

WOMEN AGAINST IMPERIALISM STUDY

I. Defining Imperialism

July 18, 7:30 at Christine's

II. Imperialism and Colonialism inside the U.S.: Racism and Self-Determination of Puerto Rico, the Black Nation, and Native American Nations

III. Male Supremacy/Patriarchy and Women's Liberation R.S.

IV. Lesbian Liberation

V. Zionism and Palestine

VI. Repression, Grand Juries, Political Prisoners and POWs J

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I. Defining Imperialism

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- 1. "The Empire and the People" by Howard Zinn from A People's History of the United States, 1980.*
- 2. Excerpts from The Enemy by Felix Greene (1970)*
- 3. Excerpt from Woman's Worth: Sexual Economics and the World of Women by Leghorn and Parker, 1981.*

Questions:

1. What do we mean by "the system of imperialism"?
2. Define colonialism. How does colonialism work to keep Third World Nations poor?
3. What has been the role of white supremacy in the development of imperialism and colonization?
4. What is the relationship between imperialism and patriarchy?
5. Imperialism appears to be so strong and entrenched, but we've begun to see its limitations in the liberations of Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua (and other countries). How have the popular movements in these Third World countries reached victory, given their lack of resources? How do we foresee the destruction of imperialism? Within this context, how do we see our role in building solidarity with national liberation movements?

Hi gang,

For our next exciting installment (of the history of the development of capitalism in Europe, i.e. the overthrow of the feudal order), we have these readings:

→ this took
300 years!

1. The History Book, pages 1-45 (everybody read, quick and fun)
2. From Man's Worldly Goods, by Leo Huberman (one of the editors of Monthly Review, the main place non-Eurocentric political economy has been developed in the US over the last 40 years. It's a journal).

We'll divide up three chapters covering three significant uprisings against the feudal order, & people can tell everyone what happened during:

Chapter V, page 44, the peasant revolts in the 14th century LS

Chapter VII, page 71, the protestant reformation LR

Chapter XIII, page 150, the French revolution ST

A fourth person will give a quickie overview of what was going on in the rest of the world meanwhile. What were the civilizations that had grown up before Europe started coming around? What were the effects of early European contact with Africa, Asia, etc.

As you read, try to keep in mind the concepts Marx introduced--can you see them in action as you read the history.?

See you real soon, mouseketeers.

How Europe
Underdeveloped
Africa

The IS A RIVER
Vincent Harding

Slavery

Any new input on questions we had last time—reports from stuff people read (if any)
Why were the Native Americans in North America more devastated than in Latin America?

Lerone Bennett—more on the hardening of the color line

2. Last line page 7, top of 8 "The mythology of the white masses pretends that while the evil planter...etc Thus, it was alleged, slavery was not in the interests of the white masses."

What about this? Let's read out loud pg 8, Thus the early settlers were not just the passive beneficiaries" to "and the slave trade."

3. How did slavery become an obstacle to settlerism? (p 22-23 etc)

4. Settler Trade Unionism sections 1, 2, 3; 24-28

What was the political content of the Jackson movement?

The period of Reconstruction was complicated. To help you get a handle on the overall outline of the story, here's a summary, focussing on the time of the overthrow.

UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL FORCES OF RECONSTRUCTION AND THE GREAT BETRAYAL OF BLACK PEOPLE

I. A triple alliance of 3 main class and national forces united to defeat the slave system in the Civil War—these 3 forces were the Big Bourgeoisie, the Petite Bourgeoisie Abolitionists, and the Black people (—slaves & abolitionist freedman.) Each force had different reasons for opposing the slave system, and these different objectives show us why the Big bourgeoisie and the p.b. white abolitionists were to desert the Black people shortly after the end of the Civil War.

A. The big bourgeoisie wanted to smash the slave system not out of any love for Black people's liberty, but because the rule of the planters in the South was the chief obstacle to the triumph of their industrial capitalism in the U.S. The heavy-duty power of the planters in the Federal Government frustrated the big b. in several ways:

1. The capitalists wanted the Western lands to be opened up under their hegemony, not under the slavocracy
2. The capitalists wanted the Southern market for their goods, which slavery kept out of their hands because of feudal-type self-sufficiency and because of Southern trade with Europe.
3. The b. wanted a high tariff to protect domestic manufactured goods, while the slavocracy wanted a low tariff to keep down the cost of their imports from Europe.
4. The b. wanted high taxes to finance lots of state investment in capitalist infrastructure (railroads, canals, etc), while the planters opposed a big role for govt.
5. The b. favored economic penetration of lands outside the North American continent, while the planters needed outright territorial seizures to get them more land for cotton—this led to differences on Cuba + other foreign policy.
6. The b. wanted the raw materials and investment potentials of the South to be open for its exploitation, not to be dominated by the planters who traded directly with Europe.
7. More ways??

Left wing: Charles Sumner, T. S. Seward
Right wing: Lincoln

B. The Petit-bourgeois liberal abolitionists, white, wanted to abolish the moral outrage of chattel slavery—they believed in the b. ideology of the French Revolution, which favored legal equality of all men under a capitalist economy. Their ideal was that of a competitive-capitalist Republic.

C. The Black people wanted liberation. The ex-slaves strove mightily for the economic base that would give their newly-won vote real meaning. The slaves and Black abolitionists constantly pushed the Triple Alliance to the left, forcing the Emancipation Proclamation, the Black vote, etc. to be given, however reluctantly and partially. The slaves held a good deal of power during the Civil War by virtue of their:

1. ec. power to cripple the South by a General Strike
2. military power, willingness to take up arms when the northern white working classes soldiers were flagging & resenting the whole "rich man's war."
3. ideological-diplomatic power. The North needed to insert the issue of abolition into the war to forestall the possibility of Europe recognizing the Southern government, &c. to win sympathy.

The objectives of the slaves were LAND (they wanted to become small farmers), EDUCATION, THE VOTE.

D. White labor in both the North and the South was not a prime actor in the conflict. White labor in the North ignored the whole issue of Black slavery/ liberation for an incredibly long time.

Reconstruction

II. No sooner had the planters been defeated in the Civil War, then all the allies of the Black people began to desert like crazy.

A. The big b., once they were sure that the planters had been unhorsed, quickly withdrew their support from the radical measures taken by the Blacks under Reconstruction. They ~~were~~ were nervous about the social upheaval in the South under Reconstruction, especially about the moves of the Blacks in taxation and land redistribution that threatened Property and interfered with the orderly raking-off of profits. They wanted "social peace" in the South that would assure them a steady supply of cotton at cheap prices, and that would free them up to decisively defeat the Indian nations, and deal with Western & Northern labor unrest. The b, once ensconced in power, concluded a pact with the planters such that the planters could rule over the south as junior partners under the hegemony of the b.

In the decade just after the Civil War the capitalists, freed from the abstacles of planter power and with state power in their hands, experienced an orgy of expansion. Zillions of dollars were raked off from the public till to finance railroads, thousands and thousands of acres of land in the West was given away to the b, and there was a general boom. A decisive turn toward monopoly-imperialist consolidation happened in 1873, when the depression drove many small capitalists out of business and consolidated power in the hands of the biggest families.

B. The Petit-b, ~~were~~ with their dream of a competitive-capitalist Republic, never reconciled themselves to the necessity of the only measures that could make Black Emancipation real: (1) a serious dictatorship over the planters, armed dictatorship. The p.b. somehow thought that the planters would surrender their power peacefully and could quickly be re-integrated into national life. (2) confiscation of property, the distribution of land to the ex--slaves. The petit b. could go along with giving the blacks political power in the form of the vote (as Lincoln finally and reluctantly did), but they were never willing to give the Blacks the economic basis that was necessary to hold political power. The petit. b, being bourgeois, opposed seizure of property, oppsed Black moves to take land from the planters, and thus were very unreliable allies of the Black people.

The p .b. liberals after the Civil War were horrified at the wild grabbing and corruption of the big Republicans, and at the way big business was gobbling up everything. Furthermore they had a sympathetic ear for the planters cries that their property was being seized by the Blacks and for the planters protests about the presence of the Northern armies in the South. So the pb. liberals split from the big bourgeoisie in 1872 and set up the Liberal Republican Party. The Liberals, representing the white middlex classes, had a program of

1. "let all ex-confederates vote and run for office"
2. "withdraw Northern armies from South" (in interests of freedom of speech, etc.)
3. and in memory of their old abolitionist sentiments, "full rights and vote for Blacks in the South."

} i.e. end the dictatorship over the planters

The white middle classes, in splitting with the big-business Radical Republicans, were ~~bound~~ bound to travel in the direction of making an alliance with the right--in fact, the Democrats (planters) supported the Liberal Republican candidate for US President.

Once the white p.b. had split from the Radical Republican Party, this left the Black people alone with the big bourgeoisie, who in turn had their own reasons for opposing ~~the~~ Black liberation.

3.

So by 1872, the Petit b. had split from the Republican Party that was providing the military backing for Black Reconstruction. The petit b. was cozying up with the planter-Democrats under the slogan of "end graft and corruption." Meanwhile the big Bourgeoisie who were left in control of the Republican Party & the northern armies in the South were growing increasingly cool to the Black struggle. They passed the Amnesty Act in 1872 which restored all political rights to vote and run for office to the old Confederate leaders. They sat on their hands as the White Terror began in earnest in the South, refusing to use the Northern troops to quell the KKK--planter moves.

The Depression of 1873 threw the country into a panic. Coming out on the other side of the Depression, you had a newly-consolidated big B. with more power than ever in its hands. They forestalled any probability of a Democratic--pb alliance by beginning the process of making the planters their trustees in the South, and by cleaning up the corruption excesses that had revolted the pb. They promised a rational economic order with state regulation that would allow prosperity for the small capitalists. With the white labor movement they concluded a tacit agreement that there would be high wages based on capitalist expansion for the skilled white male workers, if the labor movement would consent to the ravaging of the great unskilled masses. This the union movement did, becoming more and more petty-bourgeoisified, white supremacist, and exclusionary.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- made
1. What is it about the white petit bourgeoisie that/makes it a very shaky ally of revolutionary TW movements? How does the position of the white p.b. toward Black Reconstruction resemble the position of Berrigan-Baez toward the democratic dictatorship and socialist reconstruction in Viet Nam? Does the history of Reconst. amply prove that an anti-monopoly politics in an oppressor nation can still
 2. James Allen, a CP historian, writes: "The bourgeoisie had bargained away the revolution in step after step until it placed its own seal of approval upon victorious reaction." (p 206) DuBois writes: "When white laborers were convinced that the degradation of Negro Labor was more fundamental than the uplift of white labor, the end was in sight." (P 347) Because we realize that the b. and petit b. could never have followed thru on support for the black revolution in the South, we must place historical responsibility for the betrayal of Reconstruction on white workers.
- be white
supremacy
+ react
an.

So where were the white workers during this whole era of upheaval?
First let's check out the North.

***Read DuBois' interpretation of the white labor movement, p 353-360
Read Allen's interpretation in his book, "Reconstruction: Battle for Democracy", p 145-165.

It's hard to decide which is more putrid: the white labor movements stands or Allen's apologies for them. List the ways in which Allen covers up the rank white supremacy of the labor movement--this is important so we can learn how opportunists falsify and distort history.

Next let's check out the South:

***Allen, on p 193-197, lays the blame on a new Southern petit bourgeoisie.
***DuBois, 622-626 and 630-635, is not afraid to criticize the poor whites in the South.