

PEOPLE'S WEEKLY

News and views
of the 99%

WORLD

New York Edition • January 18th - 22nd, 2018 • ny.pww.org

**Support the
People's press!**

contribute online at:
**GoFundMe.com/
PeoplesWeeklyWorld**

U.S. capitalism runs on guns

By Cameron Orr (edited for length. original at bit.do/pw-bases)

As if NRA-driven gun sales, white supremacist militias, anti-woman violence, armed ICE raids, and mass incarceration weren't enough, capitalism is now giving us another reminder of its inherent violence.

Trump's new discretionary budget will shovel 61 percent of the country's social oxygen into the Pentagon's fiery furnace. That's \$727 billion worth of schools, libraries, green jobs and infrastructure, housing, hospitals, nutritional support, healthcare, and other social needs that will go unmet.

The U.S. already maintains 800+ foreign military bases in at least 80 countries around the world, mainly surrounding China and Russia—although the U.S. also maintains its fortresses on Cuba and Puerto Rico, and surrounding Venezuela.

Combatting a growing number of Chinese-invested development projects in Africa, the creation of AFRICOM in 2007 boosted U.S. military presence throughout the African continent.

This vast network of foreign military bases costs the U.S. people about \$150 billion every year.

Between 2001, at the start of the Afghanistan War, and 2013, private military contractors collectively raked in over \$385 billion in contracts with the U.S. Department of Defense. The cost of the wars since 2001 is expected to exceed \$7.9 trillion. Taken together, it's a brain-popping high for the billionaires on Wall Street.

Heir to empires

Modern imperialist plunder began with the Portuguese capture and enslavement of Africans and the European occupation of African ports in the mid-15th century, anchoring the transatlantic slave trade which would become integral to the colonization of the Americas. Shortly afterward, access to Chinese and Indian markets motivated Christopher Columbus' expeditions. Driven by imperialist competition between European nations in their budding stages of capitalist industrialization, this initiated a long term process



Rev. William Barber marches with participants commemorating the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, Ala., March 8, 2015. | Poor People's Campaign

ADDITIONAL TOP STORIES:

- A long look back from Sacramento
- Poor People's Campaign on Saving the soul of U.S. democracy

More stories online:

ny.pww.org | peoplesworld.org

of colonial and imperialist expansion, and has reached its climax with nuclear threats concentrated on the Korean peninsula.

Beginning in 1492, after stumbling into Quisqueya/Bohío as it was locally known, Columbus and his fellow minions of the Spanish empire began setting up forts in present-day Haiti and Dominican Republic. From this island, the Spanish initiated the European colonization of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the wider Caribbean—murdering, raping, and enslaving Taino and African people in gold mines and plantations—and present-day Mexico, Panama, and other regions in the Americas.

In 1609, British colonists ransacked a Native North American village near the Chesapeake Bay and established Fort Algernourne. By 1785, the first U.S. foreign military base was established in Ohio on Native land—built in the shape of a pentagon. U.S. forts would continue

MET COUNCIL ON HOUSING

Housing for People – Not Profit

Tenants' Rights Telephone Hotline

Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30 - 8:00pm

Fridays - 1:30 - 5:00pm

212-979-0611

The People's Weekly World - New York is the online and printed newspaper of the 99% in New York State. It includes regular coverage from leaders of the Communist Party USA.

to spread westward and into Florida, near the Caribbean, as American Indians were slaughtered and driven off their land.

During the 1798 Quasi War with France, the U.S. Navy occupied the ports of several Caribbean islands, and soon established its presence in the Mediterranean during the Barbary Wars. After the War of 1812, the U.S. Navy gained prestige and, between 1815 and 1840, patrolled the East Indies, Pacific, West Indies, Brazil, the Mediterranean, and Africa.

Beginning in 1842, the U.S. and other European powers forcibly opened up Chinese and Japanese ports. In 1846, the U.S. invaded Mexico, set up forts on the California coast, and patrolled the Pacific. By the end of the century, the U.S. was plotting the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i and, after the Spanish-American War in 1898, occupied Hawai'i, Guantanamo Bay, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. From Hawai'i, Guam, and its Naval bases in Asian ports, the U.S. launched the Philippine-American War, slaughtering 1.4 million Filipinos. From its Philippine bases, the U.S. would later invade Vietnam in the 1960s.

Extending its control into the Panamanian isthmus in 1846, the U.S. had forced Panama's succession from Colombia by 1903. In the years leading up to World War I and World War II, the U.S. occupied the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Haiti; invaded Honduras eight times; replaced Axis airfields in South America with its own; and in 1940 obtained many of Britain's military bases in the Caribbean and Newfoundland.

Postwar global power

With the formation of NATO after World War II, and the transfer of many European military bases to U.S. control (some in fascist Spain included), the U.S. was in the driver's seat of world imperialism, aggressively flanking the western border of the Soviet Union. The U.S. military also boosted its presence on China's eastern flank when Korea was divided in half and U.S. bases and a military dictatorship were installed in the South. A massive base was also set up in Okinawa, previously annexed by Japan.

Military base construction also exploded in the Middle East, and the Cold War developed apace. The U.S. cemented its strategic alliance with the Saudi Arabian monarchy in 1945 in view of its oil reserves, began collaborating on the forced displacement of Arab peoples to create Israel as a main ally in the region, and developed its relationship with Iran under the shah. The U.S. cut ties with Iran after the Iranian revolution in 1979, and funded religious guerillas in Afghanistan, luring the

A long look back from Sacramento

By *W.T. Whitney Jr.* (edited for length. original at bit.do/pw-alookback)

In Sacramento, California, on March 18, police bullets killed Stephon Clark, an unarmed Black man.

Stephon Clark died. As did Black people who died at the hands of Ku Klux Klan raiders during the Reconstruction era. As did thousands of Black people lynched over the course of decades, as did individuals and families killed by white people in dozens of massacres between Reconstruction and the 1920s.

On December 9, 1948, the UN General Assembly approved its "Convention on...the Crime of Genocide." Responding, the Civil Rights Congress in 1951 delivered a 240-page petition

Soviet Union into "the Afghan trap."

After the fall of the Soviet Union, control over the world's oil supply became central to Rebuilding America's Defenses, a strategy "to deter the rise of a new great-power competitor." The policy document, developed by many figures who became leading personalities in the George W. Bush administration, identified China, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria as potential 'rivals'."

However, the China-led Belt and Road Initiative, part of that developing country's struggle for a multi-polar world, is posing major challenges to these objectives, increasing the ire of the U.S.

Peace movement revival

Since the disastrous Iraq War and the so-called "War on Terrorism," the U.S. peace movement has been scattered in many different directions, but recently over 200 organizations in the U.S. and around the world have signed the unity statement of the Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Military Bases.

At a January conference in Baltimore, representatives of various organizations within the coalition presented on the history and impact of U.S. military bases around the world, with each panel focused on a different region of the world. A young people's contingent of the coalition, Antiwar Future, was also formed.

Four major resolutions were passed in solidarity with unjustly charged Okinawan anti-base activists, against the occupation of Guantanamo Bay, and for a global conference to be held on the topic of U.S. and NATO military bases. The meeting is scheduled for this November in Ireland, where the Peace and Neutrality Alliance is resisting the U.S.' use of the Shannon Airport as a de facto military base.

The coalition also resolved to build mass antiwar demonstrations around the country from April 14-15 calling for the closing of all the U.S.' foreign military bases. •

authored by William L. Patterson. Its title was: *We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People.*

Terror and killings represent only one aspect of a system of racial oppression manifesting in the United States first as occupation of Native lands and as slavery. But oppression has assumed many forms. They include efforts taken to ensure less than decent lives for black people. Poor schooling for black children is one of them. The recent death of Linda Brown of Topeka, Kansas, on March 25 served recently as a reminder.

Brown was the lead plaintiff in the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* case which concluded on May 17, 1954. That day the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation of public education is illegal. Separate schools, it reasoned, make for inferior education. Hopes were raised, but then came disappointment. Today, U.S. schools

remain segregated by race. And educational outcomes for black students lag in comparison with those of white students.

In his *Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism*, published this year, historian Gerald Horne looks at 17th-century English colonial history. He explores political changes within that nation and problems associated with the exploitation of colonies in the Caribbean and North America.

Colonial authorities faced difficulties. Rebel frontiersmen led by Nathaniel Bacon, for example, attacked Virginia's colonial governor in 1676. They complained he'd left them vulnerable to Indian attacks and limited their access to Indian land. Accordingly, they attacked the Indians and occupied land.

Enslaved and dispossessed peoples resisted. An Indigenous uprising known as King Philip's War brought chaos and bloodletting to New England in 1675-76 and later. Victorious settlers arranged for 500 captured Indigenous to be "sold into slavery from Plymouth." Slave rebellions occurred in Barbados and particularly in Jamaica, the island England stole from Spain in 1655.

Horne notes that "Enslaved Africans constituted two-thirds of the total migration into the Americas between 1600 and 1700." In the Caribbean, the "colonial elite could not untie the Gordian knot of bringing in more Africans to produce immense wealth while preventing them from rebelling and taking power—which finally occurred in 1791 in what became Haiti."

In response, many Caribbean settlers moved to the mainland. Colonial authorities experimented "with providing more benefits—combat pay—to poorer settlers." Marginalized white settlers were granted access to land. Increasingly, the exploiters used indentured servants and other poor whites to oversee slaves at work.

Clearly, those in charge were panicked. Indeed, "massive slave revolts" revealed "the frailty of the colonial project." And "the mainland's productive forces were advancing, while those of the Caribbean had a foreseeable upper limit."

Officials turned to promoting "racial solidarity" among European migrants. "The elite had devised a race-based despotism driving these recent [European] arrivals into the arms of these same elites, particularly after the poorer settlers were granted some concessions." The colonial rulers "established a cross-class alliance between and among European settlers, who bonded on the basis of 'racial identity politics'—that is, 'whiteness' and 'white supremacy'—and [on] the basis of the looting of all those not so endowed."

Saving the soul of U.S. democracy

By *Chauncey Robinson* (edited for length. original at bit.do/PW-SoulsOfPoorFolks)

W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* was a thorough analysis and critique of the struggle of Black Americans striving for democracy.

Today's Poor People's Campaign draws from the spirit of Du Bois' immortal work. *The Souls of Poor Folks*, a report produced jointly by the Poor People's Campaign and the Institute for Policy Studies, is a comprehensive study linking poverty, systemic racism, repression of voting rights, ecological disasters, and the war economy.

Taking its name from the 1968 poor people's campaign led

This defensive alliance took shape despite religious differences among white settlers. Horne suggests that as the 18th century progressed, their attraction to an agenda of political rights further solidified a united front.

In 1688, England's commercial classes engineered the so-called "Glorious Revolution." With the king's power markedly reduced, they took charge of exploiting the colonies. The new rulers, Horne writes, "proceeded to build vast fortunes on the backs of enslaved Africans and dispossessed indigenes while shouting from the rooftops about the 'liberty' and 'freedom' they were demanding at the expense of the monarchy...."

"This blatant power and money grab by merchants was then dressed in the finery of liberty and freedom as the bourgeois revolution was conceived in a crass and crude act of staggering hypocrisy." These developments led to "fueling the revolt against London in 1776." Horne regards the United States as "a state founded on solemn principles of white supremacy, often disguised in deceptive 'non-racial' words."

"Given the grimy origins of republicanism in the Anglo-American sphere, is it any wonder," Horne asks, "that even in today's United States, it remains difficult to extend the full bounty of rights to the descendants of the formerly enslaved or the indigenous?" Indeed, white supremacy "had its latest expression, at least in terms of underlying premise and intent, in the United States in November, 2016."

As he concludes his book, Horne mentions that following the crisis of U.S. slavery a "corollary crisis for white supremacy" emerged and that it was "compounded by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which—at least—thrust the question of class onto center stage." The advent of the Soviet Union "helped to erode the capitalist world's maniacal obsession with 'race'" and to bring about "crisis for all aspects of the hydra-headed monster that arose in the seventeenth century—white supremacy and capitalism not least." •

by slain civil rights leader, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, today's iteration is co-chaired by Rev. Dr. William Barber and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, gearing up for 40 days of non-violent "moral fusion direct action," to take place across the country.

Barber recently explained that "the true change forward must be from the bottom up, led by the people who are impacted—by them and not for them. Movements don't start from D.C. and New York down, but from Selma and Montgomery up."

The Souls of Poor Folk is an audit of the last 50 years since Dr. King's assassination that seeks to survey just how far the nation has come in addressing the three ills of society that King often noted—systemic racism, poverty, and militarism.

It aims to dispel myths that stand in the way of addressing the oppression of the poor. Two myths targeted in the report are that poverty is the fault of the poor, and that, despite our nation's abundance, there is not enough for all of us to survive and thrive.

The report explains that the "Triplets of Evil—systemic racism, poverty, and the war economy and militarism—as well as the interrelated problem of ecological devastation" have worsened, thus causing further poverty, as opposed to the assumption of individual failure.

A clear case is presented that there are enough resources in the world's richest nation to ensure "dignified lives" for all its people, but that the priorities of the wealthy and powerful are aimed at making just a few wealthier at the expense of the wider population.

The report argues that the ills plaguing society are not separate, but interrelated, and presents key findings related to each of the four evils: racism, poverty, militarism, and ecological devastation.

Systemic Racism

Legislative actions and legal decisions at the federal and state levels have severely restricted the ability of people of color—especially poor Black people, Latinx, and Native Americans—to participate in democratic processes.

"Tough on crime" politics has led to increased policing of poor communities and a tenfold increase in annual federal discretionary spending on prisons since 1976.

Federal spending on immigration, deportation, and border policies increased from \$2 billion to \$17 billion, and deportations increased tenfold between 1976 and 2015.

Poverty

Restrictions on democratic participation are compounded by structural changes in employment towards a low-wage economy, tied to a decline in union membership.

Instead of going to workers, massive gains from economic growth have been going to a smaller and smaller share of society.

Nearly 41 million Americans live below the federal poverty line.

Student debt levels have exploded, driven in part by the growth of high-cost, high-risk, for-profit colleges, which now make up nearly a third of new higher education opportunities.

America has become a debtor nation. 19 percent of all U.S. households (60 million people), 30 percent of Black households, 27 percent of Latinx households, and 14 percent of white households have zero wealth or their debts exceed the value of their assets.

Militarism

Since Vietnam, the United States has waged an ongoing war against diffuse enemies, siphoning

People's Weekly World is the newspaper of the people's movements.

If you would like to be in contact with the Party of the people's movements and be invited to actions or community meetings, email ny@cpusa.org

massive resources away from social needs.

Militarism abroad has gone hand in hand with the militarization of U.S. borders and of poor communities across this country. The perpetual war economy is also linked to the broader trend of criminalization of the poor over the past 50 years.

Ecological devastation

The tragic effects of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico in 2017 are a disturbing example of rising climate change threats, particularly for the poor.

Across the United States, poor people face crises of water affordability, water pollution, and water scarcity in some areas exacerbated by climate change.

While poor urban populations deal with rising water bills, the rural poor often lack access to piped water and sewage systems, with striking racial disparities.

The U.S. Department of Defense was responsible for emitting 72 percent of the U.S. government's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2016.

The report contests the notion that these four issues affect only a small portion of the population. With over 140 million people suffering in poverty and oppression in the U.S., the audit notes that in 2017, "just three White men owned as much wealth as the bottom half of the U.S. population, or 160 million people."

Poor People's Campaign organizers make it clear that *The Souls of Poor Folk* is not a research report that should remain on the shelf as a passive record of injustice. Rather, the aim is to use it as a tool to combat the damning myths that further the "attention violence" — what Barber has explained as political discourse about social issues without any mention of the poor.

Referencing the principle of "truth and justice for all," the report says that "the moral principles of our Constitution are focused on establishing justice for the general welfare." That direction has been lost, it declares, "and a moral revival is necessary to change course and save the heart and soul of our democracy."

"*The Souls of Poor Folk*," the report says, "is a declaration of the inherent value of every human being and a reminder that we are all worthy of the very necessities of life. It is also in direct contradiction to those who make moral claims about caring for the souls of people, but then pass policies that destroy their bodies and communities."

The Poor People's Campaign is inviting everyone to be part of the upcoming 40 days of civil disobedience that will culminate with a mass mobilization in Washington, D.C., on June 23, which will launch a multi-year state-based campaign targeting the social evils detailed in the report.

Quoting novelist and social critic James Baldwin, the authors of *The Souls of Poor Folk*, remind readers, "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." •

On April 23rd, the NYC Poor People's Campaign will be holding an all-day planning session for the 40 days of action with NYC endorsing organizations. To endorse and receive additional info go to bit.do/endorsePPC.

END CORPORATE RULE Build the People's World

Distributors, contributors & contributions welcome

Contact PWW by: phone (212) 924-0550, email editor@pww.org
or mail 235 West 23rd Street, New York, NY, 10011

Contribute by check or money order payable to 'CPNY'
(mail to address listed directly above)