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Giving and Asking Forgiveness: Japan and US
by Dick Bennett, December 22, 2012

Following WWII, with the assistance of Frank Buchman’s Moral Re-armament Movement, Japanese leaders began to apologize to the nations and peoples it had harmed by its invasions, exploitations, and killings. In 1950 Japanese emissaries visited European countries and the US for reconciliation. One of the delegates spoke to the US Senate and House and expressed “our sincere regret that Japan has broken an almost century-old friendship.” He received a standing ovation.

In 1955 the Japanese government sent a representative to the Philippines to ask forgiveness for Japanese atrocities during the war. In 1957 a similar apology was given to the Korean government. In the same year, the pursuit of reconciliation intensified when the Prime Minister of Japan personally visited seven Southeast Asian nations to express his sorrow at the war, apologize, and ask forgiveness. The Washington Evening Star commented that surely Premier Kishi had performed “one of the most unusual missions ever undertaken by a statesman of his rank.” Solving the problems and breaking the chain of hate caused by Japanese colonial expansion were at last sincerely begun. For example, not until 1978 did Japan begin to accept refugees from the conquered countries.

In 1950 the Japanese delegation to the US included the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The New York Times commented in an editorial, “‘If they, too, felt that they had something to forgive they had achieved a miracle.’” The Saturday Evening Post said: “‘The idea of a nation admitting it could be mistaken about anything has a refreshing impact. . . .Perhaps even Americans could think up a few past occasions of which it could be safely admitted, ‘We certainly fouled things up that time.’’” Forty five years later in 1995 on the fiftieth anniversary ceremonies marking the atomic bombings, the mayor of Hiroshima apologized for the “unbearable suffering that Japanese colonial domination and war inflicted on so many people.” And the mayor of Nagasaki spoke in similar terms at a ceremony in his city, adding this significant point: “‘Without reflection and apology on Japan’s own past, our calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons will not be heard by the people of the world.’”

Unfortunately, these apologies for their nation’s atrociousness failed to inspire the United States with similar considerateness for other countries or to impede US development of ever more destructive nuclear weapons. The Japanese apologized for Pearl Harbor, even though it was the inevitable, atrocious response to US colonial policy. As Roland Worth, Jr., explains: “‘. . .the United States knowingly and intentionally imposed economic strangulation upon Japan’ (preceding the bombing of Pearl Harbor), “aware that the Japanese economy was being wrecked to a degree that would have been intolerable if this nation had been on the receiving end. The US embraced a severe embargo “knowing full well its probable result. Hence . . .the Pacific war was caused by the United States launching a policy of economic destruction against the Japanese nation” (218).
As the Saturday Evening Post suggested, the US had also “fouled things up” in the past. It was a colonial competitor with Japan in the Pacific and East Asian rim; its embargo drove Japan to the violence of Pearl Harbor. It too should apologize for the “war without mercy,” as John Dower epitomizes WWII in the Pacific, in which so many died needlessly. Pearl Harbor offers “an abiding lesson. . .that has been little noticed,” Worth writes. “Never inflict upon another major military power a policy which would cause you yourself to go to war. . .And don’t be surprised that if they do decide to retaliate, that they seek out a time and a place that inflicts the maximum harm and humiliation upon your cause” (219).

But the war was not the only foul-up, to repeat the euphemism. The atomic bombs led quickly to the development of hydrogen bombs. The US forcibly removed citizens of the Marshall Islands from their homes in order to test 67 hydrogen bombs. Today testing continues in myriad ways. In what The New York Times described as a moral miracle, mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki apologized for their country’s atrocities in war, desiring to abolish nuclear weapons, the only rational policy, while the US to this day has offered no apologies for the embargo or for the nuclear destruction of two civilian cities, while it continues to develop more nuclear weapons. Without reflection and apology by US leaders for their nuclear bombings and continued preparation for nuclear holocaust, all their talk about nuclear weapons control will not be trusted by the people of the world.

References:
See earlier newsletters on “Pearl Harbor Day”/Colonial Pacific World War II.

West Across the Pacific: American Involvement in East Asia from 1898 to the Vietnam War
F. Hilary Conroy (Author), Francis Conroy (Author), Sophie Quinn-Judge (Author)

Publication Date: March 28, 2008  This book addresses the problem of a country telling a grand narrative to itself that does not hold up under closer examination, a narrative that leads to possibly avoidable war. In particular, the book explains and questions the narrative the United States was telling itself about East Asia and the Pacific in the late 1930s, with (in retrospect) the Pacific War only a few years away. Through empirical methods, it details how the
The standard narrative failed to understand what was really happening based on documents that later became available. The documents researched are from the Diet Library in Japan, the Foreign Office in London, the National Archives in Washington, the University of Hawai‘i library in Honolulu and several other primary sources. This research reveals opportunities unexplored that involve lessons of seeing things from the “other side’s” point of view and of valuing the contribution of “in-between” people who tried to be peacemakers. The crux of the standard narrative was that the United States, unlike European imperialist powers, involved itself in East Asia in order to bring openness (the Open Door) and democracy; and that it was increasingly confronted by an opposing force, Japan, that had imperial, closed, and undemocratic designs. This standard American narrative was later opposed by a revisionist narrative that found the United States culpable of a “neo-imperialism,” just as the European powers and Japan were guilty of “imperialism.” However, what West Across the Pacific shows is that, while there is indubitably some truth in both the “standard” and the “revisionist” versions, more careful documentary research reveals that the most important thing “lost” in the 1898-1941 period may have been the real opportunity for mutual recognition and understanding, for cooler heads and more neutral “realistic” policies to emerge; and for more attention to the standpoint of the common men and women caught up in the migrations of the period. West Across the Pacific is both a contribution to peace research in history and to a foreign policy guided modestly by empiricism and realism as the most reliable method. It is a must read for diplomats and people concerned about diplomacy, as it probes the microcosms of diplomatic negotiations. This brings special relevance and approachability as yet another generation of Americans returns from war and occupation in Iraq. The book also speaks to Vietnam veterans, by drawing lessons from the Japanese war in China for the American war in Vietnam. This is particularly true of the conclusion, co-authored by distinguished Vietnam specialist Sophie Quinn-Judge.

See Robert Shaffer’s rev. in Peace and Change (Jan. 2013).

US DAYS OF INFAMY TIMELINE
Compiled by Dick Bennett

Synonyms of Infamy: shame, ignominy, wickedness, iniquity, heinousness, outrageousness, odiousness, many more.

x = Foreign: aggressive wars, invasions, interventions, WMD, anything against non-citizens, other nations. **Entries in bold** = invasions or other actions by US that killed people illegally and unnecessarily.
The December 7, 1941, Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor was proclaimed “a day of infamy” by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The following list of US attacks on others (mainly from the “Hidden History of the United States 2012 Calendar” by *The Progressive*) includes some events not equal in scope or intensity to the Pearl Harbor bombings and some events much more horrendous. The list is offered in process of discovery of which entries should be omitted, revised, and added. I intend eventually to include all illegal US interventions and invasions reported by William Blum in *Killing Hope* and *Rogue Nation* and by other authors. Send me your suggestions on the list as it is, and especially send significant Days of Infamy absent from this list, accompanied by source(s).

**MUSLIM/CHRISTIAN ROOTS**

711: Moors (Berbers, Arabs) conquer Iberian Peninsula

732: Battle of Poitiers, French defeat Moors, beginning of long Muslim retreat

1096: The Crusades begin, a series of Western Christian military invasions to recover the Holy Land from Muslim control. Like the Muslim Jihadi today, they were promised earthly, spiritual, and eternal rewards.

1492: Granada, last Moorish enclave in Spain, conquered by Christians

1609, April 9: King Philip III of Spain, the most powerful nation in Europe, decreed expulsion of all Spaniards of Muslim descent.

**COLONIAL AND 19TH CENTURY**

August 20, 1619: First black slaves land at Jamestown, Virginia

*June 5, 1637*: 600 Pequot Indians killed by colonists at Mystic, CT

*April 6, 1712*: 20 blacks burned or hanged after NYC slave revolt

*May 30, 1741*: 31 Blacks and four whites executed for plotting slave revolt

August 29, 1758: First Indian reservation established

Oct. 26, 1749: Black slavery legalized in Georgia

*May 31, 1779*: Washington orders Iroquois military campaign (the thousands of heinous invasions and atrocities against the Native American make it impossible to do more than mention a few)
Nov 1, 1836: Seminole war protesting removal from Florida breaks out
Nov. 11, 1931: Nat Turner hanged

May 23, 1838: Cherokee begin Trail of Tears, 1,200 mile forced march to Oklahoma
May 23, 1853: U.S. troops intervene in Nicaragua

March 6, 1857: Supreme Court upholds slavery in Dred Scott decision
April 12, 1861: Civil War begins

March 3, 1863: First national conscription act passed
July 13, 1863: Draft riots begin in NYC, leaving 1,000 dead

April 12, 1864: Confederate soldiers massacre more than 350 prisoners of war

November 29, 1864: 133 Cheyenne and Arapahoe—mostly women and children—killed by Colorado cavalry volunteers at Sand Creek

July 28, 1868: 14th Amendment ratified, guaranteeing due process to all but Native Americans

June 6, 1872: Susan B. Anthony fined for voting

February 28, 1877: U.S. Government seizes Black Hills from Lakota Sioux in violation of treaty

June 21, 1877: Ten “Molly Maguires’ hanged in Penn. accused of strike violence

September 5, 1877: Crazy Horse assassinated while in custody

October 4, 1877: Chief Joseph surrenders with last Nez Perce people

November 3, 1883: Supreme Court rules that Native Americans are ‘aliens’

March 20, 1886: U.S. Marines invade Nicaragua

September 4, 1886: Geronimo, Apache chief, surrenders to Arizona Territory leaders

July 21, 1887: 20 striking railroad workers killed by state troops in Pittsburgh

November 11, 1887: Four Chicago labor organizers hanged for alleged Haymarket conspiracy

December 15, 1890: Sitting Bull killed by police at Standing Rock Reservation, South Dakota

Dec. 29, 1890: 150 Sioux massacred by troops at Wounded Knee, S.D.

July 6, 1892: Strikers at Homestead, PA, battle Carnegie Steel Pinkerton agents; July 12: state militia break the strike
January 17, 1893: Queen Lili’uokalani of Hawaii deposed by the U.S.

July 6, 1894: US troops intervene in Nicaragua

May 2, 1896: U.S. troops intervene in Nicaragua

Sept. 21, 1896: Militia sent to Leadville, Colorado, to break miners strike

September 10, 1897: 19 striking miners killed, 40 wounded, by sheriff’s deputies at Latimer, Pennsylvania

April 25, 1898: U.S. declares war on Spain

July 25, 1898: US troops invade Puerto Rico against Spain

August 13, 1898: Admiral Dewey captures Manilla

20TH CENTURY

February 18, 1908: U.S. bars Japanese immigration

Marines invade Nicaragua (killed?)

July 22, 1910: 20 blacks lynched by mob in Palestine, TX

August 14, 1912: U.S Marines invade Nicaragua

April 20, 1914: Ludlow Massacre: 13 children and 7 adults killed when Colorado National Guard burn striking miners camp

July 28, 1915: US troops land in Haiti (killed?)

November 19, 1915: IWW organizer Joe Hill executed

November 29, 1916: U.S. established military government in Dominican Republic (killed?)

July 9, 1917: Emma Goldman sentenced to two years for aiding draft resisters

September 5, 1917: IWW halls in 48 cities raided by Federal agents

Sept. 14, 1918: Eugene V. Debs sentenced to prison for opposing U.S. entry into World War I

Sept. 28, 1917: 166 Wobblies indicted for interfering in the war effort

January 2, 1920: 6,000 alleged communists arrested nationwide in “Palmer Raids”

April 21, 1921: Police fire on striking miners in Butte, Montana

May 2, 1924: Supreme Court upholds involuntary sterilization of mentally retarded persons

November 1, 1951: 5,000 U.S. Soldiers exposed to radiation by nuclear weapons test in
Nevada
August 24, 1954: Congress passes Communist Control Act
July 24, 1925: John Scopes convicted in TN of teaching evolution
May 7, 1926: U.S. troops intervene in Nicaragua (see 1896)
January 6, 1927: US Marines invade Nicaragua (see 1886)
March 5, 1927: U.S. Marines land in China
April 9, 1927: Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti sentenced to death in U.S.
August 23, 1927: Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti executed in Massachusetts
April 6, 1931: Scottsboro Boys trial begins in Alabama
March 7, 1932: Four killed when police fire on hunger march in Detroit
July 27, 1932: Two killed when US Army attacks encampment of WWII vets demanding bonus benefits

June 29, 1940: Alien registration (Smith) Act enacted
August 13, 1942: Manhattan Project begins developing A-bomb
Sept. 27, 1944: First large-scale plutonium-producing reactor begins operation at Hanford, Washington.
February 3, 1945: U.S. aircraft drops 3,000 tons of explosives on Berlin
July 16, 1945: First atomic bomb exploded at Alamogordo, NM
August 6, 1945: Hiroshima
August 9, 1945: Nagasaki
July 1, 1946: Atomic bomb test at Bikini atoll in Pacific
June 23, 1947: Senate overrides pres. Truman’s veto of anti-union Taft-Hartley Act
July 11, 1947: 8 black prisoners killed in GA for refusing to work
July 26, 1947: Dept. of “Defense” established formalizing US National Security State
Sept. 18, 1947: The CIA and the national Security Council are established under the national Security Act.
July 20, 1948: US indicts 12 Communist Party leaders
June 9, 1950: Two of Hollywood Ten imprisoned
July 29, 1950: DuPont wins contract to produce H-bomb at Savannah River, SC
**Oct. 7, 1950:** US invades North Korea
July 9, 1951: Dashiell Hammett sentenced to six months’ for refusing to cooperate with anti-communist inquiry
April 8, 1952: President Truman orders seizure of steel mills
**Oct. 31, 1952:** US explodes first hydrogen bomb in Marshall Islands
**January 3, 1953:** President Truman announces development of H-bomb
June 20, 1953: US military mission arrives in Saigon
August 19, 1953: Iranian Premier Mohammed Mossadegh ousted with CIA connivance
**March 1, 1954:** **Bikini Island H-bomb test** irradiates 7,000 square miles of Pacific Ocean and contaminates Japanese fishermen
April 19, 15-megaton bomb dropped in South Pacific
June 19, 1953: Ethel and Julius Rosenberg executed
August 24, 1954: Congress passes Communist Control Act
**Oct. 13, 1954:** Air Force orders production of first supersonic bomber
August 6, 1957: 11 peace activists arrested at Nevada nuclear-weapons test facility
February 14, 1958: Part of A-bomb accidentally dropped in ocean near Savannah, Georgia
July 8, 1958: US and S. Africa sign nuclear cooperation treaty
**July 9, 1958:** Pres. Eisenhower sends 14,000 troops armed with nuclear rockets, into Lebanon
Sept. 14, 1959: Landrum-Griffin act passed limiting trade union activities
**January 3, 1961:** United States breaks diplomatic ties with Cuba
**Oct. 12, 1961:** FBI launches Socialist Worker Disruption Program
**July 10, 1962:** US rejects Soviet proposal of complete and general disarmament
August 18, 1962: Five arrested while attempting to disrupt launching of Polaris submarine, Groton, Connecticut
October 3, 1962: US closes ports to ships with cargo to Cuba
Sept. 20, 1963: 63 arrested for flocking bulldozers in Syracuse, New York, urban renewal project

**January 9, 1964:** US troops kill 21 protesters in Panama

**May 15, 1964:** US illegally begins bombing Laos

**August 7, 1964:** Congress passes Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which was based on a lie that lead to Vietnam War

December 7, 1964: Mario Savio, leader of Berkeley Free Speech movement, arrested

**April 28, 1965:** U.S. Marines land in Dominican Republic to support military junta

August 31, 1965: Congress declares it is a crime to destroy draft cards

December 13, 1966: First U.S. Bombing of Hanoi

July 23, 1967: Week of racial rioting begins in Detroit, leaving 43 dead

August 25, 1967: FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover authorizes COINTELPRO activities against Black Nationalist groups

Oct. 21, 1967: 700 arrested in VN War protest at Pentagon

April 4, 1968, MLK Jr. assassinated

August 28, 1968: Hundreds arrested in Chicago during Democratic National Convention

December 9, 1968: Underground blast in Nevada breaks through ground, releasing fallout and violating the Test Ban Treaty

Sept. 26, 1969: Chicago Seven Conspiracy Trial opens

December 4, Chicago police murder Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark

**April 29, 1970:** President Nixon announces invasion of Cambodia

**May 4, 1970:** Ohio National Guard kills four unarmed students at Kent State University when protesting Cambodian campaign

**April 11, 1970:** Six blacks protesting prison brutality killed by Augusta, Georgia, police

**May 14, 1970:** Mississippi state police kill two black students at Jackson State University

December 18, 1970: Underground nuclear test in Nevada blows cloud of radioactive dust 8,000 feet in air into Wyoming

May 3, 1971: 12,000 arrested in protest against Vietnam War in Washington D.C.


December 30, 1971: Daniel Ellsberg indicted by a Federal grand jury for releasing
Pentagon Papers to news media

June 17, 1972: Watergate break-in

December 14, 1972: President Nixon authorizes Christmas bombing of Hanoi

September 11, 1973: Military coup overthrows elected Chilean President Salvador Allende

October 20, 1973: Pres. fires Cox and Ruckelshaus

September 8, 1974: President Ford pardons former President Nixon

July 2, 1976: USSC declares death penalty “not unconstitutionally severe”

August 22, 1976: 179 arrested at anti-nuclear rally in Seabrook, New Hampshire

October 18, 1978: Pres. Carter orders production of neutron bomb components

March 19, 1979: President Eisenhower states willingness to launch first-strike nuclear attack

April 28, 1979: 5,000 protest, 284 arrested at Rocky Flats nuclear –weapons facility, Colorado

November 27, 1980: Justice Department moves to drop charges against former FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III for authorizing agents to break into homes without search warrants

December 2, 1980: Four U.S. Catholic missionary women killed by death squads in El Salvador (client state)

May 21, 1981: Senate approves $20 billion program for chemical and nerve-gas weapons

August 3, 1981: 11,500 air-traffic controllers strike and are fired by President Reagan

September 15, 1981: 1,000 arrested in week-long protest at Diablo Canyon nuclear plant

December 1981: President Regan authorizes CIA to conduct domestic surveillance

June 20, 1982: 2,500 arrested in two days during blockade of Lawrence Livermore labs

August 12, 1982: 12 arrested in sea blockade of first Trident submarine, near Hood Canal, Washington

August 17, 1982: Enten Eller becomes first draft resister since the Vietnam War to be convicted, Roanoke, Virginia

September 29, 1982: U.S. Marines land in Lebanon as part of multinational force

October 1, 1982: First Trident submarine, U.S.S. Ohio

May 24, 1983: Congress approves $625 Million for research and development of MX missile

October 25, 1983: 5,000 US Marines and Army Rangers invade Grenada
November 14, 1983: First U.S. cruise missile arrives at Greenham Common, England

**April 14, 1986**: U.S. bombs Libya

July 3, 1988: US Navy shoots down Iranian airliner, killing 290 civilians

December 20, 1989: U.S. Invades Panama

**January 12, 1991**: Congress votes to allow US troops to be used in offensive operations in Iraq

**January 16, 1991**: Persian Gulf War begins with US bombing of Baghdad

April 29, 1992: Cops acquitted of beating Rodney King, leading to L.A. riots

December 24. 1992: President Bush pardons Caspar Weinberger and five other Reagan aides involved in the Iran-contra affair

**April 19, 1993**: FBI agents attack the Branch Dravidian compound in Waco, Texas; about 70 cult members die

July 17, 1998: in Rome, US voted against the International Criminal Court, one of 7, including China, Libya, Qatar, Yemen, and Israel, opposed to 120 nations voting for. Ref.: Johnson, *Blowback* (65ff.).

**March 24, 1999**: U.S & NATO begin 78 days of bombing Yugoslavia

21st CENTURY

December 12, 2000: U.S. Supreme Court halts Florida recount in Gore-Bush Presidential race

April 7, 2001: Cincinnati police shoot and kill unarmed black youth; violent demonstrations follow

**October 7, 2001**: invasion of Afghanistan begins


**March 19, 2003**: Invasion of Iraq

**April 9, 2003**: Baghdad falls

January 4, 2004: America starts finger printing most visitors from foreign countries

Dec. 16, 2005: Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act—HR 4437—made illegal aliens and those who harbor or assist them felons (= Nazi Germany)

Sept. 28, 2006: Military Commissions Act passed by Congress
April 5, 2010: WV mine explosion kills 29 miners

**May 1, 2011**: Osama Bin Laden killed

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**SOME OF OMNI’S VALUES:** A WORLD FREE OF VIOLENCE AND ESPECIALLY ON DECEMBER 7 A WORLD FREE OF NATIONAL AGGRESSION, A SOCIETY IN WHICH THE WORTH OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL IS VALUED SO HIGHLY THAT KILLING IS UNACCEPTABLE, A COMMUNITY WHERE EVERY PERSON’S POTENTIAL MAY BE FULFILLED, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. AN EARTH RESTORED. GRASSROOTS NONVIOLENCE, DIRECT ACTION, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, WORLD PEACE, HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL and ECONOMIC JUSTICE, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROTECTING SPECIES AND THE EARTH. Read our brochure and our newsletters, attend our Board, become an active member of one or more of our committees, participate in our dozens of activities to see how these broad goals for building a Community of Peace are realized in action, or create your own project: with OMNI’s help you can do it.

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**END COLONIAL PACIFIC WWII NEWSLETTER #5 2013**

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