than an Irish-American U.S. Senator offered to get a U.S. Customs ship for the raid if no private vessel could be obtained!(65) This only underlines the process at work. The genuine national feeling towards colonial Ireland was taken over by bourgeois elements, who shaped it in bourgeois nationalist directions, and who used the appeal of “the Cause” to promote their own political careers and pocketbooks. This is still true today.

What international solidarity means can be seen by the actions of the Patricio Corps, the hundreds of Irish soldiers in the U.S. Army who broke with the Empire during the Mexican-American War. Revolted at the barbaric invasion of 1848, they defected to the Mexican forces and *took up arms against the U.S. Empire*. In contrast, the struggle of the Irish-American community here for equality with other settlers was nothing more nor less than a push

to *join* the oppressor nation, to *enlist* in the ranks of the Empire. The difference is the difference between revolution and reaction.

The victorious U.S. Army inflicted barbaric punishment on any of these European soldiers who had defected that they later caught. Some eighty Irish and other Europeans were among the Mexican Army prisoners after the battle of Churubusco in 1847. Of these eighty the victorious settlers branded fifteen with the letter "D," fifteen were lashed two hundred times each with whips, and then forced to dig graves for the rest who were shot down.(66)

The U.S. Empire, then, at the dawn of industrialization, had two broad strata of white wage-labor: one a true Euro-Amerikan labor aristocracy, totally petit-bourgeois in life and outlook; the second, an "ethnic," nationally-differentiated stratum of immigrant Europeans and poor whites of the defeated Confederacy, who were both heavily exploited and yet given the bare privileges of settlerism to keep them loyal to the U.S. Empire. Once nationally-oppressed labor was under the bourgeoisie's brutal thumb, then white wage-labor could be put into its "proper" place. In the wake of the great strike wave of 1873-77, the white unions were severely repressed and broken up. The mass organizations of white labor, once so sure of their strength when they were dining at the White House and attacking Afrikan, Mexicano and Chinese labor at the bidding of the capitalists, now found themselves powerless when faced with the blacklist, the lock-out, and the deadly gunfire of company police and the National Guard.

In taking over the tasks of the colonial proletariat, the new white laboring masses found themselves increasingly subject to the violent repression and exploitation that capitalism inexorably subjects the proletariat to. Thus, the industrial age developed here with this crucial contradiction: The U.S. Empire was founded as a European settler society of privileged conquerors, and the new white masses could not be both savagely exploited proletarians and also

loyal, privileged settlers. As the tremendous pressures of industrial capitalism started molding them into a new proletariat—which we will examine in the next section—a fundamental crisis was posed for Amerikan capitalism.

The experience of early trade-unionism in the U.S. is extremely valuable to us. It showed that:

1. Trade-unionism cannot bridge the gap between oppressor and oppressed nations.
2. Moreover, that even among Euro-Amerikans, unionism, political movements, etc. inescapably have a *national character*.
3. The organization of nationally oppressed workers into or allied with the trade-unions of the settler masses was only an effort to *control and divide us*.
4. That the unity of the settler masses is counter-revolutionary, in that the various privileged strata of the white masses can only find common ground in petty self-interest and loyalty to settler hegemony.
5. That whatever "advanced" or democratic-minded Euro-Amerikans do exist need to be *dis-united* from their fellow settlers, rather than welded back into the whole lock-stepping, reactionary white mass by the usual reform movements.
6. That trade-unionism became a perverted mockery of its original self in a settler society, where even wage-labor became corrupted. The class antagonism latent within the settler masses had, in times of crisis, been submerged in the increased oppression of the colonial peoples. Capitalistic settlerism drastically reworked the very face of the land. A continent that was at the dawn of the 19th Century primarily populated by the various oppressed nations was at the end of the 19th Century the semi-sterilized home of a "New Europe". And in this cruel, bloody transformation, history forced everyone to choose, and thus to complete the realization of their class identity. Class is not like a brass badge or a diploma, which can be carried from Old Europe and hung on a wall, dusty but still intact. Class consciousness lives in the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed—or dies in the poisonous little privileges so eagerly sought by the settler servants of the bourgeoisie.



On the other hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeois and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into “eternal” parasites on the body of mankind, to “rest on the laurels” of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent weapons of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labor movement will now inevitably develop.

V.I. Lenin



El Grito de Lares, 23 de septiembre 1868 50

# V. COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM & LABOR ARISTOCRACY

## 1. The “Bourgeois Proletariat”

Communism has always had to fight against not only the bourgeoisie, but also the very real opposition of some strata and masses of workers who have become corrupted and reactionary. Thus, the hostility revolutionary trends face here is neither new nor a puzzle for communist theory. In England, South Afrika, etc. the communist forces have had to recognize this opposition. Marx, Engels, Lenin — all emphasized how important this question was. It is an essential part of the world fight against imperialism.

To begin with, our criticism of the historically negative role of the settler masses here is no more pointed than Friedrich Engel's statements a century ago about the English working class. Communists have never believed that the working class was some “holy,” religious object that must be enshrined away from scientific investigation. Lenin on his own part several times purposefully reminded his European comrades that the original “proletariat” — of Imperial Rome — did not work, but was supported by the surpluses of slave labor. As the lowest free class of Roman citizens, their only duty was to father new soldiers for the Roman Legions (which is why they were called “proletarii” in Latin) while they lived off government subsidies. (1) The political consciousness and material class role of the masses of any given nation cannot be assumed from historic generalizations, but must be discovered by social investigation and scientific analysis.

The phenomenon of the various capitalist ruling classes buying off and politically corrupting some portions of their own wage-laboring populations begins with the European colonial systems. The British workers of the 1830's and 1840's were becoming increasingly class-conscious. An early, pre-Marxian type of socialism (Owenism) had caused much interest, and the massive Chartist movement rallied millions of workers to demand democratic rights. Alarmed at this — and warned by the armed, democratic insurrections in 1848 in both France and Germany — the British capitalists grudgingly decided that the immense profits of their colonial empire allowed them to ease up slightly on the exploitation at home.

This tossing of a few crumbs to the British workers resulted in a growing ideological stagnation, conservatism and national chauvinism. Engels was outraged and disgusted, particularly at the corrupt spectacle of the British workers slavishly echoing their bourgeoisie as to

their alleged “right” to exploit the colonial world “...There is no workers' party here...and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies.”

In 1858 Engels sarcastically described the tamed British workers in the bluntest terms: “The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is to a certain extent justifiable.” (2) Britain was the Imperial Rome, the Amerikan Empire of that day — a nation which “feasted” on the exploitation of colonies around the entire world. Engels, as a communist, didn't make lame excuses for the corrupted English workers, but exposed them. He held the English workers accountable to the world proletariat for their sorry political choices.

This was not a matter of English factory hands suddenly wearing gold jewelry and “designer jeans.” The change was historic: it raised the English masses past the bare floor of survival. As we discussed earlier, in the early stages of capitalist development the bourgeoisie exploited the English workers to the point of early death. Workers, women and children in particular, were overworked and starved as disposable and easily replaced objects.

The change didn't mean that English workers as a whole weren't exploited — just that their exploitation was lightened in the golden flow of colonial profits. In 1840 the wages of an “ordinary laborer” in England were 8 shillings per week, while it cost some 14 shillings per week to live on a minimal but stable basis. By 1875 both the common wages and the cost of living were up to 15 shillings per week — an event that historian Arnold Toynbee points to as the first time in British capitalist history that unskilled laborers earned enough to survive. At the same time reform legislation sponsored by the big factory owners placed restrictions on the use of child labor. The length of the working day declined. At both Jarron Shipyards and the New Castle Chemical Works, for example, workers succeeded in lowering the work week from 61 to 54 hours. (3)

51 In 1892 Engels explained that the prolonged conservatism of the English workers was due to this generaliz-

ed bribery: *"The truth is this: during the period of England's industrial monopoly, the English working class have, to a certain extent, shared in the benefits of monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out amongst them; the privileged minority pocketed most, but even the great mass had, at least, a temporary share now and then. And that is the reason why, since the dying out of Owenism, there has been no socialism in England."* (4)

Engels divides the workers into two groups — the "privileged minority" of the labor aristocrats, and the "great mass" of common wage-labor. While the labor aristocracy engages in wage-labor and grows up out of the working class, it is no longer exploited. Rather, the bourgeoisie shares with this privileged layer a part of the superprofits from colonial exploitation. Typically, these labor aristocrats are trade-union officials, certain white-collar employees, foremen, the well-paid members of the restrictive craft unions, etc.. They often supervise or depend upon the labor of ordinary workers, while they themselves do little or no toil.

This stratum can also include groupings of workers who are employed directly by the state, who work in the colonial system, in war industries, etc. and who therefore have a special loyalty to the bourgeoisie. The aristocracy of labor have comfortable lives, and in general associate with the petit-bourgeoisie.

The "great mass" of English workers were, in contrast, certainly exploited. They lived lives of hardship. Yet, they had in their own lifetimes seen an uneven but upward trend in their wages and working conditions — a rise dependent upon the increasing profits of the overseas em-

pire. Under the leadership of the aristocracy of labor — who were looked up to as the most "successful," best-organized and most unionized layer of the class — these ordinary laborers increasingly indentified their own progress with the progress of "their" British empire.

Engels felt in the late 1890's that this might be only a temporary phenomenon — and one limited to England by and large. He thought that with the growth of rival industrial empires and the sharpening of European capitalist competition, the super-profits that supported this bribery might dwindle. Exactly the reverse happened, however. With the coming of imperialism and the tremendous rise of the most modern colonial empires, the trend of social bribery of the working classes spread from England to France, Germany, Belgium, etc. Between the fall of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the eve of World War I in 1913, real per capita income in both England and Germany doubled. (5)

In 1907 Lenin wrote:

"The class of those who own nothing but do not labor either is incapable of overthrowing the exploiters. Only the proletarian class, which maintains the whole of society, has the power to bring about a successful social revolution. And now we see that, as the result of a far-reaching colonial policy, the European proletariat has partly reached a situation where it is *not* its work that maintains the whole of society but that of the people of the colonies who are practically enslaved. The British bourgeoisie, for example, derives more profit from the many millions of the population of India and other colonies than from the British workers. In certain countries these circumstances create the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat of one country or another with colonial chauvinism." (6)



Imperialism allowed the European workers — once much more exploited and revolutionary than their Amerikan cousins — to catch up in privileges and degeneracy. Lenin said that imperialism gives the bourgeoisie enough “super-profits” to “devote a part (and not a small one at that!) to bribe their own workers, to create something like an alliance...between the workers of a given nation and their capitalists...”

The pro-imperialist labor aristocracy — which in 1914 Lenin estimated at roughly 20% of the German working class — were the leaders of the German trade-unions, the “socialist” party, etc..Using their state-sanctioned positions they led millions of workers in the more proletarian strata. This labor aristocracy succeeded in sabotaging the revolutionary movements in Western Europe, and disrupting unity between the anti-colonial revolutions and the workers of the oppressed nations.

We can sum up key lessons in this theoretical development of analyzing social bribery in the imperialist oppressor nations:

1. Lenin’s insistence on a total break with those “socialists” who were unwilling to support the anti-colonial revolutions in deeds was proven correct. The shallow argument that “racist” European workers would be brought to revolutionary enlightenment by union activity and reformist economic movements (the same arguments preached here in Amerika) was proven to be totally untrue.

While in every mass there are those who have backward or chauvinistic prejudices in the yet-to-be-cleaned corners of their minds, Lenin insisted that this was not the primary problem. Under imperialism “racist” politics were an outward manifestation of a class “alliance” with the imperialists.

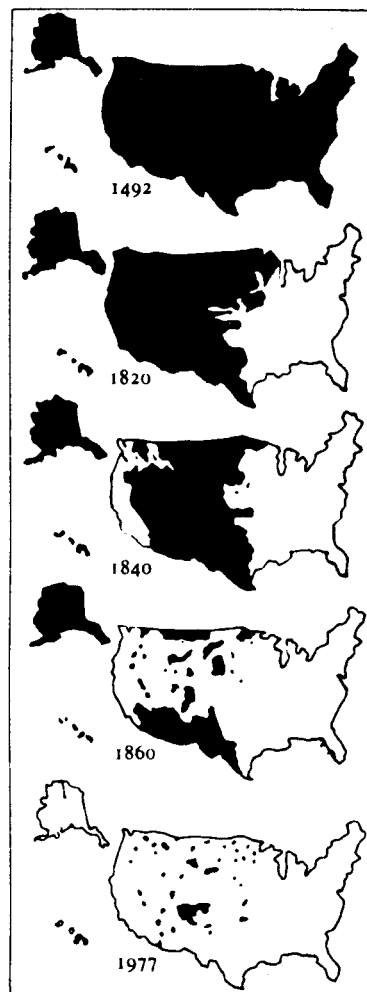
2. This labor aristocracy of bribed workers is not neutral, but is fighting for its capitalist masters. Therefore, they must be combatted, just like the army or police (who are the military base of the imperialists, while the labor aristocracy is its social base). Lenin told his comrades: “No preparation of the proletariat for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is possible, even in the preliminary sense, unless an immediate, systematic, extensive and open struggle is waged against this stratum...”

3. When the new communist movement was formed, it was greatly outnumbered and out-organized everywhere in Europe outside of Russia. Lenin’s answer was concise: Since the bribed, pro-imperialist masses were primarily the upper, privileged layers of workers, the communists in order to combat them had to “go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses.” And again he noted: “...the sufferings, miseries, and revolutionary sentiments of the ruined and impoverished masses”; he pointed to “...particularly those who are least organized and educated, who are most oppressed and least amenable to organization.” (We might say that he shared the same perception that Malcolm X had of where to find a base for revolution.)

On the global scale Lenin’s strategy of “go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses” meant that the communist movement became truly internationalist, organizing the masses of Asia, Latin Amerika and Afrika — the

#### INDIAN LAND WITHIN UNITED STATES

*In 1492, 541 Indian nations — approximately 10 million people — lived in what is now the United States. The U.S. government ratified 371 treaties with these Indian nations between 1776 and 1871. Chief Red Cloud of the Lakota said: “They made many promises to us, but they only kept one: they promised to take our land, and they took it.” The modern American Indian Movement has sought to restore the Indian land base by demanding that the United States honor its treaty obligations with the Indian nations.*



“real masses” of imperialism. Near the end of his life, noting the unexpected setbacks in revolutionizing Western Europe, Lenin remarked that in any case of the future of the world would be decided by the fact that the oppressed nations constitute the overwhelming majority of the world’s population.

4. The analysis of the labor aristocracy under imperialism helps deepen the understanding of our own varied struggles, and the evolution of the U.S. Empire in general.

As the U.S. Empire jumped into the imperialist “scramble” for world domination at the turn of the 20th century, its Euro-Amerikan workers were the most privileged in the entire capitalist world. In 1900 labor in Amerika was sharply divided into three very separate and

*nationally-distinct* strata (literally, of different nations — Euro-Amerikan, European and oppressed nations).

**On top was the labor aristocracy of Euro-Amerikan workers, who dominated the better-paid craft trades and their restrictive A.F.L. unions. This “privileged stratum” of “native-born” citizens comprised roughly 25% of the industrial workforce, and edged into the ranks of their petit-bourgeois neighbors, (foremen, small tradesmen, and so on).**

Below them was a new proletarian stratum just imported from Eastern and Southern Europe, who comprised 50-75% of the Northern industrial workforce. They were poorly paid and heavily exploited, the main factory production force of the North. Largely unorganized, they were systematically barred from the craft unions and the better-paying factory jobs. This stratum was composed of non-citizens, was only a generation old here, and had no previous existence. The very bottom, upholding everything else, were the colonial proletariats of Afrikan, Mexicano, Indian and Asian workers.

Even as modern industrialization and the Northern factory boom were in full swing, it was still true that the “super-profits” wrung from the oppressed nations (plus those wrung from imported labor from Asia) were the foundations of the Empire. Everything “American” was built up on top of their continuing oppression.

In the Afrikan South cotton was still “king.” The Afrikan laborers (whether hired, renter or share-cropper) who produced the all-important cotton still supported the entire settler economy. Between 1870-1910 cotton production had gone up by three times, while domestic cotton usage had gone up by 600% — and “king cotton” still was the leading U.S. export product (25% of all exports). The number of Afrikan men in agriculture in agriculture had increased, and in 1914 some 50% of all Afrikan workers labored in the fields. Afrikan women not only worked in the fields, as did their children, but they involuntarily continued cleaning, cooking, washing clothes and child-raising for the upper half of Euro-Amerikan families. Over 40% of the entire Afrikan workforce was still bound into domestic labor — maintaining for the Southern settlers their conquest lifestyle.

The growing Euro-Amerikan masses in the South had benefited from the fact that Afrikans had been gradually forced out of industry and the skilled trades. While roughly 80% of all skilled workers in the South had been Afrikan in 1868, by 1900 those proportions had been reversed. In the more localized construction trades Afrikans still hung on (comprising 15% of carpenters and 36% of masons), but in the desirable mechanical trades, associated now with rising industry, they were excluded. Only 2% of machinists in the South, for example, were Afrikan. On the Southern railroads, where Afrikans once predominated — and as late as 1920 still accounted for 20-25% of all firemen, brakemen and switchman — the 1911 Atlanta Agreement between Southern railroads and the A.F.L. Railroad Brotherhoods called for the gradual replacement of all Afrikans by settlers. (7)

Even the jobs in the new textile mills were reserved for “poor whites” forced off the land. So that settler labor in the South — however exploited — was grateful to the

bourgeoisie for every little privilege they got. The settler masses of the South, in the tradition of the slave patrols, the Confederate Army and the K.K.K., were still in the main the loyal garrison over occupied New Afrika.

Even though the Empire tried to use industry to build up a settler occupation population, Afrikan labor was necessary as the super-exploited base of Southern industry. In lumber they made up the bottom half of the workforce. In the coal mines of Alabama they were 54% of the miners at the turn of the century. In the Southern iron and steel mills we find that in 1907 Afrikans still made up 40% of the workers. (8)

In the Mexicano Southwest the same basic foundation of oppressed nation labor was present (together with Asian labor). Native Amerikan workers were present throughout the region — on cattle and sheep ranches, in the fields and in the mines. Navaho miners, for example, played an active role in building the Western Federation of Miners local at the great Telluride, Colorado mines. Asian labor played an equally important role. Although much of the Chinese national minority had been driven by repression out of the U.S. or to retreat into the “ghetto” economy of laundries, food service, etc., new waves of Asian workers were being recruited from Japan, the Philippines and Korea. By the many thousands they toiled on the railroads, the urban “service” economy, in canneries, and above all, in the fields.

Much less industrialized and economically developed than the North (or even the South), the Southwestern economy rested on agriculture and mining. The migrant farm laborers of the “factories in the fields” were not marginal, but the economic mainstay of the Southwest. In the key agricultural area of Southern California the majority of farm labor was Chicano-Mexicano.

Because the Southwest was much more recently conquered than other regions of the continental Empire, the labor situation was far less developed in a modern industrial sense. Armed Chicano-Mexicano resistance organizations against settler rule continued well into the 1920s. The Euro-Amerikan settlers were in general wary of concentrating masses of Mexicanos, and long into the 20th century the main interest of many “Anglo” settlers was the continuing, terroristic seizure of the remaining lands and water-rights of the Chicano-Mexicano and Indian nations. Thus, the settler economy in the Southwest even in the imperialist era was still concentrated in the conquest and looting stage. Here the conquered Chicano-Mexicanos were necessary to the settlers as ranch labor and domestic labor (just as in the rural South with Afrikans).

But at the turn of the century the development of railroad systems, of large-scale commercial agriculture, and of extensive mining were also creating the imperialist need for increased masses of cheap laborers. Thousands and then tens of thousand of Mexicano workers were brought Northward to fill this need. By 1909 on both the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads some 98% of the crews working west of Albuquerque were Chicano-Mexicano. While varying mixtures of Mexicano, Indian, and immigrant European nationalities were used in the mines, Mexicano labor played the largest role. In mines

closest to the artificial "border," Mexicano workers were often a large majority — such as in the major copper center of Clifton, Arizona. Once driven out of much of the West by settler terrorism, Mexicanos were now being brought back to their own national land as "immigrant" or "contract" labor. Mexicanos became 60% of the miners, 80% of the agricultural workers, and 90% of the railroad laborers in the West. (9) Thus, in the West the importance of colonial labor was rapidly growing.

In terms of income and lifestyle it is easy to see the gulf between the labor of the oppressor nation of settlers, imported European national minorities, and the colonial labor of the oppressed nations and minorities. The Afrikan tenant family usually lived in debt slavery, laboring as a family for little more than some food, a few clothes and use of a shack. Those Chicano-Mexicano families trapped in the Texas peonage system earned just as little.

One Texas rancher testified in 1914: *"I was paying Pancho and his whole family 60 cents a day... There were no hours; he worked from sun to sun."* As late as the 1920s Afrikan farm laborers in the South earned 75 cents per day when employed. For both Afrikans and Mexicanos at the turn of the century, even in industry and mining it was

common to earn one-half of "white man's pay."

One step up from this was the Northern industrial proletariat from Eastern and Southern Europe — newly created, heavily exploited, but whose ultimate relationship to the imperialists was still uncertain. The "Hunky" and "Dago" commonly earned \$6-10 per week in the early 1900's, for six and seven day work weeks.

One giant level up from there was the "privileged stratum" of Euro-American labor aristocrats (skilled workers, foremen, office staff). They usually earned \$15-20 per week, with the majority being homeowners and voting citizens of the Empire.

This top stratum dominated the trade unions and the socialist organizations, consistently supporting the U.S. Empire. Bribed and helped to be the imperialist leadership of all white workers as a whole, they sabotaged any militant outbreaks in the industrial ranks. Always they prevented any internationalist unity between white workers and the colonial proletariats. It is with this background (and being able to trace the continuing role of social bribery) that we can begin to examine settler mass politics in the imperialist era.



## 2. Settler Opposition To Imperialism

There have always been significant contradictions among the settlers, and even in the earliest stages of imperialism we have seen conflicts between the monopoly capitalists and their settler base. While the U.S. was an empire just as soon as it started to breathe, the "Spanish-American War" of 1898 marked this early settler empire's transition into Imperialism. The pivotal nature of this imperialist war was well-understood by the settler citizenry of that earlier day, and it caused not only a great public debate but an angry split in the settler ranks. The well organized mass movement of settlers opposed to imperialism then foreshadowed the Anti-Vietnam War movement of our times. These are important contradictions.

In the brief 1898 war, the U.S. easily removed Puerto-Rico, the Philippines, and Cuba from the feeble hands of the aging Spanish Empire. This armed robbery was so effortless because the Spanish bourgeoisie had already lost most of their former power over these colonies, due to both their own weakness and to the rise of national liberation movements. On Sept. 23, 1868, at Lares, Puerto Rican patriots proclaimed the first Republic of Puerto Rico amidst an armed uprising against the Spanish occupiers. Although crushed, the "cry of Lares" marks the start of an unbroken history of patriotic warfare by the Puerto Rican people.

Increasingly, the Puerto Rican forces controlled not only the mountains, but also the rural areas right up to the towns of the isolated Spanish garrisons. Finally, in 1897, the desperate Spanish empire agreed in negotiations with Puerto Rican representatives to a Charter of Autonomy. This recognized the power of the Puerto Rican nation to set up its own currency, fix tariffs on imports, negotiate trade agreements with other nations, and veto if they wished any Spanish diplomatic treaties applying to Puerto Rico. The end of Spanish rule was evident. (10) Similar concessions were won by Cuban and Filipino rebels.

The U.S. bourgeoisie had to move quickly if it was to annex these colonies. In addition to the possibility that Britain or some other great power would make a grab for them, there was the certainty that the oppressed nations of the Spanish Empire were raising the beacon of National Independence and anti-colonialism — as had Haiti a century before. So that on April 25, 1898, the U.S. declared war on Spain while moving to invade Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. It was just in the nick of time as far as U.S. Imperialism was concerned.

In the Philippines the liberation struggle had already reached the formation of a new Filipino Government. Spurred on by the Katipunan, the secret armed organization of workers and peasants, the revolutionaries had created a large peoples' army. By the time the first U.S. troops landed on June 30, 1898, the Filipino revolutionaries had already swept the Spanish Colonial Army and administration out of virtually the whole of the Philippines, besieging the last isolated holdouts in the old walled city of Manila. Under the pretext of being "allies" of the Filipinos, U.S. troops landed and joined the siege of the Spanish remnants. It is a fact that in the siege the Filipino patriots held 15½ miles of the lines facing the Spanish

positions, while the U.S. troops held only a token 600 yards of front line. (11) More and more U.S. troops arrived, even after the hopeless Spanish surrendered on Dec. 10, 1898. Finally, on Feb. 4, 1899, the reinforced U.S. "allies" moved to wipe out the Filipino forces, even ordering that no truces or ceasefires be accepted.

The Filipino people defended their nation with the most heroic and stubborn resistance. It took over three years of the most bitter combat before the guerrilla patriots were overcome. And defeated then only because: 1. The bourgeois nationalist Filipino leaders had treacherously purged the armed movement of the most advanced proletarian elements, while they themselves vacillated in trying to reach an accommodation with the U.S. invaders. 2. Over half of the total U.S. Army (1.2 million troops) were eventually poured into the Philippines, with weapons and organization far advanced over the former Spanish foes. 3. The Filipino people were unprepared for the brutal effectiveness of the genocidal strategy used by the U.S. invaders.

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The last became an international scandal when the full details became known, shaking even some settlers. Unable to cope with the guerrilla tactics of the Filipino revolutionaries, the U.S. Army decided to starve them into disintegration by destroying their social base — the Filipino population. The same genocidal "Population Regroupment" strategy (as the C.I.A. calls it today) that settlers first used against the Indian nations was revived in the Philippines — and would be used again in Vietnam in our times. The general outlines of U.S. strategy called for

destroying all organized social and economic life in guerilla areas. Villages would be burned down, crops and livestock destroyed, diseases spread, the People killed or forced to evacuate as refugees. Large areas were declared as "free fire zones" in which all Filipinos were to be killed on sight. (12)

Of course, even Euro-Amerikan settlers needed some indoctrination in order to daily carry out such crimes. Indiscriminate killing, looting and torture were publicly encouraged by the U.S. Army command. Amerikan reporters were invited to witness the daily torture sessions, in which Filipinos would be subjected to the "watercure" (having salt water pumped into their stomachs under pressure). The *Boston Herald* said:

"Our troops in the Philippines...look upon all Filipinos as of one race and condition, and being dark men, they are therefore 'niggers', and entitled to all the contempt and harsh treatment administered by white overlords to the most inferior races." (13)

U.S. Imperialism took the Philippines by literally turning whole regions into smoldering graveyards. U.S. Brig. Gen. James Bell, upon returning to the U.S. in 1901, said that his men had killed *one out of every six Filipinos* on the main island of Luzon (that would be some one million deaths just there). It is certain that at least 200,000 Filipinos died in the genocidal conquest. In Samar province, where the patriotic resistance to the U.S. invaders was extremely persistent, U.S. Gen. Jacob Smith ordered his troops to shoot *every Filipino man, woman or child* they could find "over ten" (years of age). (14)

**The settler anti-imperialist movement that arose in opposition to these conquests focussed on the Philippines. It was not a fringe protest by a few radicals. Many of its leaders were men of wealth and standing, many of them old veterans of the abolitionist cause. The author Mark Twain, Gov. Pingree of Michigan, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture J. Sterling Morton, and steel magnate Andrew Carnegie were but a few of the "notable" settlers involved.**

From its center in New England, the movement spread coast-to-coast, and then organized itself into the American Anti-Imperialist League. The League had over 40,000 members in some forty chapters, with hundreds of thousands of settler supporters. (15) It was also closely tied to the reform wing of the Democratic Party, and to the Presidential election campaign of William Jennings Bryan. Just as Senator George McGovern would run against President Nixon on an anti-war platform in 1972, Bryan was running against the entrenched Republicans with a platform calling for an end to Asian conquests.

The politics of the League were well developed, with an explicit class orientation. The League opposed imperialism in the first place because they correctly saw that it represented the increased power of monopoly capital. When they raised their slogan — "Republic or Empire" — they meant by it that Amerika should be a republic of free European settlers rather than a world empire, whose mixed populations would be subjects of the monopoly capitalists. They feared that the economic power gained from exploiting these new colonies, plus the permanent armed force needed to hold them, would be used as home to smother the "democracy" of the settler masses. (16)

The atrocities committed by U.S. troops in the Philippines were denounced on moral and humanitarian grounds. But the League was very careful to point out that their support for Philippine independence did not mean that they believed in any equality of colonial peoples with Europeans. Congressman Carl Schurz, the German immigrant liberal who played such a prominent role in supporting Reconstruction during the 1860s and 1870s, was a leading spokesman for the League.

In his speech "The Policy of Imperialism," Schurz began by defining Filipinos as "*the strongest and foremost tribe*" of the region. He then said: "We need not praise the Filipinos as in every way the equals of the 'embattled farmers' of Lexington and Concord...but there is an abundance of testimony, some of it unwilling, that the Filipinos are fully the equals, and even the superiors, of the Cubans and Mexicans." The patronizing arrogance of even these settlers showed that it was possible for them to be against the new imperialism — and also be white supremacists and supporters of capitalism. That this was an impossible contradiction didn't occur to them.

The class content of the League becomes very clear as Schurz continued: "Now, it may well be that the annexation of the Philippines would pay a speculative syndicate of wealthy capitalists, without at the same time paying the American people at large. As to the people of our race, tropical countries like the Philippines may be fields of profit for rich men who can hire others to work for them, but not for those who have to work for themselves." (17) In other words, the League was articulating the interests of the liberal petit-bourgeoisie.

Settler labor was appealed to on an explicitly white-supremacist basis. Congressman George S. Boutwell, the President of the League, reminded the white workers that they had just finished robbing and driving out Chinese workers — a campaign that he had supported. Now, he told white workers, a new menace had arisen of "half-civilized races" from the Philippines. If their land were to be annexed to the U.S. Empire, then in the near future these Asians would be brought to Amerika by the capitalists. He said:

"Does anyone believe, that with safety, we can receive into this Union the millions of Asia, who have no bonds of relationship with us...The question before this country shall be this: Should the laboring and producing classes of America be subjected to a direct and never-ending competition with the underpaid and half-clad laborers of Asia...?" (18)

The politics of the League did not support national liberation; they were not anti-capitalist or even anti-racist. The heart of their movement was the appeal of a false past, of the picture of Amerika as an insular European society, of an economy based on settlers production in small farms and workshops. They feared the new imperialist world of giant industrial trusts and banks, of international production where the labor of oppressed workers in far-flung colonies would give monopoly capital a financial whip over the common settler craftsman and farmer. They believed, incorrectly, that the settler economy could be sustained without continuing Amerika's history of conquest and annexation.\*



We can see the very sharply defined case the League made for counterposing the interests of settlers vs. their bourgeoisie. In his convocation address at the University of Chicago in 1899, Carl Schurz takes up the issue of explaining why the old conquests of the U.S. Empire were so "good," while the new conquests were "bad":

*"Has not the career of the Republic almost from its very beginning been one of territorial expansion? Has it not acquired California, Florida, Texas, the vast countries that came to us through the Mexican War, and Alaska, and has it not digested them well? If the Republic could digest the old, why not the new?"*

Schurz then gives five reasons why the old annexations worked out so well for the settlers: 1. They were all on this continent 2. They were not in the tropics, but in temperate climates "where democratic institutions thrive, and where our people could migrate in mass" 3. They were virtually "without any population" 4. Since only Euro-Americans would populate them, they could become territories and then states and become fully integrated into White Amerika. 5. No permanent increase in the military was needed to defend them from "probable foreign attack."

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\*Lenin commented: "In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898 stirred up the opposition of the 'anti-imperialists', the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy, who declared this war to be 'criminal'...But while all this criticism shrank from recognizing the inseverable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining forces engendered by large scale capitalism and its development — it remained a 'pious wish'." (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Peking, 1970. p.134)

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His political thought was that whereas the old annexations of settlerism provided land and resources for the invading Europeans to occupy and become the dominant population (with the aid of genocide, of course), these new annexations in Asia and the Caribbean brought only new millions of colonial subjects into the U.S. Empire — but in distant colonies that the Euro-American masses would never populate.

Schurz continues: *"The scheme of Americanizing our 'new possessions' in that sense is therefore absolutely hopeless. The immutable forces of nature are against it. Whatever we may do for their improvement, the people of the Spanish Antilles will remain...Spanish Creoles and Negroes, and the people of the Philippines, Filipinos, Malays, Tagals, and so on...a hopelessly heterogeneous element — in some respects more hopeless even than the colored people now living among us."* (19)

These settlers were opposing imperialism from the ideological standpoint of petit-bourgeois settlerism. It is significant that the League refused to take a stand on the Boer War going on in South Afrika, or on the dispatch of U.S. Marines to join other Western Powers in crushing the "Boxer Rebellion" in China. And, obviously, the League had no objection to colonialism "at home," in the annexed and settled territories of Mexico, the Indian nations, and New Afrika.

By 1901 the American Anti-Imperialist League was a spent force. Bryan and the Democrats had lost the 1900 elections by a large margin. More decisively, the Filipino, Puerto Rican and Cuban patriots had been defeated, and the issue of the U.S. expanding from a continental North American empire into a world empire had been decided.

There were other waves of petit-bourgeois settler reaction against the domination of monopoly capital. The most significant was the Populist Party, which broke the "color line" in the South uniting "poor whites" and Afrikans in voting for new government programs of reform. With heavy strength in the rural counties, the Populist Party got almost one-third of the vote in eight Northern states west of the Mississippi in 1892; in the South its strength was less but still important. (20) Led by the demagogue Tom Watson of Georgia, the Populists proposed that Afrikan sharecroppers should unite with small white farmers in forcing Big Business to give them both a better economic deal. It was the "bread and butter" coalition of two exploited forces from different nations.

But frustrated at their inability to reach their goals through this electoral coalition, the Populist leadership sharply shifted course after 1902. Watson and his cronies had discovered that the tactical position of the "poor whites" in the bourgeois elections might be improved if they drove out Afrikan voters (a conclusion the imperialists were glad to encourage). C. Vann Woodward comments: "With the Negro vote eliminated Watson and the Populists stood in much the same relation toward the two factions of the Democratic Party as the Negro had occupied towards the Populists and the Democrats: they held the balance of power." (21)

Watson himself, still the captivating spokesman of the "cracker" and "redneck," therefore moved rapidly to

the right. He encouraged new waves of terrorism against Afrikans: "Lynch law is a good sign: it shows that a sense of justice lives among the people." In 1904 Watson started campaigning for disenfranchisement of the one million Afrikan voters in Georgia. With flamboyant rhetoric, Watson supported the 1905 Russian Revolution at the same time he swore that the key to a movement of "poor whites" in Amerika was disenfranchising Afrikans: *"The white people dare not revolt so long as they can be intimidated by the fear of the Negro vote."* (22)

Not surprisingly, these stands only increased Watson's popularity as a leader of the "poor whites." In 1920, shortly before his death, he was finally elected to the U.S. Senate. At his death Eugene Debs, leading figure of the Euro-Amerikan Socialist Party, hailed Watson as a true hero of the white workers:

*"He was a great man, a heroic soul who fought the power of evil his whole life long in the interests of the common people, and they loved him and honored him."*

By that time, naturally, Watson had become a wealthy plantation owner and publisher. The Populists had faded away as a party, to become just another "pressure group" lobby within the Democratic Party.

### 3. The U.S. And South Afrikan Settlerism

The same contradictions between imperialism and its settler garrison troops appeared elsewhere, most strongly in Afrika. At the same time as the American Anti-Imperialist League was denouncing the annexation of the former Spanish colonies, the Boer settlers in South Afrika were being invaded by the forces of the British Empire. The 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War became a political issue among settlers in Amerika.

**There is a historic relationship between Euro-Amerikan settlers and the colonization of South Afrika. Amerikan mercenaries, engineers and technologies played a major role in the European exploitation of South Afrika — and, obviously, still do. The diamond and gold mines which were the economic center of British South Afrikan colonization were virtually run by the experienced Euro-Amerikans from California and Colorado.**

Gardner Williams, the U.S. consular agent in Kimberley, was the manager of the DeBeers Diamond mines. John Hays Hammond was the chief engineer for the British South Africa Corporation. By 1896 one-half of all the mines were run by Euro-Amerikan mine experts. Much of the equipment, as well, came from the U.S. Empire. One U.S. company alone — Fraser & Chalmers — supplied 40% of the machinery at the Rand gold fields. (24) When the second and decisive war broke out between the Boer South African Republic and the British Empire, Euro-Amerikans became heavily involved.

The difference in Amerika over the Anglo-Boer

Just as in the anti-imperialism of the League, the settler-Afrikan coalition of the Populists had nothing to do with any real unity of settlers with the oppressed. Rather, these poor but still-privileged settlers were tactically maneuvering to improve their position relative to the monopoly capitalists — and recruiting Afrikans to give their settler party a boost. Historian Michael Rogin points out: "Populism, however, was a movement of the farm-owning proprietors, not property-less workers. It attempted to reassert local community control against the economic and political centralization of corporate capital..." (23)

These two movements did not cross the lines of battle between the empire and the oppressed nations; their limitation — and their special importance — is that they represented the eruption of class contradictions within the camp of the enemy. The Vietnam War controversy of the '60s, the strange Watergate scandal that forced President Nixon out of power, are both evidence that the effects of these contradictions are considerable. And will be in the future. **If we become confused about their basic nature, we damage our strategic self-reliance. If, like the Vietnamese comrades, we can make these contradictions serve us, we will have seized an essential element of revolution.**

War definitely reflected the existing strains between the monopoly capitalists and their own settler base. The U.S. bourgeoisie and its political agents were strongly pro-British. Allied to the British mining interests, they supported British imperialism as the power that would open up Southern Afrika for imperialist exploitation in general. And, like the British, they saw the backward South African Republic of the original Boer settlers from Holland as an obstacle to profits. The Boer society stressed settler family agriculture, and opposed any proletarianization of the Afrikan peoples — while it was only with mass, enforced integration of Afrikan labor into the corporate economy that the Western imperialists could fully exploit South Afrika. The British imperialists had to take state power out of the hands of those narrow, theocratic Boers and bring all of South Afrika into their colonial empire.

Euro-Amerikans were heavily involved in the 1895 Jameson Raid, the "private" British military expedition of imperialist Cecil Rhodes. In the aftermath of the Raid's well-publicized failure at overthrowing the Boer Government, the facts of Euro-Amerikan involvement came out. The weapons used had been smuggled into South Afrika by Euro-Amerikan mining executives, seven of whom were arrested by the Boers.

The defense of the seven became big news back in the U.S. Mark Twain visited them in jail, afterwards supporting them as men who were innocently trying to bring about "reform." Eventually, due to diplomatic pressure, the seven were freed. Gardner Williams simply paid his

fine and resumed his post as U.S. consular agent. John Hays Hammond was ousted from the colony, however, and returned to a hero's welcome in the U.S. He later became National Chairman of the Republican Party. (25)

When the war broke out in 1899 the U.S. Government openly sided with the British. The Republican McKinley Administration approved the sale of much-needed provisions and munitions to the British forces. Permission was even given for the British to recruit mercenaries here. (26) Just as, covertly, the white "Rhodesians" obtained military reinforcements here in the 1970s.

But many Euro-American settlers identified with the Boers — who were, after all, just fellow European settlers ruling occupied lands like themselves — and saw the Boers as losing their "rights" to greedy monopoly capital. The parallel to the U.S. was very close in many minds. And if the Republican Administration in Washington was publicly championing the British side, still there were others who identified with the Boer "Davids" against the British "Goliath." There was so much popular sympathy for the Boer settlers among the U.S. settlers that the 1900 Democratic Party platform saluted: "...the heroic Burgers in their unequal struggle to maintain their liberty and independence." (27)

Much of the most impassioned support in the U.S. for the Boers came, to no surprise, from the Irish community. They saw the Boers not only as fellow European settlers, but as fellow rebels fighting for nationhood against British colonialism. An "Irish Brigade" was actually assembled and sent to the Transvaal to join the Boer army. (28)

As the eventual defeat of the Boers loomed closer public settler sympathy for them only increased. The states of Texas, New Mexico and Colorado formally offered their welcome and free land (stolen from the Indians and Mexicanos) to any Boers who wished to immigrate (just as the Governor of South Carolina in 1979 officially invited the losing "Rhodesian" settlers fleeing Zimbabwe to come settle in that state). (29) So the present U.S. imperialist involvement in South Afrika has a long history — as does the Euro-American settler solidarity with their "Afrikaner" counterparts. Once these two trends were counter-posed, now they are joined.

South Afrika played out, in a form much condensed, the same pattern of relations between settler workers and Afrikan labor as in the U.S. Afrikan laborers not only conducted strikes, but starting with the July 1913 mine strike Afrikans tried honoring the strikes of the white workers. Indeed, in the mines a strike by white workers alone would hardly have stopped production. But in every case the white workers themselves refused in return to support Afrikan strikes, customarily serving as scabs and "special constables" (volunteer police) to put down Afrikan struggles. The December 1919 Cape Town strike by Afrikan longshoremen and the Feb. 1920 Afrikan miners strike were both broken by the authorities with the help of white labor. (30) One Afrikaner radical comments:

*"But the white workers believed that they had nothing in common with the blacks...the white miners earned ten times as much as the blacks, that many of them employed black servants in their homes, that a victory of*

*the black miners would have increased the desire of the mine-owners to reduce the status of the white miners, since any increase in black wages would have to be met either by a reduction in white wages or by a reduction of profits. Such was the reality of the situation which the white workers, consciously or not, understood very well."* (31)

Imperialism knows no gratitude, not even towards its servants. From 1907 on the mining companies kept pushing at the white miners, kept trying to gradually replace white miners with low-paid Afrikans, to reduce white wages, and to reduce the total numbers of expensive white miners. In response, from 1907-1922 there was a series of militant white strikes. Finally, in 1922 the Chamber of Mines announced that the companies had repudiated the existing labor agreements and had decided to lay off 2,000 white miners. (32)

This touched off the great Rand Revolt of 1922, in which an eight-week strike escalated into a general strike of all white workers, and then into a week of armed revolt with fighting between the "Red Guards" of white miners and the imperialist troops. The main slogan of this amazing explosion was "For A White South Africa!" The white "communists" marched through the streets with banners reading *"Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White South Africa!"* (33) The main demand was obvious.

The white miners (who were Boer, British, Scottish and Welsh) gained the support not only of the other white workers, but of the whole Boer people as well. As the strike grew, the armed "Red Guards" of the miners started attacking Afrikan workers. Between the production halts and the attacks thousands of Afrikans had to evacuate the Rand. In recognition of the reactionary character of the revolt, all the leading Afrikan political organizations, churches and unions denounced it. (34)

The violent upheaval of settler discontent corrected the erring course of imperialism in South Afrika. In 1924 the rigidly pro-company Smuts government was voted out by the settler electorate. The new "Afrikaner" government granted the white workers all they wanted, except for driving out the Afrikan population wholesale. The "Color Bar" act was passed, which legally enforced the settler monopoly on highly-paid wage labor. Toil was now to be reserved for the Afrikan proletariat. "Afrikaner" wage-labor had stabilized its position as a subsidized, non-exploited aristocracy of labor.

The main function of the "Afrikaner" masses was no longer to produce and support society, but only to serve as the social base for the occupation garrison that imperialism needed to hold down the colonial peoples. Indeed, today it is evident that South Afrikan mining, industry and agriculture are all the products of colonial Afrikan labor alone. "Afrikaner" workers, far from supporting society, are themselves supported by the super-exploitation of the oppressed nation of Afrikans. There is no longer, in any meaningful terms, any working class struggle within settler society there.