Empires Crumble as Movements Fall: Antisystemic Struggle, 1917-1968  
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A World in Transition  

1917-1968 demonstrates remarkable changes in the world economic order. In this brief fifty-one year period, the world was completely transformed politically, culturally and technologically. Hobsbawm notes that “an age of Catastrophe from 1914 to the aftermath of the Second World War was followed by some twenty-five or thirty years of extraordinary economic growth and social transformation, which probably changed human society more profoundly than any other period of comparable brevity.”¹  

This epoch covers roughly one Kondratieff wave, entering an economic B phase associated with the Great Depression by the end of World War I. By the end of the war, depression had struck semi-peripheral and peripheral zones, and by some ten to fifteen years later core zones had been included in the downturn. With the world marred in economic instability, the struggle for hegemony between core states (specifically, the United States, Britain and Germany) would not be resolved until the end of the Second World War (1945). With Europe decimated from war and Japan temporarily out of the picture, the US ushered in an economic A phase of expansion that in part concretized its hegemonic position.  

Thus, this period includes an interwar timespan of economic decline between the First and Second World War, with the economic expansion coming roughly from the close of World War II until the late sixties. Undeniably, economically, politically and socially, the world looked remarkably different in 1968 than it did in 1917. A central contention of this paper argues that antisystemic struggle during this time was critical in transforming the world. From the social  

¹ Hobsbawm demarcates, for this periodization, an age of catastrophe 1914 to 1945; the golden age 1947 to 1973; and the landslide from 1973 to 1991 (1994:6).
compromises reached throughout the core regions of the world-economy to the explosion of struggles for independence and revolutions in most of the colonial world, change was driven by the actions of a disparate collection of movements. During this time, we see the breakdown of empire, the reconstitution of the ruling class and the reconfiguration of nationalist as well as individual identities on a global scale. Herein, we seek to link spatially and temporally, patterns of antisystemic resistance to the global domination and exploitation of the masses across geographical and temporal boundaries.

At the outset, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century marks the emergence of clear opposition and challenges to the systemic processes of modern world capitalism. These instances are clearly represented in global movements and resistance that ideologically and politically challenge the domination of People of Color, women, workers and peasants. Throughout this epoch movements created the space and seized opportunities to challenge political, economic and cultural domination. The embracing of liberal ideology, principally visible in an embrace of state power as the avenue for change, became the principal impetus for solidarity between Nationalist, Pan-Africanist, and workers movements (through labor union solidarity), hence connecting people throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America as a result of their common political, economic and social subjugation in the capitalist world-system.

As a result of that subjugation, the re-articulation of race, gender and citizenship crystallized on a global scale fundamentally challenging the foundations of western cultural and economic hegemony from within as well as without core states. The right to self-determination, along with the notion of universal human rights and the right of livelihood, became the driving force of the “property-less masses” to challenge imperial and colonial power relations and the global division of labor operating within the capitalist system. The Bolshevik revolution (1917)
that opens the period was only one of the many manifestations of the systemic crises and chaos within the capitalist world-system during 1917-1968.

The history of antisystemic movements from 1917 to 1968 can be told in two parts, and this two-fold history highlights major shifts in the world-system that occurred during this time. Firstly, movements that had emerged during the late nineteenth century in the centers of world power, important labor movements and socialist organizations and parties, realized long-held goals at this time. In North America and Europe, labor and socialist struggles were fully institutionalized over the course of 1917-1968, gaining access to state power and significant political and economic benefits at the very cost of their antisystemic nature. Social compromises and Fordist arrangements meant better quality of life for workers as long as the status quo was agreed upon and maintained by them. The first half of the argument explores this history of movements in core regions of the world exposing how their decades of struggle and proximity to power forever altered their character.

Secondly, at the same time these powerful movements lost antisystemic momentum, all across the colonial world struggles for independence placed critical strain on metropole powers. Following World War II, these independence movements in Asia and Africa became the radical world actors; of course, this says little revolutions, such as those in China and Cuba, that fundamentally altered the balance of the world-system at this time. By 1968, the vast majority of the world’s population was free of colonial rule, and those still under colonialism were in active resistance. Pushed by antisystemic movements, independent states became the norm across the globe, and the interstate system looked much as it does today. Yet, much like the older labor and socialist efforts, these movements across the colonial world pursued state power, becoming
independent nation-states within the capitalist world-system. This dilemma of movement strategy lies in large part behind the often systemic outcomes of antisystemic activity.

**Labor and Socialism: Growing Unrest and Institutionalization at the Centers of Power**

The first part of the history of antisystemic struggle follows the continuing evolution of labor and socialist struggles in core regions during this time. Labor, growing in strength, size, and organizational sophistication from the second half of the nineteenth century, entered 1917-1968 with a bang. The labor unrest following World War I and later World War II clearly defines the activities of workers’ struggles during this period. Arrighi’s assessment captures something of the pathbreaking essence of these postwar peaks of antisystemic activity:

Both world wars did in fact generate global waves of class struggle. Overall strike activity declined in the opening years of the two wars only to escalate rapidly in their closing years. The resulting peaks in world labor unrest had no historical precedent and have remained unmatched to this day. And each peak was associated with a major socialist revolution — the first with the Soviet Revolution and the second with the Chinese Revolution. (1990, p. 65; see also Arrighi 1983)

The work of the World Labor Unrest research working group (Silver, Arrighi & Dubofsky 1995) confirms this startling surge in labor unrest. The peaks for strike waves worldwide following World War I and World War II present the highest- and second-highest surges respectively on record. Major, watershed strike waves follow both wars in Italy (Arrighi 1995), the United States (Dubofsky 1983, 1995; Edwards 1981; Babson 1999), Germany (Casparis & Arrighi 1995) and a host of other countries, and strike waves follow World War I alone in locales as far apart as South Africa (Beittel 1995) and China. On China, Selden confirms that “the labor unrest of the years 1922-27... best illustrates the conjuncture of labor with international issues of imperialism and nationalist revolution” (1995, p. 74), the latter explored elsewhere in this essay. Made evident in these waves, labor unrest presents an interesting part of overall antisystemic
activity during 1917-1968 while crucially displaying the dangers inherent in any movements’ rise to power.

A brief exploration of the details behind these unprecedented strike waves offers an interesting history of labor’s antisystemic challenge — and ultimate decline — over 1917-1968. Without question, the close of the First World War awakened a somewhat quiescent labor in much of the world. In the United States, the famous Great Steel Strike of 1919 reflected a larger mass strike wave across the country, and “labor in North America seemed to be a potent political force” (Dubofsky 1983, p. 33). In the textile districts of New England, railroad yards across much of the country, the coalfields of the Midwest, as well as the dockyards of the West Coast, workers rose up to make claims on the postwar state (Brecher 1997). In Seattle, longshoremen demonstrated affinity for the Bolshevik revolution in Russia by refusing to load arms destined for Kolchek and the counterrevolution in Siberia — the effect of which “was to suddenly bring American labor struggles into the context of the revolutionary conflicts sweeping the world in the wake of World War I” (Brecher 1997, p. 128). Across Europe at the same time, labor rallied against the state in a crucial wave of strikes, factory occupations, and mass demonstrations that shook the continent (Arrighi 1983). In Germany, strikes in the metalworking industry and the mines of Silesia, a navy mutiny, worker-soldier councils, and military defeat combined to put Germany in a ‘revolutionary situation’ (Casparis & Arrighi 1995). In Spain, labor organization grew rapidly from 1914, divided as it was between socialist and anarcho-syndicalist strategies (Smith 1995).

Yet, this upsurge in militancy would not last. In the United States and across Europe labor’s immediate postwar gains were quickly stymied in the 1920s. In the United States, the 1920s present a relative lull or a ‘lost decade’ in labor activity (Nelson 1997), as trade unions
went into relative decline and strikes fell to the lowest levels of the industrial era (Brecher 1997; Dubofsky 1983). At this time, “the power of the government came down heavily on capital’s side” (Brody 1993, p. 62) — American capital rose as labor movements fell. In Great Britain, home to the exceptional General Strike of 1926, 8.3 million workers were organized in trade unions at the start of the 1920s; by the open of the 1930s, that number had fallen to 4.4 million (Williams 1995). In a somewhat different manner, the rise of fascism in Italy as early as 1922, as well as Spain and Germany, spelt doom for labor struggles as such organizations were ruthlessly crushed.

Interestingly, in almost all these above cases, the correlation between labor, socialism, and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia lent the state justification for its actions. The attainment of state power in Russia, held out as a source of hope for workers around the world, was utilized as a reason for states, democratic or otherwise, to come down on labor and reverse the gains of the postwar period. The dilemma was such that “for much of Europe (and indeed the world) during these years, the Russian Revolution served as a model of future trends. But the same revolution that served as a positive example for left-wing militancy served equally as a spur to anti-left activities among those who feared communism” (Chirot 1977, p. 94). The Russian Revolution clearly dealt a ‘crippling blow’ to the socialists organized in the Second International (Dubofsky 1983). Mussolini and Franco justified their power grabs on the need to fight the spread of communism in their countries (Halliday 1999). Nationalism, in its extreme form in fascism, was thus utilized in the consolidation of capital to the detriment of radical labor and socialism (Polanyi 1944). Here, we see a critical paradox at work in the struggles between the forces of historical capitalism and those who would oppose it. The relative success of antisystemic struggle provided inspiration and support for some while also serving as a powerful
weapon against future efforts for others, a recurring theme throughout the history of antisystemic struggle.²

**Interlude: Internationals and Antisystemic Cooperation and Competition**

Within this history of organized labor’s gains and setbacks can be found interesting examples of antisystemic linkages across borders and the cooperation and antagonism that such ties fostered. With massive surges in membership and begrudging acceptance by the state, the nascent labor struggles of the previous era, 1848-1917, became the *organizations* familiar even today. Movements’ development into sustained organizations only facilitated the development of transnational linkages, whether complementary or antagonistic. Such international organizations had of course been around for some time, but the First International was short lived due in no small part to it being a ‘weak collection of weak movements’ (Wallerstein 1990). The Second International that followed would instead be composed of nationally-based parties and trade union federations, providing a more solid foundation for sustaining the organization. Yet, here again, the First World War devastated the Second International (Stevis 1999; Dubofsky 1983), as war weakened member groups both organizationally and ideologically. Thus, international movements started 1917-1968 at something of a disadvantage.

However, with the attainment of power in Russia, socialists had a ‘success’ to emulate elsewhere and even gain support from in the process. On the heels of the revolution, “the Bolsheviks would place the ‘national question’ squarely at the center of the international communist movement” (Griffler 1995, p. 12). Following their own revolution, Russian socialists were quick to turn their attention to revolution elsewhere in the world, establishing a new

² This paradox can be seen at work in the inspiration that antisystemic struggles such as the Haitian Revolution of the Paris Commune provided for others seeking radical social change. These same efforts were utilized by national and international interests to repress brutally slave rebellions in the Caribbean and radical organization in Europe respectively.
international with the expressed hope of developing movements that could overthrow states everywhere. Along these lines, “at the Congress of Baku in 1921... Lenin in effect proposed a formal alliance between the anticapitalist social movements of the core and the anti-imperialist nationalist movements of the periphery” (Wallerstein 1990, p. 25). Indeed, the Communist International (Comintern) at this time was organized precisely to guide revolutionary efforts around the globe (Katz 1997). In this role, the Comintern held seven congresses and until World War II was “a major factor in the politics of many European states and those of China and much of the colonial world” (Halliday 1999, p. 106).

Discussed in greater detail elsewhere, the Soviets in this role provided important support in the development of the Chinese Revolution (Pantsov 2000), while Filipino radicals, who would play a ‘central leadership role’ in the development of Philippine communism, studied and trained in Moscow in the 1930s (Morris 1994). In 1936, civil war erupted in Spain between Republicans and Franco’s forces. Interestingly (and perhaps famously), this struggle in Spain became “a test for the moral convictions of the Left everywhere in the Western world” (Diggins 1992, p. 177). Again, the Soviet Comintern fought on the side of the loyalists — as did communist from throughout Europe. 3200 Americans even entered the conflict as the Abraham Lincoln Battalion on the side of the loyalists. Such struggles and their international dimension highlight the positive dynamics of antisystemic linkages at this time.

Yet, the interwar years are important for another reason due to the divide that emerged amongst the left at this time. In 1919 at Berne, Switzerland, European social democrats took steps to restore the Second International under the expressed ideal that the Bolshevik Revolution was not relevant for the development of socialism (Callaghan 2001). With the near-contemporaneous development of the Third International oriented toward communism and the
Soviet state, two separate internationalist movements emerged “vehemently opposed one to the other” (Arrighi, Hopkins & Wallerstein 1989, p. 32) from the very beginning. Amongst labor, similar divisions became readily apparent. Condemning here, “by 1922, the divisions within the world’s labor movement broke down its prospects of becoming a hegemonic organization within socialist civil society” (Stevis 1998, p. 58). The International Federation of Trade Unions, founded in 1919, and the communist-led International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions, founded in 1921, competed with each other throughout the 1920s and the 1930s. Following World War II, these sorts of divisions, discussed in detail ahead, would only strengthen amongst labor organizations under the demands of the Cold War and United States’ hegemony.

Finally, labor also had uneven relationships with other movements at this time. During the interwar years, labor and black radicals in the United States reached an uneasy alliance of sorts (Griffler 1995). As Griffler points out (and discussed later in this essay), “The decade following World War I displayed a vibrancy in Black radicalism in the United States that no decade before or since could match” (1995, p. 13), and due to massive migrations of African Americans to the industrial north, blacks workers were also important for a developing labor movement at the same time. Labor organizations were thus compelled to address the ‘Negro Question,’ pushed and linked to workers’ struggles by Black radicals. At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1927, Stalin even weighed in on the ‘Negro Question,’ declaring that “one of the most important tasks of the Communist Party consists in the struggle for a complete and real

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3 So complete was the orientation of the Third International to the Soviet Union that it quickly transformed “from a network of parallel movements into a hierarchical structure adjusted to the needs of a particular state power” (Wallerstein 1990, p. 25). Cooperation in such a case becomes domination, and linkages turn into one-way conduits of exchange.

4 The International Workers of the World, it should be addressed, were one of the few labor organizations that from its inception sought to organize workers regardless of race. However, the Wobbles suffered fierce repression during the years of the First World War and were thus greatly weakened relative to other labor organizations which had grown during the same period (Brecher 1997).
equality of the Negroes, for the abolition of all kinds of social and political inequalities” (Griffler 1995, p. 84). The recognition of the importance of race and racial inequality was clearly pushed by Black radicals at this time, and labor and socialists efforts were compelled to address this fact in the expression of movement goals. Such a meeting of movements displays the cooperation and conflict inherent in antisystemic activity, 1917-1968.

Labor and the New Deal in the United States: The Routinization of Unrest in the 1930s

In Europe, by the close of the 1930s, labor had experienced a ‘significant erosion’ of the gains made following World War I and the early 1920s (Salter & Stephenson 1990). Yet, in many ways, the labor-capital arrangements facilitated by the Roosevelt administration in the United States provide a prelude to the institutionalization of labor throughout the core countries following World War II. This window of time was when “American trade unions reached their twentieth-century apogee, whether measured by organizing success, economic power, or political influence” (Lichtenstein 2002, p. 12; see also Nelson 1997). After a rather extended period of quietude, American labor came to life in the mid-1930s: realizing the biggest organizing victories in its history, witnessing the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO), and demonstrating the power of the sit-down strike in a wave of related, massive labor protests, including the important General Motors strike in 1937 (Babson 1999; Nelson 1997; Brecher 1997). The result of this conjuncture of labor activity “produced a major transformation in the dominant pattern of labor-capital relations in the most capital-intensive sectors of the United States economy... [T]rade unionism had come to stay in that sector of the economy, and capital began to bargain with labor’ representatives” (Dubofsky 1995, p. 133).

Behind this activity, however, lay the trends of a shift that would mark the true demise of labor as an antisystemic force in the centers of power in the capitalist world-system. Section 7A
of the New Deal’s National Recovery Act guaranteed the right of workers to organize, an important, if loaded, victory for organized labor. The 1935 Wagner Act affirmed this right for unions in the United States, and labor was a recognized force in the production process in the United States. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935, establishing the National Labor Relations Board, set up a government body for mediation in the labor-capital relationship. Most interesting, at this time, unions, including those in the CIO, began to play something of a double game, playing ‘champion’ of the sit-down movement to workers, while, “to management, the CIO was able to sell itself with equal honesty as a mechanism for disciplining the workforce” (Brecher 1997, p. 235).

In the 1930s, one thus witnesses the institutionalization of labor in the United States, as workers demands were channeled into organizations and forms of protest acceptable to capital and the state. At this time, workers and their unions even become linked to the ‘established bourgeois party’ of the democrats rather than any left-wing party (Dubofsky 1983). Edwards provides powerful summary, explaining that “rank and file protests came increasingly under institutional control as the New Deal progressed. Union recognition and collective agreements with employers were made the main aims, and the conservation of CIO leaders and the revival of the AFL illustrates the absorption of rank and file militancy by union structures” (1981, p. 171). In the United States, emerging hegemon in the world-system, labor organizations thereby subsumed the radical power of the workers who filled their ranks — making labor protest ‘safe’ for systemic forces. This development would be realized on a much larger scale following World War II, *even with the assistance of these same movements.*
Labor and Socialism after World War II: The Demise of Antisystemic Character

“In every instance in which workers confronted state power directly it was the state rather than the labour movement which emerged triumphant... By and large, workers achieved significant gains only in cooperation with the state, not in opposition to it” (Salter & Stephenson 1990, p. 4).

The immediate postwar period brought to fruition the organizing gains of labor and a related socialism in many parts of the world. Decades of struggle, going back to the nineteenth century, found these important antisystemic actors well positioned to realize serious gains. 1945 can be seen as a ‘psychological turning point,’ as these movements as well as important nationalist/anti-colonial struggles for independence discussed at length ahead, seemed stronger and closer to success than ever before in their history (Wallerstein 1990; Arrighi, Hopkins & Wallerstein 1989). Part of a larger ‘Marxist-Leninist’ revolutionary wave stemming from the Russian Revolution (Katz 1997; see also Arrighi 1990), numerous communist governments came to power in Europe (as well as China and North Korea). This revolutionary situation was seemingly strengthened by the presence of mass communist parties in France, Italy, Greece, and Czechoslovakia, while such parties had entered political coalitions in much of Western Europe (Callaghan 2001). In England, the labor party won the 1945 election, and Attlee succeeded the war-hero Churchill on the foundation of an agenda for real social change — nationalized healthcare and industry being among the changes to come. Social-democrats in much of Western Europe saw success on unparalleled levels. At the same time, in the United States and throughout Europe, one the largest strike waves on record also followed the war. In Germany and Italy with the collapse of fascist regimes, labor was given room to maneuver for the first time in years.

Yet, the close of World War II also marked the beginning of United States’ hegemony and the accompanying Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. With Europe

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5 The postwar years really are the era of the ‘success’ of national liberation movements around the world.
devastated by the war, the United States stepped into a rebuilding role on the continent looking to shape postwar Europe to the desires of the new hegemon. The Marshall Plan offered European states much needed support only with serious strings attached; Europe was to be made safe for the growth of (American) capitalism. Not surprisingly, the Russians, now a major presence in Eastern Europe, rejected the terms put forth by the United States. Meanwhile, the Truman Doctrine made the United States’ desire to contain the spread of communism blatant. In fact, a large component of United States’ hegemony at this time included a counterrevolutionary thrust aimed directly at antisystemic movements at home and abroad; anti-communism became an ‘ideological carapace’ of the newly constituted hegemon (Arrighi, Hopkins & Wallerstein 1989).

In this era of polarized world politics, labor and socialism in the United States and much of Europe compromised — realizing the closure of their time as antisystemic forces. O’Connor nicely captures the shifts that had now occurred:

By the third quarter of the 20th century, the national leaders of social democratic, communist, and nationalist parties succeeded to power and privilege. The price that they had to pay — or, more accurately, the price that they made their working classes pay — was the abandonment of class politics. Struggles for political goals or ends were regarded as more or less completed (the left’s own ‘end of history’ thesis) and politics largely became means to the end of realizing economic and social demands. Working class political parties became parties of national rule and they themselves became the left-wing of the establishment or the establishment itself. (1994, p. 9)

Labor in the United States was now a major pillar of support for the state’s agenda. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act made the state’s intentions even more clear — radical opposition had no place in organized labor.

In 1952, the AFL for the first time formally endorsed a major party candidate, Adlai Stevenson. The 1955 merger of the AFL and CIO created a massive and powerful labor organization, “but one committed irrevocably to the two-party system” (Brody 1993, p. 70; see
also Dubofsky 1983). Under the fordist reorganization of labor-capital relations, labor accepted higher wages, greater levels of employment, and the benefits of the welfare state in return for the routinization of protest under collective bargaining agreements. Similar if even wider social accords were also struck throughout much of Europe. In the worldwide picture at this time, under United States’ hegemony, “while pro-communist parties and movements were repressed, core working classes were coopted via the extension of Fordist mass consumption norms” (Silver 1995, p. 174).

Part of this cooption meant labor even began to play an increasing international role in controlling the direction of labor politics worldwide. In postwar Germany, American policy-makers were fearful of radical labor reemerging in this key European state, especially given the proximity of Soviet power in Eastern Europe, and “aided by the AFL... acted vigorously to ensure the tractability of German labor” (Eisenberg 1983, p. 306). This pattern was repeated again and again over the coming decades as the AFL established regional labor offices in all parts of the world that became tools for the spread of American policy goals. The AFL and the CIO also joined the Dies Committee and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in purging its own unions during the Anticommunist campaign (Rose 2000). At the transnational level, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), organized in 1945, “brought together the vast majority of unions in Europe, South America, and Asia, with the notable exceptions of the AFL and Christian unions” (Stevis 1998, p. 59). The AFL was in fact extremely hostile to the WFTU, distrusting of the member British Trade Unions Council (TUC) and other socialist unions, and in 1949 would help form the adversarial International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). In the polarized world of the Cold War, the

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6 According to Rose, "Anticommunism was also used by the government to contain the peace movement and other progressive activities" (2000, p. 81-82).
ICFTU and WFTU then became “transmission belts for the priorities of the interests of U.S. and U.S.S.R labor-state alliances” (Stevis 1998, p. 60).

Under conditions of economic prosperity and with collective bargaining a part of the labor process, the 1950s and 1960s saw the ‘withering away of the strike’ (Silver 1995) and the opening of an era of relative social peace. These movements, which had only emerged in the second half of the nineteenth, had succeeded in roughly a century’s time in realizing many of their goals. The postwar world was a markedly different place, and these movements — at first in opposition, now in cooperation — played a major role in the transformations that occurred. The Russian Revolution at the open of the period inspired and supported a wide array of socialist revolutions and insurgencies in the following decades. In the capitalist states, labor unrest and the growth of socialist and communist parties threatened the very process of capital accumulation. The social accords that were struck with militant labor assured workers of significant gains under the agreement that the status quo be maintained. The eventual détente that was reached between the United States and the Soviet Union (not to mention China) secured much the same on a global scale. These arrangements were affected precisely because of the threats posed by this legacy of antisystemic activity.

The goal of state power, set out in the previous era, 1848-1917, had been achieved to a greater or lesser degree, “resulting in a complex pattern of antisystemic mobilization combined with constant co-optation” (Wallerstein 1983, p. 19). Labor ultimately undermined itself in the core, because multinational corporations soon sought the advantages of lower wages and lax governmental control in the periphery and began shifting labor-intensive work to new locales. Accordingly, as labor power began relatively to diminish in the core, it picked up in the periphery and helped tilt the balance in favor of the anti-colonial/imperial and nationalist
projects. The seeds of nationalism were coming of age throughout the world, ushering in a rejection of colonialism and the status quo. The dilemmas of change would thereby be placed before the many nationalist and anti-colonial movements that flowered around the world during this same time — a crucial history to which the rest of the text is devoted.\textsuperscript{7} The struggles against empire and oppression tell the most important story of 1917-1968. As a large collection of established movements receded in relative importance, struggles throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America would surge to the fore and radically alter the world from 1917 to 1968.

\textbf{Revolution and Independence in Asia, Africa and Latin America}

In the first decade after the Second World War, the United States solidified its position as hegemon in the world-system. With the Marshall Plan, Europe and Japan would be rebuilt and a new world economic order based on militarism and an unstable interstate system would dominate the globe. As already shown, this would have dramatic implications for labor in the core but would also have major repercussions in colonial states throughout what would become the periphery. By the turn of the twentieth century the seeds of nationalism were firmly planted around the globe. Highlighting the radical foundation for this anti-colonial nationalism, Lenin’s \textit{Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism} provided in part an ideological basis for revolt against colonialism and imperialism for a growing body of nationalists in the non-western world (Stavrianos 1981). Darryl Thomas notes of this rising educated middle-class in Africa and Asia:

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In Paris, a predominating communist influence spread among young African, Asian and West Indian students who were later to become national leaders. At one time or another, Ho Chi Minh, Felix Houphuet-Boigny, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, and C.L.R. James were all part of this group. In London Harold Laski tutored Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Krishna Menon at the London School of Economics. (2001, p. 41)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{7} It should be pointed out that the movements that emerge in the next period starting with 1968 target the very movements here that ‘succeeded.’ These movements would target the very failure of the strategies and the co-optation of these movements. The 1962 Port Huron statement of Students for a Democratic Society, for example, openly challenged the ‘old’ left.
These figures would in many instances lead struggles against empire across the colonial world, and some of these leaders would be instrumental in forming an Afro-Asian alliance, discussed later, that would help to reshape the modern world system after World War II. The antisystemic movements aimed at freedom from colonial rule occupy a central place in the remainder of the discussion here. These movements, often with strong ties to socialism and communism, became the radical actors that altered the world from 1917 to 1968.

_Rebellion and Revolt in Asia_

Throughout a larger Asia from 1917 to 1968, independence and revolution swayed the balance of power from intrusive, colonial powers to a large and important set of newly independent and often radical states. The sheer size of countries like China, India, and Indonesia, for example, that witnessed revolutions and/or movements for independence makes Asia a highly significant section of the world at this time. In the post-war polarized world, the United States would turn its attention to Asia invading Vietnam and playing a major role in the politics of countries such as the Philippines. Radical movements across Asia took up challenges at this time and utilized the relative weakness of colonial powers following the Second World War to achieve independence.

_Revolution in China_

1917 marks the year of Russian Revolution. Yet, almost coincident with the struggle of the Bolsheviks in Russia, in Asia the Chinese Revolution covers much of 1917-1968, a decades long struggle opening with the Republican Revolution in 1911 that would eventually result in the formation of the communist People’s Republic of China in 1949 under Mao’s leadership. The

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8 Wolf (1969) traces the impetus for China’s revolution back to the Taiping and Nien struggles of the middle nineteenth century, what he calls “rehearsals of a still greater event, the peasant-based Communist revolution of the twentieth century” (p. 118-119). There can be little doubt that in China and places throughout the world, earlier struggles carried lessons and helped to form the issues and protagonists that would push resistance in later times.
conditions which pushed China’s revolutionary path from 1911-1949 ring familiar with many locales around Asia during the same time — continual foreign encroachment, the spread of industry and trade, and agricultural discontent among them. Such changes combined to push a ‘rising anti-foreign nationalism’ in China (Wolf 1969) evident in the formation of the nationalist Kuo Min Tang and the Chinese Communist Party (in 1921). Interesting as well, world war again had an impact on Chinese discontent when the May Fourth Movement, “a significant advance in the growth of Chinese nationalism” (Lazzerini 1999, p. 13), erupted alongside a major strike wave (Selden 1983) to condemn allied decisions after the close of World War I. One also cannot fail to note that the civil war in China recommences in 1946 after the close of the Second World War; the end of the struggle against Japan and its long occupation of much of China meant that attention could again turn to issues at home.

The long road of revolution in China offers something of a microcosm of larger issues of cooperation and antagonism between antisystemic movements from 1917 to 1968. For instance, in 1923, the Kuo Min Tang established a formal relationship and exchange of advisors with the Soviet Union. Even with Chinese communists as something of a ‘second party’ in the early nationalist-Soviet relationship (Wolf 1969), the Bolsheviks had a profound impact on Chinese Communists in the early years, so much so that the Chinese “slavishly followed the ideological lead of their Russian idols” (Pantsov 2000, p. 209). Displaying the antagonisms inherent between parties in a revolutionary situation, the nationalists and communists in China would of course part ways in 1927 after Chiang Kai-shek’s turn against the communists. The communists’ famous Long March in 1934 under Mao was an effort on their part to escape Kuo Min Tang encirclement. The communists would ultimately prevail, yet the revolutionary process

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9 Such concern with revolutionary nationalism is of course indicative of Soviet Comintern desires at this time, but it is also interesting to note that the ‘Chinese Question’ played an important role in Soviet intra-party conflict, as Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin all weighed in with different opinions on China (Pantsov 2000).
in China demonstrates the ways in which internal and external antisystemic actors worked together and against one another at different times.

China’s antisystemic impact was quickly felt throughout Asia and eventually around the world. From the ashes of the Nationalist Revolution and Chiang Kai-shek’s coup, Mao and the communists would adopt a new strategy for revolutionary change that focused instead on the peasantry. As will be seen in the discussion ahead, the Chinese communists’ strategy focusing on the importance of the peasantry would gain serious favor throughout Asia (and eventually around the globe) and the many struggles for independence that came during 1917-1968. One cannot discount the overall impact of China’s revolution on antisystemic movements elsewhere; the success of the Soviet-influenced First Five Year Plan in 1952 would drive this point home again in the years immediate following the revolution (Lazzerini 1999). Likewise, the very success of the revolution in attaining state power in Asia echoed loudly the accomplishments of the Russian Revolution, again reinforcing the state-power strategy for anti-systemic movements (Arrihi, Hopkins & Wallerstein 1989) — in Asia and elsewhere. In many ways, China became the revolutionary ideal at this time, the true revolutionary state for antisystemic movements around the world.

In 1956, the revolutionary successes, China and the Soviet Union, would split, marking a key historical division amongst post-war communist states; in many ways the dispute was over the aims and goals of revolutionary communism. Mao’s belief in sheer violence and revolution to realize change presented a radical option for aspiring revolutionaries throughout the world-system at a time when reformist parliamentarianism was increasingly common. In other words, “Mao asserted the necessity of violence in the destruction of the reactionary state’s power. Participating in the parliamentary activities of the bourgeois state, as the French and Italian
communists were doing, simply served to legitimize bourgeois institutions and dampen the revolutionary ardor of the masses” (Morris 1994, p. 82). Such sentiment would find many supporters in China and elsewhere in the world during Mao’s time and long after.

*War and Independence in Asia and the Pacific*

The antisystemic story in Asia goes well beyond China at this time as the many European colonies found throughout Asia erupted with anti-colonial fervor. With many once antisystemic movements now occupying political office in Europe as organized parties, the struggles here grow all the more complex; to the point, for example:

Communism, socialism and anti-colonial revolutions have been among the leading protagonists of the twentieth century. Sometimes they have been complementary, at other times opposed. During the First Indochinese War (1945-1954), they were both. Communists in Vietnam were in the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle, while Communists and Socialists in France responded in a variety of convergent and divergent ways. (Rice-Maximin 1986, p. ix)

The revolutions in Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia would indeed challenge colonial powers and many assumptions about movement desires at home and abroad. Radical organizations in one location would often be forced to choose between the colonial demands for independence and their own aspirations for state power and political participation at home. Ultimately, 1917-1968 can be characterized by sustained antisystemic activity throughout Asia, and much like the colonies of Africa, a nascent anti-imperial fervor would explode following World War II and result in independence and the formation of new states throughout a large part of the world.

The very experience of Japanese occupation during the war links many movements against empire after the war throughout Asia and the Pacific at this time. The demands of such occupation, including forced rice deliveries to support Japanese troops in Indonesia, the Philippines, Indochina, and elsewhere, placed strains on rural peasantries as well as urban
populations that ignited resistance everywhere. Almost without exception, the insurgencies across Asia enjoyed widespread support amongst rural populations, keying on similar social structural factors that encouraged Mao’s focus on the peasantry in China. Nationalists in India, the Viet Minh in Indochina, the Hukbalahap in the Philippines, for example, enjoyed key support amongst peasant populations in their countries, lending significant weight to postwar efforts at change. In China, the Philippines as well as Indochina, the Japanese invasion provided a major catalyst in bringing the peasantry to the side of the communists who were seen actively resisting Japan’s advances while other groups and their leaders collaborated (Wolf 1969; Bradley 1999, 2000).

Combining such conditions with the political and economic strains of the war effort on European powers, following the war all across Asia, rural insurgencies and larger revolutionary possibilities made it seem “as if for one brief moment the societies of Southeast Asia could begin to shape their own futures without dictation from the outside” (Anderson 1972, p. xii-xiii). Of course, mitigating circumstances — the strong desire of weakened but still powerful European states to hold on to colonial possessions, the Cold War struggles between the Soviet Union and the United States — meant such openings were brief, but resistance and revolution in a larger Asia would result in the end of empire over the course of 1917-1968.

The postwar surge in struggles for independence really came after decades, if not centuries, of antisystemic activity throughout Asia. The parties, guerilla movements, and other groups that would lead struggles for independence often came into existence in the interwar years. The emergence of nationalism in India can even be traced as far back as the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. By the opening years of the period at hand, Indian

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10 In the Philippines, for example, the Huk Rebellion from 1946-1953 arguably has origins in longer histories of protest dating back to the early years of Spanish colonization (Walton 1984).
resistance, led very often by the Congress movement, was placing major strains on British colonialism. Perhaps indicative of the strength of the Congress movement, by the 1930s, the Indian National Congress was even lending support to anti-imperial and anti-fascist struggles in China, Palestine, and Spain (Prasad 1983). In the early 1930s as well, Ghandi led campaigns of civil disobedience, the salt march and rent strikes for example, that were also happening alongside bombings, widespread violence, and the Chittagong Arsenal Raid in Bengal (Cell 1999). 1942 brought the Quit India Movement and British authority in India was placed under serious pressure (although still able to repress such movements until after the war).

Elsewhere, in 1924 American members of the Communist International entered the Philippines, and several years later, the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands was proclaimed — on November 7, 1930, the symbolic date of the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution (Morris 1994). The Vietnamese Nationalist Party was founded in 1927 “on the model of the Chinese Kuo Min Tang” (Wolf 1969, p. 180; see also Short 1989) and by 1930 led a significant uprising at Yen Bay. Vietnamese communists, unified under Ho Chi Minh in 1930, sponsored an uprising at Nghe An in 1929. 1926 and 1927 saw communist revolts in Java and West Sumatra, both part of the 1920’s pergerakan in Indonesia which “met its death in an attempt to seize state power” (Shiraishi 1990, p. 339).

The postwar struggles for independence clearly emerged from these extended histories of protest and (often failed) resistance throughout Asia. The economic, social, and political impacts of decades of colonialism — negative changes in labor regimes, agricultural production processes, and land tenure high among them — meshed with the contestation and then end Japanese occupation and the postwar weakness of metropole powers (still keen to hold on to colonial possessions) to unleash a wave of Asian independence efforts following World War II.
These many earlier struggles played no small role in establishing the conditions and providing the buildup for such change. Walton’s assessment of the situation for the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines resonates for much of a larger Asia, in that “the prewar years witnessed a general organization and mobilization of workers, significant increases in labor unrest and militant protest, and all of this was based on a broad coalition of rural agricultural and urban industrial workers” (1984, p. 57). In such a manner, revolutionary actors were created.

Taken altogether, the postwar wave of anti-colonial, nationalist, and/or communist struggles in Asia presents a remarkable history. After prolonged struggle, India would gain independence in 1947. In 1945, nationalist revolution would swell in Indonesia, ending in 1949 when the Dutch transferred legal sovereignty to the Indonesians under Sukarno (Anderson 1972). By the early 1960s, the Indonesian Communist party (PKI) would be the largest non-ruling communist party in the world. Linked to the PKI, the Filipino radical, Jose Maria Sison, would form the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 after coming in contact with the PKI while on scholarship in Indonesia (Morris 1994). After decades of anti-colonial resistance, the August Revolution took place in Vietnam in 1945. On September 2, 1945, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed Vietnam free of colonial rule, “marking the successful culmination of the August Revolution that brought to power the revolutionary leadership of the first postcolonial independent Vietnamese state” (Bradley 1999, p. 23; see also, Bradley 2000; Short 1989). Of course, in Vietnam, matters were not so simple, and 1945 would be only the beginning of a prolonged anti-imperial struggle that would envelope neighboring states as well. In 1946, fighting would break out between the Viet Minh and the French, who had returned to Indochina after the departure of the Chinese. 

11 Using, in part, arms sold to them by the Kuo Min Tang (Wolf 1969).
12 It is interesting to note that the presence of the Chinese and Americans in Vietnam following the end of the Pacific War played no small role in facilitating the Viet Minh’s rise to power. As Worthing relates, “The presence
In 1954 at Dien Bien Phu, the French ultimately suffered “a defeat of such magnitude that it impaired their ability to continue the war” (Wolf 1969, p. 187). After the French defeat, another hugely symbolic moment in the history of antisystemic resistance, the United States, fighting the Cold War and aiming to contain the spread of communism, would more fully enter the war on the side of the Diem government in the south, ultimately to withdraw in humiliating defeat only in the 1970s. Of no small consequence, the loss of Vietnam severely shook United States hegemony in the world-system, as the Cold War super-power fell to a communist guerilla insurgency fighting against tall military odds.

From late 1945 to early 1946, even Japan would approach a revolutionary situation created by an unhappy Japanese working class (Selden 1983). Meanwhile 1946-1953 brought the Huk Rebellion to the Philippines, this time a ‘failed’ struggle against a relatively weak state supported by the United States. Thus, throughout much of Asia, these emergent struggles, many gaining independence in the years after the war, could trace origins of discontent to an intersection between changes wrought at the national level, often under colonialism, and the neo-colonial ambitions of imperialist powers (Walton 1984). The post-war succession of independent Asian states represents a critical wave of interrelated antisystemic struggles. By 1968, some of the most populous countries in the world had challenged colonialism and won independence. Communists in China, Vietnam and elsewhere openly pressed systemic forces. The very fact that Vietnam drew the might of American military power against the communists there indicates the importance of these struggles in Asia. Yet, the movements for independence in Asia had company in many other places in the world at this time.

of the Chinese and Americans delayed the return of the French and ensured that Ho Chi Minh had time in which to consolidate his control over Vietnamese politics and to prepare for future negotiations with the French” (1997, p. 127). Interestingly, Ho Chi Minh had worked with the United States as an agent against the Japanese during the war, and for some time afterwards, the Viet Minh leadership would continue to look toward the United States for help (Bradley 1999, 2000).
Pan-Africanism, Black Nationalism and Independence in Africa and the African Diaspora

“Colonization has provided the shock that awakened them and inspired a new spirit. It is not paradoxical to contend that colonization engendered nationalism, not only that of clans and tribes, but also doctrinal, unifying nationalism, which transforms the struggle of colonized nations into a struggle on a world-wide scale” (Mamadou Dia 1961[1974]).

Pan-Africanism emerged as a collective ideology that embraced all peoples of African Descent. As such, it called for a direct response and challenge to the notion of white superiority and the worldwide discrimination against Africans and people of African descent. As an historical process, to temporally tie Pan-Africanism to the twentieth century negates the long histories of a people who throughout modern slavery, maroonage, and emancipation, still maintained their cultural links to the African continent. Under these terms Pan-Africanism can be seen as consciousness movement as well as a political movement.

As a political project, Pan Africanism took two different trajectories early on as oppressed blacks responded to racial inequality and denigration in different ways. As far back as slavery on the one hand, free blacks and free people of color throughout the Americas developed a political “consciousness” that leaned toward integration and assimilation. On the other hand, the descendants of slavery challenged Euro-American hegemony through separatist’s movements such as, “emigration, migration and external colonialism” (Robinson 1997).

Ultimately, what dictated the way in which blacks sought social equality and economic justice was highly dependent on their life experiences. As this tradition historically unfolded, African descendents throughout the Diaspora have without fail found themselves historically divided into the political camps — integrationist or separatist. In the end, what connected Africans and people of African descent was their common experience of racial domination. 

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13 Geiss (165) has a chapter on 19th century forerunners, this implies that Pan-Africanism had a definitive starting point. Any top-down analysis would make this assumption. We see Pan Africanism as a consciousness as well as a political movement. Places where there are large ex-slave populations such as Brazil, Haiti and Cuba, African descendants have synthesized some of their cultural traditions with Europeans, but for the most part they have kept those spiritual ties that link them to the continent.
early development of Pan-Africanism and Nationalist politics continued this ideological tradition until after the Second World War. In spite of this dual political consciousness and variance in strategies, the common goal was the same. As Magubane notes of the movement:

That the birth of Pan-Africanism took place 20 years after the collective dismemberment of Africa by Europe, and 25 year after the political expulsion of the black from the democratic process in America is important. It is further important that this movement conceived the emancipation of Africa from white rule as a prerequisite to the emancipation of the black in America and wherever foreign rule was perpetrated on the African. (1994, p. 135)

It would not be until the mid twentieth century that both traditions would merge and confront the forces of imperialism and colonialism as a unified movement.

The Pan African movement prior to the Second World War was basically ineffectual. The First Pan African Conference was held in London in July 1900. It was organized by Henry Sylvester Williams and W.E.B. Dubois and was comprised of elite intellectuals from Africa (which was underrepresented), the United States, the West Indies and a few participants who actually resided in London (Geiss 1974). The most positive result of this meeting was that by 1905 the African Aid Association, which had been in existence since 1861, would become the Pan-African Association (Magubane 1994). This led to the five Pan-African Congresses of 1919, 1921, 1923, 1927, and 1945, and the institutionalization of a black political movement. In between the 1900 and 1919 Congresses, the Universal Races Conference took place in London in 1911. This conference was attended by intellectuals and philanthropists from all over the world most notably Dubois and Gandhi. According to Geiss, the most important result of the Universal Races Conference would be the rise of Mohammed Ali Duse, who through his journal the
"African Times and Orient Review" can be credited as a journalistic forerunner to the Afro-Asian alliance at Bandung discussed later (Geiss 1974).14

The 1921 Pan-African Congress congress can be seen as a highpoint of the early Pan-African movement in the 1920s. On two points it was successful. This Congress laid the groundwork for more African participation and direct appeals within the movement. Thus far, Pan-Africanism had had limited involvement from Africans, yet, in this conference of 113 delegates one third came from the continent. At the 1921 Congress, delegates were able to draft a petition to the League of Nations appealing for an end to racial discrimination world-wide. Of particular note at the 1921 Congress, Dubois and some of the other delegates attempted to disassociate themselves from the activities of Marcus Garvey (Geiss 1974). Later, the 1927 Congress in New York presents another example of the successes achieved by Pan-Africanism. The 208 delegates and 5000 participants from twenty-two states — including India, China, Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast — were able to draft resolutions calling for native rights and education for all children. They also called for development and the reorganization of commerce and the non-discriminatory treatment of people of color (Marable 1994). The stock market crash of 1929 and the global instability created by the rise in Fascism would prevent any further Pan African Congresses until 1945. By that time, the turbulent winds of change had shifted in the direction of the masses and struggles for independence exploded across Africa changing the character and content of Pan-Africanism.

14 Geiss (1974) explains that Duse would meet Garvey in London at the same time as the Races Conference (1911), making contacts with African Students and African-Americans. He would move to the U.S. in 1920 and collaborate with Garvey on his journal *The Negro World*. His global perspective on politics would inevitably lead him to settle in Lagos where he contributed to Nigerian Nationalism through his paper the *Comet*. 
Black Nationalism

Before moving to any discussion of independence efforts in Africa, a brief consideration of the second camp of black nationalism under Marcus Garvey is deserved. While the elite accommodationist intellectuals of the Pan-African Congresses were making humanitarian appeals, Marcus Garvey was forging inroads toward a mass movement through his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). After World War I, the violence perpetrated on blacks in the United States was unrelenting. There were mass migrations from the South, where lynching had become the order of the day. Migration to the North proved to be no solution for blacks after all as they were plunged into joblessness, poverty and urban squalor. Against this backdrop, Garvey presented the opportunity for American Blacks to become a part of the global majority as opposed to an isolated, impoverished black minority. Penny Von Eschen points out:

It was Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association that brought the notion of the links between the Black world and Africa to a mass audience, creating a new working-class diaspora consciousness. By linking the entire black world to Africa and its members to one another, Garvey made the American Negro conscious of his African origins and created for the first time a feeling of international solidarity between Africans and peoples of African descent. (1997, p. 10)

Magubane credits Garvey with establishing the “first truly international organization of Africans and people of African descent” and goes further to credit Garvey with being the first to make the link between Africans and African-Americans in terms of economic exploitation. In his words:

Until the advent of Garvey the struggle for black humanity and liberation was expressed largely in religious and humanitarian terms, which dissociated black energies and focused them on meaningless targets instead of pointing out the connection between the economic plunder which went on in Africa and what the black experienced in America. (Magubane 1994, p. 107).

Garvey and his movement were rightly perceived as a direct challenge to white hegemony.

Counter the integrationists amongst radical blacks, he sought nationhood rather than
accommodation or assimilation. Where the Pan-African Congress courted the League of Nations, Garvey openly condemned the League as being “null and void,” as an instrument preventing blacks from receiving true liberty and citizenship (Marable 1994). Garvey’s influence simply transcended national boundaries. His “Africa for the African” approach would not only awaken the consciousness of the working-class but would also set the tone of self-determination for a new generation of Black Nationalists who would forge an alliance with people of color throughout the globe.

The Pan-African Congresses from 1919 through 1927 and Garveyism provided the venue and laid the foundation for unifying the radical nationalists of the post World War II period. This post-war period marks the unification of both strains of Pan-Africanism, that of the intelligentsia and the working masses on the African continent as well as throughout the diaspora. The contacts and alliances made in this earlier period would be the necessary element to affect change in imperialist and colonial policy and to challenge the capitalist world-system. The discussion now turns to this critical post-war generation of nationalists that helped transform the colonial world and realize liberation from oppression for peoples across Africa and around the world.

Decolonization in Africa

The changes in power throughout the core regions that were driven home by antisystemic movements certainly appear also to have created the disequilibria necessary to step up nationalism and closely related labor activity in the colonial world. The all-out embracing of liberal ideology fostered under world war became the principal incentive for solidarity between Nationalist, Pan Africanist and labor union organizations. These themes of universal liberty had been echoed by the imperialist powers as they sought the aid of their colonial subjects in the war
Hence, the returning veterans of the Great War, on both sides of the Atlantic, would seek economic as well as social justice. With the heightened political consciousness of colonial peoples at this time, minute compromises at the local level were insufficient to stave-off the sweeping tide of change. As such, the colonial powers found themselves in crisis with challenges from all directions. Samir Amin notes:

Imperialism has never been able to make the social and political compromises necessary to install stable powers operating to its advantage….compromise is objectively unattainable, that the polarization caused by capitalist expansion creates in the periphery an objective situation that is by its very nature explosive and unstable, and potentially revolutionary. (1994, p. 28)

With nationalism at its peak following World War II, Africans were all too ready to demand liberation. India’s attainment of independence, discussed previously, provided critical evidence that struggle could result in real change while it also demonstrated the weakness of colonial powers.

Examples are abundant to highlight the instability on the African continent (and really throughout the colonial world). Egypt was the first to gain independence after a military coup in 1952, while Algeria fought a bloody revolution from 1954-1962 to gain independence from France. In 1957, Britain again relinquished political control of Ghana. With nationalism on the rise, most of the continent was decolonized by the close of the period here. This is not to mention the long fought battle on three fronts (Angola, Guinea-Bassau, and Mozambique) between Africans and the Portuguese.

At the forefront of the African liberation struggle two patterns emerged with decolonization, armed struggle and the ‘relatively’ peaceful transition to independent government. Interestingly enough, as Fredrick Cooper notes of Great Britain and France, the

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15 Geiss (1974) notes that 372,000 Africans from the British colonies, and 141,000 from the French colonies fought in the war effort.
more reformist and flexible empires were the first colonies to collapse, whereas with Portugal, the most inflexible survived the longest (Cooper 2002). However, no colonial powers saw an absolute end to their empires at this time. This is significant as we juxtapose the strategies and tactics implored by colonial administrators in order to preserve control of their territories and the response of African nationalists in their demands for liberation. To arrive at this point we must look at how the ideological foundations of Pan Africanism coupled with labor mobilization and changes in colonial policy formed the basis for these challenges. As previously noted Pan Africanism formed the ideological foundation for these responses.

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*Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism*

The Fifth Pan African Congress in Manchester clearly marks the “diasporic production” and the uniting of the political strains of Pan-Africanism: the ‘traditional’ branch of the early congresses brought by W.E.B. Du Bois and Henry Sylvester Williams; the Negritude of Leopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire; and the more populist version of Marcus Garvey. This Congress marked the full emergence of a tradition of colonial/imperial resistance and forged the inroads for an intercontinental movement for decolonization (Cooper 2002; Young 2001). This Congress in 1945 organized by Padmore, Nkrumah and Makonnen16 philosophically redefined the movement. Geiss confirms, “After a series of failures and disappointments, Pan-Africanism reached its climax with the Manchester congress” (Geiss 1974, p. 411).

This conference was strategically timed to coincide with the communist-led World Trade Unions Conference of 1945, which thereby added a distinctly African Nationalist element centered and organized around trade union activity (Young, p.238). This offered direct appeal to

16 Robinson (1983) credits Makonnen – as publisher of some of the works of Eric Williams, Padmore and Jomo Kenyatta – with being as instrumental as Dubois, Padmore and Nkrumah in organizing the 1945 Congress.
the masses as the movement clearly articulated a specifically African Nationalist and Socialist political agenda developed from the earlier black radical tradition discussed previously. Using the Atlantic Charter, the Congress leadership challenged the colonial powers to grant self-government. Churchill’s response, that the Atlantic Charter only applied to Axis aggression (Stavranios 1981, p. 666), only served to incite positive action toward realizing independence without colonial government acquiescence. The official endorsement of non-violence/non-cooperation based on the Gandhian method became a central theme in direct appeals to the masses. As a common strategy used by earlier Pan-Africanist such as Duse and Garvey, the development of a national press became a powerful instrument for disseminating information and raising political consciousness in order to produce a mass movement (Hodgkin 1957 p. 13). In Nkrumah’s own account of the congress:

We listened to reports of conditions in the colonial territories, and both capitalist and reformist solutions to the African colonial problem were rejected. Instead the Congress unanimously endorsed the doctrine of African socialism based upon the tactics of positive action without violence. It also endorsed the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Human Rights and advised Africans and those of African descent wherever they might be to organize themselves into political parties, trade unions, co-operative societies and farmers organization in support of their struggle for political freedom and economic advancement. (1957, p.52-3).

An ideological basis of non-violence constructed in the framework of African socialism provided, for Padmore and others, a ‘third way’ analogous to the Non-Aligned movement and the 1955 Bandung conference discussed ahead. The analogous reactions of these movements centered on different world regions directly reflects movement realities at this time and their immediate rejection of historical capitalism and the violence of colonial domination. The common ideology of Pan Africanism was a socialism that developed out of the black Marxist

17 See again Cedric Robinson’s “Black Marxism,” for a study of the theoretical articulation of the Black Radical Tradition. Robinson identifies DuBois, C.L.R. James and Richard Wright as three Intellectuals whose theoretical contributions best articulated collective black struggle and resistance throughout the diaspora.
tradition and communist anti-colonial activism (Young 2001). Like their Latin American counterparts discussed ahead, closely associated with the Chinese communism of Mao and resistant to Russian style communism, Africans unique brand of socialism developed out of the historical specificity of Africa’s colonial situation. This situation also included an interesting anti-colonial role for organized workers, urban populations and associated elites throughout Africa whose place in colonial economies granted them tremendous power.

*Post-War Transition: Urban Workers and Colonial Elites in African Independence*

The European conception of colonial societies in the early twentieth century was archaic and static. By the 1920s, the “civilizing mission” was over, and the colonial authorities had written off Africa as a grouping of “tribes and traditions” and an exploitable labor force not to be invested in by the metropole (Cooper 1996?). Yet, from the earliest years of colonial rule, even small numbers of urban wage workers not only threatened the colonial economies but aided in building the organizational infrastructure for resistance in the Post World War II period (Young 2001). In the British Colonies of West Africa the groundwork for trade union activity had already been laid in response to the social unrest that had developed in the West Indies (1938) with the passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (1940), which not only allowed trade union activity to operate but even encouraged them through grants extended to colonial administrators (Geiss 1974). Blossoming throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the instability created by strike waves and labor unrest in mines, railways and ports persisted and expanded. It would not be until after the Second World War that changes in policy and economic ‘development’ would be implemented as formal strategy — in the vain hope of holding empire.

Counter to their intent, development strategies such as better wages, education, healthcare and, social services of the post war period and the subsequent changes in colonial policy
undoubtedly aided Africans in politically mobilizing. Several patterns emerged that transcended colonial boundaries. Increased urbanization, a rising educated middle class sector, and traditional religious affiliations in some form or another were common threads that fostered and cultivated political mobilization and solidarity in Africa (Hodgkin 1957, p. 31). Against this backdrop Cooper aptly notes, “[T]he desire to expand empire resources while legitimizing colonial rule – became the basis for a profound engagement of African and European actors, which in turn changed the meanings of ‘development,’ of ‘citizenship,’ and of ‘self-government’ (1996?, p.39).

In British and Belgian colonies, there was no political representation of the colonial subject in government, and there was no citizenship for the colonial subject nor the slightest indication that citizenship was forthcoming. Yet, in these colonies a new type colonial administrator emerged. Hodgkin explains that during this phase of transition that this new colonial administrator, “had to be a good practical psychologist, with a working knowledge of political theory from Machiavelli to Lenin; trained in the arts of diplomacy and negotiation; with the adaptability which enables him to turn easily from planning a mass-education campaign to trying to settle a railway strike; who is well aware of his incapacity to control the course of events” (Hodgkin 1957, p.32). These administrators’ withdrawal of support from traditional chiefs in favor of the educated, urban elite made it possible for this new African leadership to develop its own political constituencies.

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18 Hodgkin further notes that public investments from 1945 thru 1953 were “estimated roughly at £275 for the French, £160 for the British, and £75 for Belgian, Africa; and, though many economist would argue this is well below the desirable minimum, it is certainly on a much larger scale than pre-war” (1957, p. 29). Stavriansos notes similarly for this period, “British West African producers more than doubled the value of their exports between 1938 and 1946. Likewise the value of Congo exports increased fourteen times between 1939 and 1953, while government revenues rose four times” (1981, p. 666). This economic expansion led to improvements in housing, sanitation and schools.
In the Gold Coast, Kwame Nkrumah, for example, was quick to create a political base.\textsuperscript{19} In French territories, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Houphouët-Boigny of Côte Ivoire, and Sekou Touré of French Guinea, all amassed a following and political support through the language of citizenship and identity (the Negritude movement).\textsuperscript{20} Working within the colonial system, these important leaders of independence struggles eventually were eventually placed at the head of post-colonial political apparatus through statewide elections. In the Belgium Congo, the case is much more complex. The first municipal elections (1957) introduced not only the first political groupings among urban Africans, but they revealed the “bitter cleavages” between Africans along ethnic lines (Freund 1984, p. 228).

In essence, proletarianization, urbanization and political mobilization such as mass strikes and civil disobedience, created instability in colonial territories that was impossible for colonial administrators to control and cover-up. These factors combined with the global pressures created by the growing anti-colonial position in the United Nations, the Cold War and U.S. antipathy toward a growing Afro-Asian bloc in world politics (Macqueen 19??, p.17) led to rapid de-colonization. South of the Sahara, the Gold Coast was the first to decolonize. By the mid 1960s all of British West Africa had decolonized, and by the end of the 1960s all the colonies of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa had won their independence — with all but one becoming a member of the United Nations (Stavrianos 1981, p. 667-8). Between 1957 and 1967 thirty-two countries attained their political independence and came under African leadership.

\textsuperscript{19} Nkrumah’s political base initially came out of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). He later forged a base among the urban workers, the less educated and urban “popular” groups eventually breaking away from the UGCC and forming the Convention People’s Party (Cooper 1996?, p52).

\textsuperscript{20} Senghors political base came the leaders of the Islamic brotherhoods, which in Senegal was a stable political base which interconnected with secular politics without contradiction. Houphouët-Boigny’s political base came from the African Agricultural Society – part lobby group and part labor. Sekou Tourés initial base came from the union movement (PDG) Parti Démocratique de la Guinée which he later extended to include the peasantry of French Guinea.
Yet, what inevitably emerged from political independence were nationalist regimes tied economically to their former colonies. The problem with the vision of nationalist and/or Pan-Africanist leaders was that they accepted colonial boundaries for their new states and incorporated into the states’ economic apparatus neo-colonial policies put in place before colonial departure. What occurred out of decolonization, according to Young, was “a balkanization that left a collection of separate states” (2001, p. 240).

In 1958, Nkrumah attempted to revitalize Pan-Africanism with the first All African Peoples’ Conference in Accra. With the formation of the Casablanca group in 1961, which eventually merged into the Organization of African States (OAU) in 1963, Pan Africanism had come full circle. As “State-centered Pan Africanism became institutionalized as the OAU” (Cooper 2002?, p.184), Nkrumah suspended his campaign for a ‘Union Government of Africa.’ The euphoria of independence was over, and colonial ties of dependence to a metropole power were paled by comparison to neocolonial burdens placed on the new states of Africa. Yet, the story of resistance should not be downplayed for 1917-1968, especially when one also considers the unrest and revolution that shook Latin America at this time.

Latin America & the Cuban Revolution
“*The outcome of today’s struggles does not matter. It does not matter in the final count that one or two movements were temporarily defeated because what is definite is the decision to struggle which matures every day, the consciousness of the need for revolutionary change, and the certainty that it is possible*” (Guevara 1997, p. 161-2).

Latin America presents a clear case of geo-political asymmetry. Its social, economic and political landscape has been characterized by a complex history of unequal development, economic dependency and political instability to the Mexican Revolution and beyond. Moreover in the broader context of its regional development, Latin America’s close proximity to the United
States and the region’s dependent status have made it a political playground for overt and covert U.S. involvement in state affairs.

Here, Bolivia offers an immediate example. As one of the poorest nations in the western hemisphere, it had as many as twenty-nine regime changes between 1880 and 1952 (Guevara 1997, p. 313). With its unstable history, what began as labor strikes in May 1936 led to the "toppling the Tejada government" (Lora 1977, p. 17). After a long history of labor unrest, strikes and violence, concessions (albeit temporarily) were finally made in the interest of workers – with the new government even going so far as to create a ministry of labor (which they eventually appointed and controlled). However, it was the military that seized the moment in order to overthrow the government so that:

The revolt against poverty acquired unexpected dimensions because of the extreme political instability which prevailed. The army, at the instigation of Colonel Busch, promised not to intervene against the workers, so the repressive capacity of the government was enormously reduced. (Lora 1977, p. 174)

All this came about directly on the heels of the Chaos War, at a time when the traditional parties and socialist parties were in disarray. Like much of Latin America, the military and national politics became intertwined. The radical demands of the workers only provided the catalyst for the military to co-opt power and install a similarly repressive government (Busch) — which shifted power again after another military coup a year later. Since the state apparatus was beholden to capital interests (in mining and oil) for its revenue, any concessions made on behalf of the workers were only temporary.

Considering its position within the world-economy, Bolivia, like all Latin American countries, had been dramatically affected by the Great Depression. According to Skidmore, “both unit price and the quantity of Latin American exports dropped, with the result that their total value for the years 1930-34 was 48 percent below what it had been for 1925-29” (Skidmore
Smith 2001, p. 51). Even shifting to an import-substitution industrial economy did not quell or alleviate political instability, so that as Stavrianos so aptly put it, “bad business helped to make bad governments intolerable” (1981, p. 577). Hence, military rule became standard operating procedure in Bolivia as well and throughout Latin America.

Political and economic conditions only present a partial picture. As national economies of Latin America were increasingly integrated within the world economy, the social landscape was altered by increased immigration policies. A direct response to meet the demands of export economies, these working class imports brought egalitarian ideas of workers justice to all corners of the region. As far back as the Russian Revolution and the larger revolutionary wave at the start of the twentieth century, Latin America had been a hotbed for the evolution of communist parties — Mexico in 1919, in Argentina in 1920, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay in 1921, Ecuador and Cuba in 1925, and Peru in 1930 (Young 2001). Also a part of this radical history, “the years between 1914 and 1927 saw a surge of labor mobilization” (Skidmore & Smith 2001, p. 49). Even though these laboring classes, along with the peasants, did not gain a political foothold early on, they would set up an historical tradition of labor unrest and instability that would challenge the ruling elites throughout Latin America during 1917-1968. As industry grew throughout the 1940s, an organized labor force would emerge with significant political influence.

With American investors (Standard Oil; United Fruit Company) being one of the largest capital investors in Latin America, U.S. intervention in Latin American politics was a foregone conclusion. With the onset of the Cold War, the U.S. would initiate changes in its policy agenda toward Latin America states. Citing the Bolivia case once again as an example, prior to the Cold War the US had been opposed to the MNR (National Revolutionary Movement) for its “fascist leanings, rather than its reformist policies.” Nevertheless, Washington supported the “politically
undesirable” regime rather than risk what Milton Eisenhower (Ambassador to Latin America and brother to the President) referred to as, “a Communist takeover” (Guevara 1997, p. 317).

This policy shift characterizes US/Latin American relations throughout the cold war period. Guatemala experienced a popular uprising in 1944, which ousted the dictatorial regime of Jorge Ubico. José Arévalo’s administration (1944-50) began instituting political and social reforms, which threatened the oligarchy. Ten years (1954) later, during the Jacobo Arbenz administration (1951-54), the U.S. financed and directed a coup to oust Arbenz and subsequently install a succession of military dictators – who immediately reversed reforms initiated by the two previous administrations (Guevara 1997). As a consequence, only one “civilian” administration (César Méndez Montenegro 1966-9) was seen in Guatemala between 1958 and 1984.

A few additional examples from the region highlight the tension between radical movements and sometimes governments and the U.S. supported regimes in the region. Venezuela is case in point here. The Trienio administration (1945-48), for example, implemented a reformist program — refining their oil industry leases and initiating agrarian reform — until a military junta in 1948 in which the authoritarian dictator, Marcos Pérez Jiménez was installed and supported by the U.S. In addition, Columbia (1946-1958), Nicaragua (1958-1963) and Peru (1962-1963), all experienced guerilla activity and peasant uprisings with the U.S. involved in one way or another in state affairs in each case. Yet, perhaps more than any of these struggles, the Cuban Revolution (1956-1959) demarcates a watershed moment in anti-systemic and world-systemic history.

*The Cuban Revolution*

Any discussion of antisystemic activity in the western hemisphere after 1945 must include the Cuban Revolution (1952-1959), if for no other reason than its stark impact on national
liberation struggles around the world. Certainly, special attention must be given to this revolution for its implications and influences on Latin America, national liberation movements worldwide, as well as its strategic challenges to US hegemony. As the second successful third world revolution (the first being China in 1949), Cuba’s legacy imparted three fundamental lessons to revolutionary movements and their leaders: one, that armies could be defeated by popular forces; two, that an insurrection can make the necessary conditions for a successful revolution; and three, that making use of the countryside is the best option for armed resistance and guerilla warfare (Castro 1999). For Stavrianos (1981) however, the implications of guerilla war were less important than the impact of Castro’s ability to seize power, stay in power, and construct a successful social revolution in the western hemisphere. Perhaps, the fundamental impact for international revolutionaries who were engaged in or on the verge of violent liberation struggles (an endless list at this time including Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bassau) Castro and Guevara represented the vanguard for socialist revolutions everywhere. In many ways, this again echoes the revolutionary impact of China for antisystemic struggle after World War II.

Ideologically, the Cuban revolution was really revolutionary on two fronts. First, it broke with the ideological dogma of the Soviets that emphasized the urban proletariat as the revolutionary force. Influenced by Mao’s Chinese Revolution, Guevara, like most leaders of liberation movements, had embraced a variant of Marxist ideology in viewing socialism in the general sense and African socialism in particular as a means of achieving social justice and economic parity. 21 This combination imparted on the Cuban revolutionaries the importance of

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21 Castro would not declare himself a Marxist-Leninist until 1961, hence completing the “fidelista-communist merger” in 1965. (Wright: 23)
“culturally and economically de-linking from the world system,” and for them socialism was the means to achieve that end (Young 2001).

Closer to home, the Cuban Revolution set precedent in Latin America in two fundamental ways. First, Cuba made it apparent that the U.S. was not invincible and historic subservience to Washington was not automatically required. The best example here is the Agrarian Reform Law of 1959, which expropriated corporate and individual land holdings of more than 74 acres and redistributed the land to landless peasants and agricultural workers (Luis 2001). With this law, Castro expropriated U.S. owned property without compensation and further nationalized public utilities, banking and transportation. Second, the ‘David and Goliath’ style of Castro’s challenges to U.S. hegemony made it apparent that radical reform was in fact possible throughout Latin America despite the seemingly stacked odds. Even more directly here, “Castro aided exile invasions of Panama, Nicaragua and Haiti but denied it; however, he acknowledged responsibility for a thwarted invasion of the Dominican Republic in June 1959 and promised more efforts to export his revolution” (Wright 2001, p. 31). Looked at collectively, the entire region was overwhelmingly affected by the Cuban Revolution. The level and intensity of political turmoil increased dramatically afterwards. As Wright again notes, “political mobilization following the Cuban Revolution were greater than those of the first two waves (WWI; the Depression), and the impact of fidelismo was more widespread throughout Latin America” (2001, p. 45).

With Cuba struggling to survive the ideological and political confrontation with the U.S, increased anti-American sentiment pushed Washington into launching the Alliance for Progress. Presented at Punta del Oeste, Uruguay, on August 17, 1961, the Alliance for Progress was a $100 billion ten-year program of tax and land reform allocation that offered a laundry list of benefits
for the masses of the region. It was supposed to provide a more equitable distribution of income, trade diversification, increased agricultural productivity, an end to adult illiteracy, low-cost housing and improved tax collection (Stavrianos 1981). Yet, this program was ill-fated from the start for its fundamental contradictions. While on one hand, the goal was to protect American investments, on the other hand the benefits from the program not only threatened the reigning oligarchies, but they threatened the very multinational investors they were set-up to protect. In essence, this program, set up in reaction to fears of the Cuban Revolution and the spread of communism (ie instability), further *increased* the political instability in Latin America.\(^{22}\)

Internationally, the 1966 Tricontinental conference in Havana presents perhaps the biggest influence of the Cuban Revolution on the international community. This conference represented, like Bandung discussed yet ahead, a global struggle to be waged against European colonialism and U.S. imperialism across three separate regions of the world (Africa, Asia and Latin America). Young notes that Guevara’s final statement to the Tricontinental:\(^{23}\)

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\text{ constitutes the first moment where a general internationalist counter-hegemonic position was elaborated by a dispossessed subject of imperialism, powerfully and persuasively invoking others throughout the three continents to open up new front of resistance, in a global strategy of guerrilla warfare conceived from an internationalist perspective. 2001, p. 213) }\]

As Castro and Guevara saw it (and like Mao before them), anti-colonial/imperial struggle could not be based on passive resistance. Armed guerrilla warfare was a crucial element in ensuring liberation.

All things considered, it is perhaps the multitude of events taking place simultaneously throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa that contributed to the success of the Cuban

\(^{22}\) Stavrianos (1981) also notes that within 8 years of this program Latin America experienced sixteen coups.

\(^{23}\) Since this date (1967) comes after the Tricontinental Conference, hosted by Cuba in 1966, I think this statement was placed in the Tricontinental Journal that was a result of the conference.
Revolution. Certainly, support from the Soviets contributed to equalizing or giving balance to Castro’s social revolution. Nevertheless, given the historical specificity of this revolution, Cuba stands in its own right as a defining moment in the history of antisystemic struggle at this time. Ultimately, the Tricontinental Congress in which Cuba played a critical role was more radical than Bandung and the Non-Aligned Movement (in its objectives as well as its representation) that emerged around the same time. The discussion now turns to Bandung and non-alignment — a coalition of newly independent states and liberation efforts that emerged from struggles in Asia as well as Africa.

Bandung: An Afro-Asian Alliance & the Non-aligned Movement

Less than ten years after the Russian Revolution, on February 27, 1927 the first conference of African and Asian nationalists took place in Brussels. The Congress of Oppressed Nationalists, fortified by V.I. Lenin’s treatise, *Imperialism*, was attended by “approximately 200 delegates representing 134 organizations, as well as 300 visitors from India, China, Syria, Arabia (Palestine and Egypt), Korea, Indonesia, Indo-China, Annan, north and south Africa, North and South America and almost every European State (Thomas 2001, p. 41)”²⁴ This conference opened the communication and dialogue that would lead to Bandung and the subsequent Non-Aligned Movement some thirty years later.

The (often newly) independent nation-states in Asia, African, and Latin America entered a polarized world in which the United States and Soviet Union faced off in the aftermath of World War II. Cold War realities would place a heavy burden on many of the newly independent states in Asia; the war in Vietnam (as well as Cambodia and Laos) and Suharto’s coup in Indonesia present two of the most obvious examples of United States’ involvement in the

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²⁴ Of particular note, in attendance were Jawaharlal Nehru, Ho Chi Minh, Mohammed Hatta, Madame Sun Yat-sen and Leopold Senghor.
region. Interestingly, many of these newly independent states were loath to accept such a polarized view of the world, opting instead for a movement of *non-alignment* in an increasingly aligned world, a difficult contradiction for such states to enter.

Growing to embrace countries in every part of the world, “non-alignment was born in the circumstances of the Cold War” (Kohli 1985, p. 15) while also greatly “influenced by the forces of postwar nationalism expressed in terms of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, and the pressing problems of economic underdevelopment” (Kofele-Kale 1978, p. 253; see also Keuneman 1976). The appeal of non-alignment to many newly independent states reflected a shared set of conditions that compelled struggle during the Cold War era. For these countries non-alignment meant:

A country’s policy should be independent, based on principles of peaceful co-existence and non-alignment, or it should sympathize with such a policy. A country should support the movement for national liberation, it should not join any collective military alliance, it should not enter into a bilateral alliance with any Great Power and should not permit any foreign power to establish any military bases on its territory. (Bondarevsky & Sofinsky 1975, p. 50)

Non-alignment as such signaled, we believe, these newly-emerging states’ recognition of the perils inherent in attaining power and entering the world-stage as an ‘independent’ state.

Emerging forcefully with the Bandung meeting of Afro-Asian states in 1955, the immediate roots of non-alignment extend back to the postwar years. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh proposed to the government of Indonesia “a declaration on uniting the efforts of both states in the struggle against colonialism” (Kovalenko 1980, p. 18). Also in 1945, the Fifth Pan-African Congress in its ‘Declaration to the Colonial Peoples,’ “affirmed the right of all colonial peoples to control their own destiny” (Mathews 1987, p. 47).25 In 1947, the first All-Asian conference

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25 The same author is keen to point out that African nationalism and Pan-Africanism, discussed elsewhere in this text had a serious non-aligned element. African leaders such as Nkrumah and Nasser certainly demonstrate the overlap of such concerns.
was held in New Delhi, and in 1949, the Conference on Indonesia took place, again in New Delhi, where sixteen states would demand Dutch withdrawal from the colony (Muni 1982; Kovalenko 1980). Mention of New Dehli here betrays a fundamental source of the non-aligned impulse at this time, India and the Congress leader, Nehru (see especially Prasad 1983). At this time of early independence, Nehru “developed the idea of a struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism, urging the newly independent countries to unite to resist attempts by the imperialist forces to reimpose the yoke of slavery upon the emerging nations” (Kovalenko 1980, p. 19). Yet, non-alignment ultimately emerged from the shared vision of many different states and their leaders: India and Nehru, Indonesia and Sukarno, Egypt and Nasser, Yugoslavia and Tito, Ghana and Nkrumah, amongst others.

Bandung clearly stands out for the impact it made on the world at that time. At Bandung, a large collection of (once) antisystemic movements turned new leaders of independent states came together to make common claims and set common goals for their states (as well as those still striving for independence). In other words, Bandung carried “great symbolic importance because it was the first time that so many nations — from Asia and Africa — many of them newly decolonized — came together in the absence of the great European powers and the Soviet Union and the United States to discuss international affairs” (Waters 2001, p. 154; see also Wallerstein 1990). Because of this, Bandung troubled core states and ‘imperialist capital’ greatly (Amin 1990), as imperial powers such as Britain, keen to control tightly any decolonization and fearful of communism at the same time, looked on anxiously at Bandung (Tarling 1992). In the eyes of the John Foster Dulles and the U.S. State Department, Bandung “could conceivably lead to the eventual establishment of an intensely anti-Western, anti-colonial
bloc from East Asia to Africa” (quoted in Waters 2001, p. 165; see also Prasad 1983). For the hegemonic, neo-colonial United States engaged in a Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union such a possibility was troubling indeed. Such concerns only worsened when the Soviet Union openly backed non-alignment for its anti-west leanings, and the Non-Aligned Movement displayed similar leanings towards the Soviets (Muni 1982).

Troubling for American policy concerns as well, Communist China also took an active interest in non-alignment, hoping perhaps to shape the process of Afro-Asian solidarity more toward China’s predilections. Zhou En-lai participated in Bandung’s proceedings and would later tour Africa in 1963-1964 visiting ten states to push the idea of a second Afro-Asian conference. In Ghana, Nkrumah and Zhou En-lai issued a joint communiqué stating “that all anti-colonial movements in the world should close their ranks and wage a united struggle against the forces of colonialism and neo-colonialism” (Shinde 1978, p. 66). In such ways, China as well as the Soviet Union, despite profound differences evident in the Sino-Soviet split, tried to engage non-alignment to push critiques of United States’ hegemony at this time. Not to be outdone, non-aligned states and their leaders, “Nkrumah of Ghana and Nasser of Egypt... played the East against the West to their advantage” (Kofele-Kale 1978, p. 258).

Bandung and the several Non-Aligned conferences that followed in Belgrade, Cairo, Lusaka witnessed the emergence and growth (from twenty-five member states at Belgrade to fifty-four at Lusaka) of a movement of newly-independent states across different continents actively engaged with the great powers and their international agendas (Keuneman 1976). Non-

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26 In great detail, Waters aptly demonstrates how Bandung and the Non-Aligned Movement in general pushed a worried Australia, a state with colonial possessions of its own, a race-based immigration policy, and with many of the Bandung attendees as rather close neighbors.

27 The discussion here benefits greatly from Shinde’s excellent and detailed history of Chinese involvement in non-alignment and Afro-Asian solidarity. As Shinde relates, China “came to view Afro-Asian solidarity as the most important force in the united front against imperialism” (1978, p. 65), although China’s idea of Afro-Asian solidarity did not necessarily coincide with the non-aligned states.
alignment was certainly impactful at this time, weighing in on issues of peace, nuclear
disarmament, decolonization, etc. India even played a crucial role in the settlement of the
Korean War conflict in the 1950s. In 1960, Non-Aligned leaders working together were able to
get the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt a Declaration on Decolonization.

Conclusion: Dilemmas of State Power in a Polarized World

A key dilemma for antisystemic struggle before and ever since, their strategies, including
non-alignment, were based on the legal fiction of state sovereignty versus the economic reality of
dependence (Kofele-Kale 1978). Non-alignment, like the strategies pursued by labor and
socialism in core regions, suffered weaknesses drawn from the very sources from which it
emerged. In the era of the Cold War and the end of colonialism, choosing a path as non-aligned
states somehow clear of the two Super Powers was easier in theory than in practice. Many of
these young, non-aligned nations found themselves from the earliest days accepting economic
and military aid with strings firmly attached. At its essence:

Stripped of the romance and passions that came to surround it, of the radicalism that was
attached to it, the Bandung generation was, however, not a particularly radical one.
Behind the sound and the fury were leaders who wanted their societies to enter the world
on more equitable terms... The energy that propelled them was the comparatively
moderate one of middle-class nationalism... In their own way, these were the non-
Western children of the Westphalian nation-state system that had emerged in Europe in
the seventeenth century and was now being globalized. (Ajami 1980-1981, p. 369).

The newly-formed states, despite the best intentions of the generation of liberation movement
leaders who brought them independence, were from the beginning firmly ensconced in the
machinations of the interstate system and the ties of unequal trade. The pursuit of state power
was again a strategic trap this time upon which non-alignment hinged.

On one level, decolonization in Africa and Asia was antisystemic in that it broke down
the last vestiges of European empire. With African socialism as an ideological base alongside the
principles of the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter, Africans across the continent rose up and mobilized the masses; they demanded an end to racial discrimination, economic and education reform, and elections with universal suffrage (Cooper 2002?). These demands would come in the midst of a rapidly changing colonial authority and a worldview becoming increasingly antithetical to colonization. The global pressures of liberation struggles and labor unrest in Africa, Asia and Latin America compelled changes in strategy of the European authorities toward their colonial territories. Without question, these movements placed pressure on reticent colonial powers that brought a rather abrupt end to empire to all corners of the planet.

In the immediate period following independence, these same leaders pursued socialist goals and a path of non-alignment that clearly rejected the economic primacy of capitalism as well as the polarized politics of the Cold War. Where Bandung gave more political platform to representatives of former colonies, Cuba’s Tricontinental made efforts to gather specifically representatives of colonies still entrenched in violent struggles for liberation. For a seemingly brief moment, both the Tricontinental as well as non-alignment provided a network for unifying imperialist struggles throughout the globe.

Yet, on another level, independence throughout the world at this time strengthened the capitalist world-system and the primacy of the United States as hegemon within that system. The liberation movements now made political parties, much like labor and socialist organizations in Europe and North America, were now firmly within the orbit of state power and the machinations of the interstate system. In the years to come, these new states, from Angola to Vietnam, would serve as battlegrounds for the struggles of the Cold War. This in no way discounts the important changes the the antisystemic struggles over 1917-1968 realized. Without question, the world in 1968 — with (often non-aligned) independent states where there were
once colonies, communism in China and Cuba, and important social accords benefiting labor and socialist ideals across the core — was a fundamentally different place from that inherited in 1917. The difficulties experienced by labor, socialist, and national liberation struggles at this time only serve to remind us of the difficulties at work in antisystemic struggle. Many (most) of the antisystemic movements over 1917-1968 ended the period close to a rather systemic power. Yet, these struggles here clearly pushed and strained historical capitalism and forced serious concessions on behalf of working and once colonized peoples that were clearly unimaginable without the actions of a key group of antisystemic actors at this time.
Bibliography


Macqueen ???


