THE CHINA THREAT

“Percentage of Americans who say China ‘can’t be trusted: 68.’” (“Harper’s Index” January 2013). Where do you think that fear came from? US encirclement of China would not happen without the majority of people first having been persuaded by the warriors to believe China was an enemy, just as with Vietnam and the “Axis of Evil.”
US Fear of Chinese Port Management
Andre Vltchek, Oceania, Western Imperialism S. Pacific

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Please share with your email lists

Stop War Games, Start Peace Talks

Statement Opposing U.S.-South Korea Joint Military Exercises Key Resolve Foal Eagle

The Korean War, known in the United States as "The Forgotten War," has never ended. Every year, the United States stages a series of massive joint war games with its ally, South Korea (ROK). These coordinated exercises are both virtual and real. Among other things, they practice live fire drills and simulate the invasion of North Korea including first-strike options.

While we - peace, human rights, faith-based, environmental, and Korean solidarity activists - are deeply concerned about North Korea's third nuclear weapons test, we also oppose the U.S.-ROK joint war games as adding to the dangerous cycle of escalation of tensions on the Korean peninsula. North Korea views these war games as an act of provocation and threat of invasion like that which we have witnessed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya and routinely condemns these maneuvers as aimed at "bring[ing] down the DPRK by force" and forcing it to "bolster up the war deterrent physically." South Korean activists also decry the role of these war games in the hostile perpetuation of the division of the Korean peninsula and are often persecuted for their protests under South Korea's draconian National Security Law.

The U.S.-ROK "Key Resolve" and "Foal Eagle" annual war games, usually staged in March, and "Ulchi Freedom Guardian" in August, typically last for months and involve tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in South Korea and deployed from the United States, as well as hundreds of thousands of their ROK counterparts. U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, and Space Command forces will participate in these exercises and practice scenarios including the removal of North Korea’s leadership, occupation of Pyeongyang, and reunification of the peninsula under U.S. and South Korean control.

In South Korea, peace and reunification groups have long opposed these war games. They have called for peninsula-wide demilitarization entailing the eventual removal of U.S. troops. As one organization puts it, "Unless and until US forces are completely and permanently withdrawn from South Korea, it will be impossible to establish peace on the Korean peninsula."

We call upon the U.S. and South Korean governments to stop the costly and provocative war games and take proactive steps to deescalate the current tensions on the Korean peninsula.

The Perils of the U.S. Pivot

In the past five years, hard-won efforts by the Korean people to ease North-South tensions have been reversed. Through its massive military buildup across the region, the United States has amplified regional tensions. Recent
years have been witness to North Korea’s nuclear and missile tests, increasing nationalism and militarism in Japan (the world's sixth greatest military spender), and a host of increasingly militarized territorial disputes. The global Cold War may have ended 20 years ago, but as the recent round of U.S.-led sanctions on the DPRK and threat of a third DPRK nuclear weapons test illustrate, the anachronism remains alive and well on the Korean peninsula.

Crisis on the Korean peninsula furnishes a rationale for U.S. militarization of the region, and the Pentagon has committed to deploy 60% of its air and naval forces to Asia and the Pacific to reinforce its air sea battle doctrine. Announced as the “pivot” of U.S. military resources to Asia and the Pacific, President Obama’s policy, which necessitates more training areas, runways, ports of call, and barracks for the massive shift of U.S. military forces, disregards the impact of militarization on the lives of ordinary people in the region.

The disastrous ecological and human costs of this “pivot” are acutely apparent in the current construction of a naval base on Jeju, an "island of peace" in South Korea known for having the planet's densest concentration of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Once celebrated for its pristine beauty and sea-based culture, Gangjeong, a 450-year-old fishing and farming village is being torn to shreds by the South Korean government in collaboration with the United States, which can freely use any ROK military installation. Base construction crews are dredging acres of world-class, bio-diverse coral habitats and covering them with concrete. The obliteration of these coastal ecosystems also destroys the millennia-old livelihoods of the villagers, 94% of whom voted against the base in a local referendum. Gangjeong villagers are watching their heritage, economy, vibrant local culture, spiritual center, and very core of their identity collapse into rubble.

This same multi-facted people’s struggle is being played out in many places across the Asia-Pacific. Within President Obama’s “pivot” policy, U.S. bases in South Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Hawaii, and Guam are ever more important. Moreover, his administration has been pressing hard to open up previously closed U.S. bases in geostrategically vital nations such as Vietnam and the Philippines.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the July 27, 1953 Armistice Agreement that brought the combat phase of the Korean War to a temporary halt but did not end the war. The Armistice Agreement stipulated that a peace agreement be realized within three months and that negotiations take place for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea. Over the past several decades, North Korea, often portrayed in mainstream media as an irrational rogue state, has repeatedly requested peace negotiations with the United States. Yet today, we station nearly 30,000 military personnel and operate over 40 military bases on the Korean peninsula. We have spent the past 60 years living not in a post-war era, but under a ceasefire whose consequences are borne most acutely by the Korean people. On this anniversary of the irreolution of the Korean War, the longest conflict the United States has been involved in, as we human rights, Korean solidarity, faith-based, peace, and environmental organizations call for attention to the human and ecological costs of permanent war as the modus vivendi of U.S.-Korean relations. Efforts that promote increased militarization and conflict and the destruction of the rich biodiversity in Korea are immoral and go against universally shared values of building peace, caring for Earth, and respecting the human dignity and worth of every person.

Resolution for Peace

We, the undersigned peace, human rights, faith-based, environmental, and Korean solidarity activists, call upon the U.S.-ROK governments to cancel their dangerous and costly war games against North Korea.

We strongly urge the United States to turn to diplomacy for common and human security rather than militarization, which will only undermine regional and U.S. security. We further request that the Obama administration focus its strategic shift to the Asia region on finding diplomatic and peaceful solutions to conflict, and building cooperation with all nations in the region, including China, DPRK, and Russia.

On this anniversary of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice Agreement, which several decades ago called for a peaceful resolution to the Korean War, we join with our peace-minded brothers and sisters in Korea and call on the Obama administration to deescalate the current tensions and do its part in realizing “Year One of Peace” on the Korean Peninsula.

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Working Group for Peace and Demilitarization in Asia and the Pacific

Christine Ahn, Gretchen Alther, Rev. Levi Bautista, Jackie Cabasso, Herbert Docena, John Feffer, Bruce
Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth. ~Henry David Thoreau

The shroud of darkness

From Sue Skidmore [suesactivism@mchsi.com]

From: Steve, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch [mailto:gtwinfo@citizen.org]

Sent: Friday, February 22, 2013 3:12 PM

Sue,

Is your member of Congress still in the dark?

Email your representative right now and join us in shining a spotlight on the Trans-Pacific Partnership's (TPP) unprecedented secrecy. [http://action.citizen.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=12129 ]

In less than two weeks, TPP negotiators will be gathering again behind closed doors to try to complete this NAFTA-on-steroids deal with 11 Asian and Latin American countries before President Obama's October deadline.

Leaked negotiating texts have shown that the TPP would lead to the offshoring of millions of U.S. jobs, imports of food and products that don't meet our safety standards, and a laundry list of other outrageous corporate demands that would never survive public scrutiny.
But the public, press and our members of Congress still aren't even allowed to see what rules these unelected negotiators are agreeing to.  

*Your representative might not even know that he or she doesn't have access to the secret texts.*

That's why we need to write our representatives now to make them realize they're being locked out of a process that will affect their constituents' lives - and their ability to legislate.

Send an email to your representative today asking for a copy of the TPP texts. [http://action.citizen.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=12129](http://action.citizen.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=12129)

Thank you for your support. For more information, see my earlier message copied below.

In solidarity, Steve

[see more at end—Dick]
During the first two weeks of October (2012), I visited South Korea, invited by the group World Without War to give a training for trainers in nonviolent action and to visit Gangjeong village, on Jeju Island, where people are resisting the construction of a naval base.

It is well known that South Korea is a militarised country, with the protracted conflict with North Korea being a permanent reminder of this militarisation.

For a decade WRI has been cooperating with South Korean antimilitarists. This began in 2001 when South Korean activists asked WRI for support in their work on conscientious objection. At that time there were hundreds of Jehovah's Witness COs in prison for their refusal to military service. In early 2002 political COs started to organise themselves, and WRI played an important role in supporting their work. Initially their CO work came more from a Human Rights perspective but rapidly it took a more antimilitarist approach, with nonviolence being an important identity for them. As nonviolence and antimilitarism took a more prominent role in their work, they started expanding their work beyond CO support. That is how World Without War (2003) came to existence as a group resisting war by nonviolent means.

As a direct consequence of the conflict with North Korea and a legacy from the Cold War, South Korea has around 70 US military bases in its territory. US Forces have been stationed in South Korea since 1950. Historically, their main role was to deter any possible war threat posed by North Korea. However, the USA's Global Posture Review changes the role of US Forces in Korea from a stationary army on the Korean peninsula into a regional hub for rapid deployment and capable of pre-emptive strikes. The Land Partnership Plan of 2002, agreed by South Korea and
the USA, has re-organised forces into fewer but bigger bases and training areas. Bases previous clustered on the Demarcation Line have been closed, but the expansion of bases further south increases the capacity to send highly trained troops to other Asian 'theatres', with the Jeju base playing a crucial role in it.

Resistance to military bases has a long history in South Korea, with a wide variety of groups struggling against these bases. World Without War sees itself as taking the nonviolent direct action side of the resistance.

**Nonviolence Training**

World Without War has advocated and engaged in nonviolent action against the military bases and the different form of militarism in their country. This also includes their work against war profiteering, under their sister organisation, [Weapon Zero](#). As part of this work they see nonviolence training as a key element in strengthening their commitment to nonviolence and helping to make their actions more effective. World Without War has been at the forefront of antimilitarist nonviolent actions in South Korea, carrying actions against military bases, war profiteering, military service, etc. Nonviolent direct action, however, is still a relative new concept within South Korean movements and there are strong criticism about it, but thanks to the strong commitment of World Without War and other sympathetic activists, slowly these perceptions are changing – nonviolence training has contributed to this change. Numerous World Without War members have participated in nonviolence trainings and some of them have carried out trainings.

As part of the cooperation with WRI, we had the idea of having a training for trainers, for activists to empower themselves to go out and give their own trainings, and this year (2012) the plans finally materialised, with a training for trainers taking place in early October. The training for trainers was organised by World Without War, but was open to activists from other groups. Mostly of groups engaged in the struggle against the naval base in Gangjeong, Jeju Island. As part of the whole training for trainers process, five preparatory sessions where held before the training, with World Without War members doing the facilitation. These sessions used WRI's [Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns as a guide for their sessions](#).

The workshop was led by Denise Drake, of the UK nonviolence training organisation [Turning the Tide](#), and myself. It was held on Ganghwa island. This island is very near the border with North Korea, actually from the island you could see North Korea. The island is a two hours drive from Seoul, and I recommend not to fall a sleep during the journey – as I did even though there was a big tv screen on the bus – if not you will definitely miss the moment you get on the island, as it is very close to the continent and joined by a bridge.
Of North Korea I only saw some distant mountains, but just the feeling of being so close to this almost unaccessible country was special. I wished I had some binoculars to see more clearly. This excitement was shared by all participants, which goes to show how close but at the same time far is North Korea from South Korean people. The training was held at a beautiful complex, formed of a series of cosy cabins. Sleeping was Korean style, meaning good for your backs, on thin mats, which were a bit too exposed to the floor heating (useful in winter but this was autumn). Food was provided by a group from a Seoul Haebangchon Café Co-op under the name Bin-gagae and it was delicious, mostly rice and all forms of vegetable side dishes and with one night having Korean style Vietnamese wraps. Every evening we had a Peace Bar, with a good selection of beers and my favourite - soju. The Peace Bar raised funds to support the court cases of activists against the Gangjeong base.

The training itself focused on the facilitation side of nonviolence training. At the end of each day we had a long session under the title Today's Facilitation Points, which looked at what facilitation methodologies and tools we had used and how to adapt them to the South Korean context. After the first day we had to incorporate many more ice-breaking games as it was a common feedback from participants that South Koreans in general are shy when it comes to sharing in larger groups, and it is much easier for them to do the sharing in a more playful manner. Dancing is very important among South Korean activists, so we also learned some activist dances.

During the training we used the struggle in Gangjeon against the naval base as well as the action at Samsung's headquarters, where a group of activist poured red paint on them at the entrance of their offices - which is one of the main contractors of the naval base. If you still own a Samsung product, it is now time to get rid of it and join the boycott! This framework helped us to connect the training to actual struggles, for example an important discussion within the movement has been the phenomenon of shouting at police officers during the protests against the naval base. The point was not to agree if this is or not nonviolent, but what are the causes of it and what consequences this has. Another important issue was how to deal with people joining a direct action without being part of the preparation process, the pros and cons of this.
An important session was what we called facilitation practice, where pairs practised facilitating a session. One of the pairs after doing their session came up to me all excited saying “it is tough but fun”.

The training ended with a session on what's next? The proposal is to form a South Korean network of nonviolence trainers, and several tasks were set up to help this process. As trainer, I saw myself mostly as an excuse to get different activists together to share their experiences and share some limited experience I have. Clearly the knowledge and experience is there and there is huge capacity to work in nonviolence training in South Korea.

**No to the Naval Base in Gangjeong Style**

As part of WRI's work against [war profiteering](#), and with the help of World Without War, WRI has repeatedly reported on the struggle against the naval base in Gangjeong, Jeju, mostly focusing on the role that [Samsung](#) is playing in the construction of the base. Also WRI's close friend, Angie Zelter, who visited Gangjeong for a month earlier this year, wrote an [article for The Broken Rifle](#) on her experience.

From the moment I knew I was going to go to South Korea I had in mind that I had to go to Jeju Island. I was still not familiarised with the name and even less with the pronunciation of Gangjeong. I have to say that before going to Gangjeong I knew little about Jeju Island, what I did know was that it is a beautiful island, with many natural wonders, including the highest mountain in South Korea – Halla Mountain - and that it is the place where they are constructing a naval base. When booking my flight to Jeju, I was surprised that there are flights from Seoul to Jeju every 15 minutes, which is more often than my local bus! Which goes to show that it is a highly popular destination mostly for Korean tourists, though there are more and more international visitors.

Once you arrive at Jeju airport you get the bus number 600, which takes you through the centre of Jeju city. Once you get out of Jeju city you cross the island, which provides an incredible view of it. 15 minutes before you arrive to Gangjeong village, you are driven through several big tourist resorts, which is a bit of a shock. When we approached Gangjeong village, passengers told me “the next stop is Gangjeong, where people protest”, I guess knowing that I was getting off there. The bus drops you almost in front of Gangjeong's Peace Centre, where you will always find someone to help you with information and it is the place where many meetings take place.

Gangjeong is a village of around 2,000 inhabitants, where people live from fishing and agriculture, mostly of delicious tangerines. For both fishing and agriculture
water is a vital resource, and the naval base will affect both, as already the
construction of the base is affecting the soft coral and the sea biodiversity as well
as the blasting of the precious Gureomibi rock. This rock is not only
environmentally sensitive but also an ancient place of prayer - it is the only
smooth volcanic fresh water rock in Korea. The fresh-water springs underneath
the rock are believed to be the source of the Gangjeong Stream that provides
70% of the drinking water for the southern half of the Island, this water is also
what keeps the agriculture going.

The naval base will be a South Korean base available for unlimited use by the US
military, mostly to station aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and other lethal
weapon platforms. As Angie says in her article, when the plan to construct the
base was announced, it was a huge shock for the people in Gangjeong as “the
last time a military base was located on Jeju Island, in 1948, more than 30,000
people (a ninth of the population) were killed in a genocide that is known as
Sasam. They were killed by the South Korean government under US military rule,
84 villages were razed to the ground and a scorched earth policy left thousands of
refugees. People were not even allowed to openly talk about this trauma until
2006 when the late President Roh Moo-Hyun officially apologized for the massacre
and designated Jeju an 'Island of World Peace'. You can imagine how terrible the
sense of betrayal was when only 2 years later he agreed to build a naval base on
Jeju.”

My hosts in Gangjeong were mostly people from the organisation The Frontiers,
an organisation committed to peace building in conflict areas. In Gangjeong they
do most of the international work as well as the sea direct actions. The founder of
The Frontiers is Dr. Kang Ho Song, who a few days before I arrived had been
freed from a six months prison sentence for his actions against the naval base.
Members of The Frontiers share a house that a village person of Gangjeong lets
them have for free, as a sign of support and appreciation for what they do. If you
have come across the No Naval Base on Jeju facebook or twitter or the English
newsletter, they are the main people behind them.

At the time of my visit the construction of the naval base was around 13%
completed, so there is still the chance to stop it! As I was in Gangjeong a 1-month march against the base was taking place in the main land, covering most of the country, and which will end with a huge rally at the Seoul Square on 3 November. This meant that many of the regular protesters in Gangjeon were away, but still there was an important presence in the village. The resistance against the naval base is formed mostly of villagers together with what they call supporters (Gikimi), mostly coming from the mainland. I would like to use Angie's words here to say that “the resistance of the villagers and their supporters has been remarkable despite being repeatedly subject to arrest, imprisonment and heavy fines. The South Korean military claim that the base construction approval process was approved by a democratic vote was exposed as a lie. Only 87 people, some of whom were bribed (out of 1800 residents) had an opportunity to cast a vote, by applause only. When the village elected a new Mayor and held their own re-vote, that fairly included the entire community and was done by proper ballot, 94 percent of all villagers opposed the military base—yet the government and military refused to recognize these results.”

The day protest in front of the gates from the very little I could see has a bit of a routine. It starts at 7 am, with people bowing 100 times in front of the naval base gate, then the blockaders take their places in front of the two access gates to block the entry and exit of lorries and cars from the construction site. Every few hours the police comes in hundreds and removes the blockaders, without arresting them. As soon as the police leave, the blockaders take back their position. At 11 am there is a Catholic mass in front of the gate. When a few months ago all forms of protest at the gates were banned, mass was the only action allowed and it symbolised the continuation of the protest. After mass it is time for lunch, which is provided by the activist restaurant supporting the resistance (Samgeori). The police - not officially - have agreed not to interrupt the mass and to also not remove the blockaders during lunch time. In the afternoon there is more blockading and police removal, the blockaders always getting some refreshments from the activist cafeteria (Halmangmul). The day ends at 8pm with a candle vigil in front of the gates, which is also a time to talk and share information and experiences. The candle vigil almost always ends with one or more of the several dances which have become a trademark of the resistance to the base. Dancing is a very important form of protest in South Korea, and this could not be more true in Gangjeong, with the latest hit Gangjeong Style soon topping the rankings as
most watched video. I tried to learn a few dances, and I am still practising while looking at the video clips. Check them out!

Throughout the five years of resistance against the construction of the base, villagers and supporters have inspired us with the resilience and courage to continue their struggle. This is one of the best examples of the importance of continuous resistance, as people are there everyday struggling against the base. Many activists have given up their life in the mainland to join the struggle, as Arundhati Roy argued “weekend demonstrations don't stop wars”. One question is how well they can combine their local protest with pressure in Seoul. The month long march ending in Seoul is a step in that direction. The continuous pressure on Samsung is also crucial. Perhaps South Korea's presidential elections in December will bring some renegotiation of the relationship with the USA, and Catholic bishops have petitioned that this should include cancelling Jeju. One of the most famous anti-militarist struggles - the decade-long resistance to a firing range on the Larzac in France - resulted in 1981 in the newly-elected French president, François Mitterrand, keeping his promise and cancelling the plan. Nothing like that is likely with Jeju, however, until the movement grows even stronger. Therefore the movement needs a longer term perspective - and could certainly benefit from the long-range support and encouragement of those far away who see the importance of this struggle. Boycott Samsung - share information on what's happening in Gangjeong - write to or picket your nearest South Korean embassy. Join the Facebook cause if that's your way. Let's all find some way to say "No to the Naval base on Jeju Island!"

For more pictures go to: http://wri-irg.org/node/20503 or to Facebook

From: Kalikasan-PNE <kalikasan.pne@gmail.com>
Subject: Press Release: Environmentalists and militants protest US trespassing and environmental crimes
To: kalikasan.pne@gmail.com
Date: Monday, January 21, 2013, 12:41 AM

KALIKASAN PEOPLE’S NETWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
26 Matulungin St. Central Dist., Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, 1100
Tel./Fax; +63 (2) 924-8756; E-mail: kalikasan.pne@gmail.com Website: www.kalikasan.net

Press release 22 January 2013

[Dick: This is a comparatively minor harm but its destruction is multiplied by all the US bases, ships, and missiles in the Pacific and E. Asian Rim.]

Environmentalists and militants protest US trespassing and environmental crimes
Environmentalist and militants trooped to the US Embassy to denounce the recent grounding of USS Guardian, a US Navy minesweeper, in world heritage site and marine biodiversity-rich Tubbataha Reef National Park.

“At this moment USS Guardian is stuck atop Tubbataha Reef and continues to wreck our national treasure. The US officials until now offer no clear explanation as to why their ship trespassed into the marine sanctuary. No apology or even an acknowledgement of the violation was done,” says Clemente Bautista, Kalikasan PNE national coordinator.

According to US Pacific Fleet, the USS Guardian had just completed a port call in Subic Bay and was en route to Indonesia and then on to Timor Leste to participate in a military exercise when the grounding occurred. The US Navy attributes the error to a faulty navigation chart.

“Blaming old digital navigation chart the reason for grounding is a lame excuse, the intruders are clearly lying. The US ship is equipped with state of the art navigation technology and weaponry,” Bautista points out.

The US Navy has pulled out and took custody of 72 out of 79 crew of the USS Guardian. Commanding and executive officers remain on the ship.

“The Philippine government should assert its jurisdiction and authority over our territorial waters. Like what we did with the Chinese poachers who entered the Tubbataha Reef area, the US Guardian officials and crew should be arrested and apprehended. The Philippine government should be the one doing the direct investigation and have custody over the violators,” Bautista explains.

“Instead to be prudent and assertive, the Aquino government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) just accepted the excuses and allowed US military forces to get scotch free like in their previous violations such as the toxic pollution in Subic Bay and US drone in Masbate. There is prima facie evidence that the US deliberately violated our laws,” Bautista states.

Angeline Songco, Tubbataha National Park Management officer, said that the US Navy entered the reserve without a permit, damaged the protected corals, did not coordinate with the government officials, and prevented the park management to immediately investigate the incident.

“The Philippine government, which up to this day have not filed any formal protest or complaint against the US Navy, is showing how spineless they are before the US. We expect that the Aquino government again to defend the US military forces by invoking the power of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA),” adds Bautista.

“If VFA continue to be implemented, we expect these kind of violations to proliferate and persist, affecting our people and environment. Legal actions should be filed against the US Navy and VFA. If we want to protect our marine biodiversity and environment, we must work for the abrogation of VFA,” Bautista ends.

Reference: Clemente Bautista, national coordinator, Kalikasan PNE 09228449787.

CLEMENTE BAUTISTA
National Coordinator
Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE)
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION–A Homage to David Fagen by E. SAN JUAN, Jr.

6:44 PM (2 hours ago)

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: THE PHILIPPINES MATRIX PROJECT <comment-reply@wordpress.com>
To: philcs@sbcglobal.net
Sent: Fri, February 8, 2013 10:25:10 AM
Subject: [New post] AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION–A Homage to David Fagen by E. SAN JUAN, Jr.

philcs posted: "HOMAGE TO DAVID FAGEN: AFRICAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONALISM AND THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION by E. SAN JUAN, Jr. Fellow, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin Let him never dream that his bullet’s scream went wide of its island mark, "

Respond to this post by replying above this line

New post on THE PHILIPPINES MATRIX PROJECT
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION–A Homage to David Fagen by E. SAN JUAN, Jr.
by philcsc

HOMAGE TO DAVID FAGEN: AFRICAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONALISM AND THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION

by E. SAN JUAN, Jr.
Fellow, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin

Let him never dream that his bullet’s scream went wide of its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled and sinned in the dark.

--WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY, “On A Soldier Fallen in the Philippines” (1901)

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in American and the islands of the sea.
--W.E. B. DU BOIS, The Souls of Black Folk (1903)

From 1865 to 1898, the United States underwent momentous changes not least of which was the formal “emancipation” of African slaves exploited by the Southern plantation aristocracy. However, the failure of the complete “reconstruction” of the South institutionalized segregation and white racial supremacy for another century. U.S. victory over the moribund Spanish empire in 1898 signalled its birth as a world imperial power dominant over the Caribbean and Latin America. Its colonization of the southeast Asian islands of the Philippines (bought from Spain after its defeat) allowed it to project itself as an Asian-Pacific power and ruler of
In July 1900, when the third meeting of the Pan-African Congress met in London, the Filipino Republic's resistance to US “pacification” of the colony was over a year old, with the preponderance of native casualties due to quasi-genocidal war practices anticipating the forcible “hamletting” in Vietnam, scorched-earth counter-insurgency tactics, torture by “water-boarding,” and so on. In a now historic speech at the Congress, W.E.B. Du Bois, who participated in the Anti-Imperialist League (one active member was William James, Du Bois' professor at Harvard University) opposed to US suppression of the dark-skinned Filipinos, took notice of the universal plight of “the darker races of mankind” as well as “the brown and yellow myriads” by prophetically announcing that “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line...” (1970, 125).

The dialectic between race and class implicit in Du Bois’ address had already been anticipated in his 1891 paper on “The Enforcement of the Slave Trade Laws.” Du Bois analyzed the interface between ideology, politics, and economic structure: “If slave labor was an economic god, then the slave trade was its strong right arm; and with Southern planters recognizing this and Northen capital unfettered by a conscience it was almost like legislating against economic laws to attempt to abolish the slave trade by statutes” (quoted in Lewis 1993, 159). Legal ideology and economic practice were so intricately meshed that one cannot privilege one category over the other. At that time Du Bois was neither an “economic determinist” nor a postmodern deconstructionist. Neither was Karl Marx when he studied the politics of the U.S. civil war in his journalistic writings. Marx regarded the destruction of the slave system as a necessary pre-requisite for the advance of the working-class struggles in the U.S. and Europe, hence the whole-hearted support of the British trade unions and the first International Working Men’s Association for Lincoln and the Union.

In his recent pathbreaking work, Kevin Anderson demonstrates how Marx’s inquiries into the complex dialectic between race and class in the U.S. civil war, as well as in Ireland’s struggle against British colonialism, led Marx to change his earlier hypothesis of society’s unilinear development and the progressive aspect of British colonialism. By 1853, and especially in his studies of Russia and non-western formations from 1857 (the completion of the Grundrisse) to the 1879-1882 notes on indigenous peoples, Marx formulated a multilinear and non-reductionist theory of social change that did not univocally and exclusively focus on economic relations of production. Anderson concludes that Marx’s mature social theory “revolved around a concept of totality that not only offered considerable scope for particularity and difference but also on occasion made those particulars—race, ethnicity, or nationality—determinants for the totality” (2010, 244). In 1862, before the Emancipation Proclamation, Marx had already conceptualized the
subjectivity or revolutionary agency of “free Negroes” as a crucial element in the victory of the Union forces.

Prologue to Possession

Du Bois, of course, famously speculated on the “double consciousness” of this African American agency in The Souls of Black Folk published just a year after the end of the Filipino American War of 1899-1902 (actually, guerilla resistance continued up to 1913). A moral and spiritual dilemma then confronted this emergent identity. While the African half dreamed of realizing full humanity, the American half yielded to a citizenship option: he joined the troops sent to the Philippines on a “civilizing mission.” Soon he discovered the reality of the imperial situation where race, nationality and class articulated for him the choice he must make: to follow a racialist-capitalist order, or cast his lot with the “dark-skinned” victims. This is what African American soldiers were ultimately confronted with when the bifurcated “subject-position” (to use the postmodernist idiom) was faced with the need to reconcile knowledge and real-life situations. Imperial duty had to give way to the ethical imperative of fraternal solidarity with peoples occupying the same position as his community, a historically conscious partisanship committed to a transcendent cause that would dissolve racial, class and national barriers in the name of a universal humanist principle.

This theme of the dialectic of race, class and nation informs my project of speculative historical inventory of which this essay is a preliminary investigation (segments appeared in an earlier version in Cultural Logic). Here I explore how this process of African American internationalist praxis, personified by the African American soldier David Fagen and replicated by selected radical African American activists in the last century, materialized in the concrete historical situation of the Filipino-American War of 1899-1902 and acquired richer nuances and ramifications when the U.S., after World War II and during the Cold War, made the Philippines a laboratory for reactionary counter-insurgency and intervention in developing “third world” nations. The fraught issues of race, class and nation that post-9/11 global capitalism has sublimated today into the Manichean dualism of “terrorism-versus-Western civilization” were all rehearsed earlier in the narratives of African Americans who, cognizant of the two-edged “double consciousness” and its creative impact in the Civil Rights mobilization, joined their honor and lives with the four-centuries-old struggle of the Filipino masses of workers and peasants for dignity, popular sovereignty, and democratic socialism.

Unless news of a disaster grabs the headlines—the eruption of a volcano that drove the US military forces from Clark and Subic bases two decades ago, or of American missionaries kidnapped by the Muslim separatists, the Abu Sayyaf
labeled a terrorist group by the US State Department in 2003), the Philippines scarcely figures in the U.S. public consciousness. Not even as a tourist destination, or as the source of mail order brides and domestic help. Some mistake the Philippines as islands in the Caribbean, or somewhere near Hawaii or Tahiti; others wondered then if “them Philippians were the folks St. Paul wrote the epistle to.”

September 11, 2001 changed this somewhat. When U.S. occupation troops in Iraq continued to suffer casualties every day after the war officially ended, pundits began to supply capsule histories comparing their situation with those of troops in the Philippines during the Filipino-American War (1899-1902). A New York Times op-ed summed up the lesson in its title, “In 1901 Philippines, Peace Cost More Lives Than Were Lost in War” (2 July 2003, B1). An article in the Los Angeles Times contrasted the simplicity of McKinley’s “easy” goal of annexation with George W. Bush’s ambition to “create a new working democracy as soon as possible” (20 July 2003, M2). Immediately after the proclaimed defeat of the Taliban and the rout of Osama bin Laden’s forces in Afghanistan, the Philippines became the second front in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, with hundreds of US “Special Forces” re-invading the former colony.

Necrological Rites

Few Americans know about the Spanish-American War of 1898—school textbooks allow only a few paragraphs for this “splendid little war.” After Spain’s surrender in the Treaty of Paris, December 1898, the US Empire began with the military rule over Cuba, and annexation of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam and later on, Hawaii and parts of Samoa. Fewer know about the Filipino American War which began in February 1899 and lasted until 1913, with the Filipino Muslims sustaining the heaviest casualties in publicized massacres. This chapter in US history is only now beginning to merit some attention in the wake of the adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan (Boot 2002; Kaplan 2003).

This story of African American soldiers in the Philippine revolution—US officials called it “an insurrection”—might begin with President William McKinley. While there was public support for the war against Spain, pitched as a crusade to liberate the Cubans from Spanish tyranny, there was fierce debate over acquiring the Philippine Islands. This expansionist zeal of the “yellow journalists,” commercial houses, and militarists was opposed by an organized nation-wide group called the Anti-Imperialist League. It included Andrew Carnegie, former president Grover Cleveland, George Boutwell, co-founder of the Republican Party; and numerous personalities such as Mark Twain, William James, William Dean Howells, Jane Addams, George Santayana, and others. Besieged by such a
crowd, McKinley confessed to a visiting delegation of Methodist church leaders how he sought the light of “Almighty God” to advise him what to do with the Philippines, and God told him that, among other things, “there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God’s grace to do the very best we could by them….and then I went to sleep, and slept soundly” (quoted in Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, 22-23). It was this sound sleep and McKinley’s policy of “Benevolent Assimilation” that led to US casualties of 4,234 soldiers killed, about 3,000 wounded, and anywhere from 250,000 to 1.4 million “new-caught sullen peoples” of the islands forever silenced.

With the 1898 Treaty of Paris, Spain agreed to cede—that is, sell—the Philippines to the United States for $20 million, even though it had already lost control of the islands except for its Manila garrison. But the Filipinos, as William Blum puts it, “who had already proclaimed their own independent republic, did not take kindly to being treated like a plot of uninhabited real estate. Accordingly, an American force numbering initially 50,000 [126,500, all in all] proceeded to instill in the population a proper appreciation of their status,” gaining for the US its “longest-lasting and most conspicuous colony” (2004, 39). Admiral Dewey himself, the hero of the battle of Manila Bay, reflected on how the Peace Conference “scarcely comprehended that a rebellion was included with the purchase.” Henry Adams wrote Theodore Roosevelt to express his alarm that the US was ready “to plunge into an inevitable war to conquer the Philippines, contrary to every profession or so-called principle in our lives and history. I turn green in bed at midnight if I think of the horror of a year’s warfare in the Philippines where…we must slaughter a million or two of foolish Malays in order to give them the comforts of flannel petticoats and electric railways” (Ocampo 1998, 249).

While postmodern scholars today expound on the need then of Americans to assert manhood, moral superiority, and so on, material interests were indubitably paramount in the turn-of-the-century discourse on progress and civilization. U.S. policy decisions and consequent practices were framed in a “regime of truth” based on the now well-known politics of colonial representation. Roxanne Lynn Doty (1996) describes this discursive economy that has since framed North-South relations, in Foucaultian terms, as the denial of the transcendental international signifier, sovereignty, to Filipinos and other newly conquered indigenes; that is, the denial of the capacity to exercise agency. Force is justified because the annexed or colonized are unruly, undisciplined, rebellious, disposed to resist the laws established by the civilizing missionaries. What stood out in the cry for colonial possession is the need for a naval port and springboard for penetrating the China market and demonstrating American power in the Asia/Pacific region. This
ideological legitimacy for the occupation was voiced by Senator Alfred Beveridge, among others. After rehearsing the profits to be gained from trade and natural resources, he repeated a familiar refrain from past conquests of the Native Americans, the Mexicans, and other indigenes:

They [natives of the Philippines] are a barbarous race, modified by three centuries of contact with a decadent race. The Filipino is the South Sea Malay, put through a process of three hundred years of superstition in religion, dishonesty in dealing, disorder in habits of industry, and cruelty, caprice, and corruption in government. It is barely possible that 1,000 men in all the archipelago are capable of self-government in the Anglo-Saxon sense (Schirmer and Shalom 1987, 25)

This was echoed by General Arthur McArthur who thought the natives needed “bayonet treatment for at least a decade,” while Theodore Roosevelt felt that the Filipinos needed a good beating so they could become “good Injuns” (cited in Ignacio 2004). The “barbarous” natives, however, resisted for a time longer than anticipated, offering lessons that still have to be learned, even after Korea and Vietnam, and the quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite the neoconservative revisionists’ view that the US “savage war of peace” in the Philippines was humane, humanitarian, and honorable under the circumstances, US intervention to annex the Philippines continues to haunt the conscience of some humanists and historians of international relations.

Counting the Victims

Current controversy among scholars surrounds the tally of Filipino victims of US pacification. Journalist Bernard Fall cited the killing of three million Filipinos in “the bloodiest colonial war (in proportion to population) ever fought by a white power in Asia,” comparable to the carnage in Vietnam. Describing it as “among the cruelest conflicts in the annals of Western imperialism,” Stanley Karnow, author of the award-winning In Our Image, counts 200,000 civilians and 20,000 soldiers (1989, 194), while others cite the figure of 600,000 victims. Filipina historian Luzviminda Francisco arrives at the figure of 1.4 million Filipinos sacrificed for Uplift and Christianization—in a country ruled by Christian Spain for three hundred years. While Kipling at the outbreak of the war urged the US to “take up the White Man’s burden” and tame the “new-caught sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child,” Mark Twain wrote some of his fiery pieces denouncing “Benevolent Assimilation” as the “new name of the musket” and acidly harped on the “collateral damage” of the US “civilizing mission”: “Thirty thousand [US soldiers] killed a million [Filipinos]. It seems a pity that the historian let that get out; it is really a most embarrassing circumstance” (1992, 62). Recently Gore Vidal stirred up the hornet’s nest when he
Between the years 1899 and 1913 the United States of America wrote the darkest pages of its history. The invasion of the Philippines, for no other reason than acquiring imperial possessions, prompted a fierce reaction of the Filipino people... 400,000 Filipino "insurrectos" died under the American fire and one million Filipino civilians died because of the hardship, mass killings and scorched earth tactics carried out by the Americans. In total the American war against a peaceful people who fairly ignored the existence of the Americans until their arrival wiped out 1/6 of the population of the country....Our policy in the Philippines was genocide. We were not there to liberate or even defend a 'liberty-loving' people, we were there to acquire those rich islands and if we had to kill the entire population we would have done so. Just as we had killed the Indians in the century before (some of our best troops in the Philippines were former Indian fighters) and as we would kill Southeast Asians later in this century (1981).

In Search of the Dissenter

Whatever the exact figures of the dead, this landscape or theater of war was surely surveyed and closely inspected by one corporal David Fagen, an African American soldier, after he landed in June 1899. The Filipino revolutionary army was beleaguered and on the defensive, having suffered several defeats in Manila, Caloocan and Malolos, and the US was on the way to winning the war. It was only a matter of time that superior force would reign supreme. Fagen was one among fifteen to thirty deserters from four regiments of “Buffalo Soldiers”—the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 23rd and 24th Infantry-- dispatched to the Philippines in July and August 1899. Seven thousand African Americans were involved in the war. After fighting the Native Americans as “Buffalo Soldiers,” these four regiments were mobilized for the Spanish American War. As the New York State Military Museum reminds us, the use of black soldiers by the War Department conformed to the belief that black soldiers were “naturally adapted to survive the tropical climate.” In fact, the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th US Volunteer Infantry were later formed in response to the government need for soldiers “immune to tropical diseases.” Incidentally, it was members of the 10th Cavalry that used its “Indian fighting skills” to save Theodore Roosevelt and his “Rough Riders” from certain extermination. But they never received recognition equal to Roosevelt’s. When the Philippine resistance proved tougher than the officials estimated, the War Department recruited two regiments of black volunteers, the Forty-Eight and Forty-Ninth Infantry and sent them to the Philippines in early 1900 to stay up to the official end of the war.
We know the names of seven of about twenty-nine African Americans who deserted—their names have been expurgated from ordinary historical accounts. Deserters from the military are never mentioned in official histories, much less in approved textbooks and government documentaries. Only Fagen of Company I of the 24th Infantry seems to have survived in civic memory because he joined the revolutionary army of General Emilio Aguinaldo, the beleaguered president of the first Philippine Republic. Fagen’s courage and skill as a guerilla leader earned him the trust of his Filipino comrades. As captain of his unit, Fagen led skirmishes against the pursuing troops of General Funston who offered a $600 reward for his head. A report of his “supposed killing” failed to convince even the U.S. Army, so Fagen continues to live on, at last arriving at his niche in the American National Biography (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Invoking the Double

Before describing the circumstances surrounding Fagen’s defection, I should state at the outset that my interest is not so much in the personal life and biographical circumstances of Fagen as in his position as an indexical sign, a pedagogical signifier (if you like) of intersubjective or interethnic relations. It would of course be useful to have complete biographical details about Fagen and his other companions, and a full disclosure of all government documents on all the incidents of the war in which the soldiers participated. My interest, however, is in the political, ethical, and philosophical—dare one use the term “ideological”—issues. What I am concerned with in this historic event in which Fagen and seven other African American soldiers were involved, is its potential as an allegorical trope, an exemplary figure (for some, an exemplum), of the politics of self-determination for enslaved and subjugated communities.

From the conventional optic, Fagen’s decision to join the Philippine anti-colonial revolution was a treasonous act, a violation of his oath of loyalty to the US military and government. But given the situation of African Americans at that time in US post-reconstruction history, in the context of what some describe as an apartheid caste-system sanctioned by the 1896 Plessy versus Ferguson judgment and other laws, one might ask: Is Fagen’s status that of a full citizen whose word to uphold the authority of the state is uncompromised? Is Fagen’s decision to fight the invasion (under Filipino leadership) simply that of a soldier citizen, or could it not be read as an allegory of the black nation’s struggle for self-determination? If the United States’ war against the Philippine republic that had virtually wrested power from colonial Spain a war of colonial conquest, within this framework, can we not regard Fagen’s refusal to be part of the State’s violence a quintessential act of political dissent and his joining the enemy as an act of rebellion against the racial
State?
Given the domination of white-racial supremacy, Fagen’s act may be taken as a complete repudiation of that juridical-political order. His refusal to surrender confirms his choice as a moral and political act of self-determination—both on a personal and collective dimension. To commit oneself to join a revolutionary movement resisting a colonial power and its history of slavery and racialized subjugation of African Americans, is to reaffirm the right of collective self-determination. It is to reaffirm a long durable tradition of revolt against a slave-system. Further, in contradistinction to the maroon revolts of the past which sought to restore a pre-capitalist or pre-feudal order in an isolated place, Fagen’s decision to join the Filipino anti-colonial struggle—a struggle comparable to Haiti’s revolution against the French, with the qualification that the U.S. in 1899 was a fully industrialized capitalist power—is to reaffirm a new level of dissent which, at the threshold of the era of finance-capital and wars for the division of the world into colonies and imperial metropoles, acquires a global transnational resonance. This concrete universality of Fagen’s individual revolt taken as a symbolic act at the beginning of the century of revolutions and intercontinental wars, is what I would like to explore further in connection with a quite distinct strain in African American political thought, dating back to Frederick Douglass and earlier reflections on slave revolts up to W.E. B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, C.L. R. James, Harry Haywood, Harold Cruse, Nelson Peery, and others. This is a modest exercise in a transformative critique of cosmopolitan, possessive individualist—shall we say, neoliberal—reason.

Historical Panorama

Before focusing on the figure of Fagen as an African American rebel-soldier, it might be useful to paint him against the historical landscape of the time. The war against the Spanish Empire was quite brief—indeed, “a splendid little war,” in John Hay’s terms. After Theodore Roosevelt’s “fabled” storming of San Juan Hill and the surrender of the Spanish forces in Santiago, Cuba, followed by the passage of the Teller amendment, that episode might have concluded with the Treaty of Paris in December 1998. But strong opposition to colonial annexation of the Philippines delayed its Senate ratification.

Why would the United States want to acquire a colony? The major reason is the need of the ascendant commercial, industrial and military interests to penetrate the markets and natural resources of Asia. The initial desire (as expressed by Senator Beveridge, among others) was for a gateway to China. The Philippines offered a strategic location for a naval base, a military launching-pad, in addition to the immense value of its raw materials, above all mineral deposits. Senator Henry
Cabot Lodge emphasized the potential market of the Philippines’ ten million inhabitants, thus carrying out McKinley’s adherence to “the great American doctrine of protection to American industries.” President McKinley—whose wife was obsessed in converting the pagan “Igorottes”-- pushed for colonization under the slogan of “Benevolent Assimilation” of the colonized subjects under US sovereignty (for a summary of the historical context, see Constantino 1970, 67-91). By the time Commodore George Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in May 1998, the Filipino revolutionary forces under General Emilio Aguinaldo had practically liberated the whole country and was besieging the Spanish garrison in the Walled City of Manila. Dewey held Aguinaldo at bay with false promises of US support. The Spaniards, after a mock battle already agreed upon, decided to surrender to General Merritt on August 13. Earlier, on June 12, General Aguinaldo formally proclaimed the independence of the Philippines from Spain; and on June 23, a revolutionary government was formed with provisions for administration of the entire country. Thus before the arrival of the first US expeditionary troops on June 30, there was already a functioning Philippine government operating nationally and locally, which commanded the loyalty of the people. But despite Aguinaldo’s desire to negotiate some kind of compromise with the U.S., McKinley and his military officials proceeded to build up the occupation forces until fighting broke out on February 4, six months after the Spanish surrender, and a few weeks after the inauguration of the Philippine Republic on January 23, 1899. From June 29, 1898, McKinley’s policy sought to enforce “the absolute domain of military authority” on people who had just won their freedom with arms. He knew that Aguinaldo and his followers, the bulk of which came from the landless peasantry and impoverished middle strata, would never surrender their newly won independence. Fifty to seventy thousand troops were needed to pacify and “benevolently” assimilate the islands. The Filipinos resisted in frontal battles from February to March, 1899. Meanwhile, in July 1899, the first of 6,000 segregated African American soldiers arrived in the Philippines. The US began to occupy Jolo and other Muslim provinces once guarded by isolated Spanish forts in the southern Philippines.

On November 13, 1899, after losing the capital of Malolos and substantial fighters, Aguinaldo disbanded the regular army and switched to guerilla warfare. Military governor General Otis did not understand this new strategy and believed that the insurrection was suppressed with the capture of Malolos, the headquarters of Aguinaldo’s government. Before he was replaced by General Arthur McArthur, father of General Douglas McArthur, who was forced to abandon Bataan and Corregidor to the invading Japanese forces in 1942, Otis wrote to the War Department in April 1900 that we are no longer dealing “with organized insurrection, but brigandage,” which would require police action by a quarter of a
million soldiers (Pomeroy 1970, 86), Mark Twain’s suspicion, shared by a large majority, was that “we do not intend to free, but to subjugate, the people of the Philippines” (Putzel 1992, 52). On May 2, 1900, Otis was replaced by General McArthur who imposed martial law on December 20, 1900.

Waterboarding and Other Gory Business

There is general consensus that the pacification of the Philippines is one of the bloodiest wars in imperial history. After two days of fighting, the Filipinos on Manila’s perimeter and nearby provinces sustained a casualty of nearly 10,000. Aguinaldo’s officers schooled in European manuals followed positional warfare along classic military lines; but they were forced to resort to mobile warfare, utilizing their knowledge of the countryside and universal support from the populace in the face of vastly superior US firepower. The inaugural model of anti-colonial “people’s war” may be found here, as well as its ruthless antidote, “low-intensity” warfare.

As we saw, Otis and his officers thought that the insurrection would be over in a matter of weeks. Mobile tactics and eventually guerilla strategy reduced the US garrisons to easy targets, with the US troops finding themselves ill-suited and ill-equipped to confront their enemies lacking adequate firearms, often fighting with bolos—long bladed knives—and spears. The Filipino insurgents resembled the proverbial fish swimming in the ocean of their sympathizers so that by subterfuge and hand-to-hand combat, the rebels overcame the odds against them. After protracted fighting with unconscionable losses, the US army began to treat all the “niggers” as enemies, whether armed or not; it resorted to destroying villages and killing civilians. In the second year of fighting, 75,000 troops escalated the war against the Filipino masses, not just the sporadic guerillas in the “boondocks”—the term adopted from the Filipino word, “bundok,” contested mountainous terrain. General MacArthur observed that guerilla warfare was contrary to “the customs and usages” of civilized warfare,” hence those captured were no longer soldiers but simple criminals, brigands, etc. They were “are not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war.” This accorded with the US Army “Instructions” (General Order 100) issued during the Civil War, defining “war rebels” who “rise in arms against the occupying or conquering army” as “high robbers or pirates” (Pomeroy 1970, 87). Those rebels would be today’s “unlawful combatants” not deserving of Geneva Convention guidelines. By placing Filipino resistance outside the bounds of recognized warfare, William Pomeroy notes, “the American military authorities in effect and in practice gave sanction to barbarous methods,” among them the infamous “water cure,” rope torture, and others (1970, 88). Such atrocities flourished in the racialist ethos of the conduct of the war.
The US pacification campaign against the insurrectos, argues Jonathan Fast, “degenerated into a grisly slaughter of non-combatants” (1973, 74). From April 1901 to April 1902, four successive “depopulation campaigns” were carried out. The first occurred in Northern Luzon, described by one American Congressman: “Our soldiers took no prisoners, they kept no records; they simply swept the country and wherever and whenever they could get hold of a Filipino they killed him” (quoted in Wolff 1968, 352). Then in August 1901, in Panay island, the same procedure was adopted. US troops cut an area 60 miles wide from one end of the island to the other, burning everything in their path. In September and October, US troops swarmed into Samar, with orders from General Jacob Smith to burn and kill everything over ten,” as a reprisal for the ambush of 48 American soldiers in the town of Balangiga. His subalterns fulfilled his vow to make the whole island “a howling wilderness.”

The climax is rather unsurprising. In December, the entire population of Batangas (about 500,000) was forced into concentration camps. Frustrated by Filipino perseverance in resisting US sovereignty, General J. Franklin Bell who masterminded the Batangas campaign stated that he intended to “create in the minds of the people a burning desire for the war to cease—that will impel them to join hands with the Americans....” For this purpose, it was necessary to keep the people “in such a state of anxiety and apprehension that living under such conditions will soon become unbearable” (Storey and Codman 1902, 71-73). Due to the brutal conditions in the detention camps, to hunger and diseases, over 100,000 died in Batangas alone. Later on, General Bell calculated that over 600,000 Filipinos in Luzon alone had been killed or died as a direct result of the pacification campaign. This estimate made in May 1901 does not take into account the victims of the other four campaigns listed above. The extermination of almost the entire population of Samar remains emblematic of how the US administered the stick without the carrot. General Jacob Smith wiped out the town, summarily executed prisoners, and devastated the whole province--probably the longest and most brutal campaign on record. His method could not be considered exceptional, as Linn and others argue, because it had been repeated many times. Although Roosevelt declared the war over on July 4, 1902, the fighting lasted until 1910 when the last guerilla leader was captured in Luzon; and Muslim uprisings continued until 1916, punctuated by the massacres of Bud Dajo in 1906 and of Bud Bagsak in 1913.

Orientalist Theater of Cruelty

Harsh measures such as “reconcentration” or hamletting of civilians became official policy in fighting Aguinaldo’s guerilla forces. The most notorious
practitioners were Gen. Bell who inflicted it in Batangas and southern Luzon and Gen. Jacob Smith who turned Samar into a “howling wilderness.” Recently, in the controversy over the use of torture such as “waterboarding,” Paul Kramer rehearsed again what a British witness called “the murderous butchery” of the US “pacification” campaign. Except for such apologists of the McKinley and Roosevelt policies, such as Brian McAllister Linn (whose claim to neutrality in his book, The Philippine War 1899-1902, is quite a feat of Olympian hauteur), the general consensus is that the atrocities committed by the invading US army is out of proportion to the resistance of the revolutionary guerillas of the Philippine Republic, even allowing for the desperate measures Filipinos took to retaliate in kind. Of course, it is easy to say that both are guilty. But that is to abandon the search for historical clarity if not some measure of provisional objectivity. Kramer recounts some of the findings of the Senate committee that inquired into the reports of “cruelties and barbarities” earlier revealed through letters sent to newspapers. At one hearing, the testimony of Charles Riley of the 26th Volunteer Infantry described in detail a scene of “water cure” that he witnessed, but after the ritual of a court martial, the guilty officer Capt. Edwin Glenn was suspended for a month and fined fifty-dollars; in 1919 he retired from the army as brigadier general. At one hearing, William Howard Taft, head of the second Philippine Commission sent to the islands and first Civil Governor of the Philippines, was forced to admit that “cruelties have been inflicted” and the “water cure” administered, but countered that military officers have condemned such methods. Elihu Root, Secretary of War, excused the cruelties because the Filipino insurgents were guilty of “barbarous cruelty, common among uncivilized races.” One stark leitmotif in this narrative centering on Fagen is the question of civilization. Filipinos were not only an “uncivilized race,” they were savages, barbarous, treacherous, wild devils, and so on. In one Senate hearing, Senator Joseph Rawlins asked General Robert Hughes whether the burning of Filipino homes by advancing US troops was “within the ordinary rules of civilized warfare,” to which Hughes replied curtly: “These people are not civilized” On January 9, 1900, Senator Beveridge already reminded the U.S. public not to worry about the cruel conduct of the war because “We are dealing with Orientals.” This strain appeared again in Senator Lodge’s ascription of “Asiatic” cruelty to all Filipinos. Harvard University philosopher William James accused McKinley’s camp of hypocrisy and cant and said: “God damn the U.S. for its vile conduct in the Philippine Isles” (Zinn 1980, 307). Systematic extermination of homes and inhabitants occurred in the destruction of Caloocan before Aguinaldo switched from positional to guerilla warfare. The general sentiment of the occupying army was captured by one volunteer: “We all wanted to kill ‘niggers’… beats rabbit hunting…”In November 1901, the Manila correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger reported: “The present war is no bloodless, opera bouffe
engagement; our men have been relentless, have killed to exterminate men, women, children, prisoners and captives, active insurgents and suspected people from lads of ten up, the idea prevailing that the Filipino as such was little better than a dog…” (Zinn 1980, 308).

Were it not for a persisting amnesia or selective forgetting in the national psyche, the catalogue of gruesome facts would be a perverse imposition. Aside from Twain, Vidal and others, Gabriel Kolko rendered one of the most cogent reflections on the “enormity of the crime” of force and chicanery accomplished by officers most of whom were veterans of the Indian campaigns:

...Against the Indians, who owned and occupied much coveted land, wholesale slaughter was widely sanctioned as a virtue. That terribly bloody, sordid history, involving countless tens of thousands of lives that neither victims nor executioners can ever enumerate, made violence endemic to the process of continental expansion. Violence reached a crescendo against the Indian after the Civil War and found a yet bloodier manifestation during the protracted conquest of the Philippines from 1898 until well into the next decade, when anywhere from 200,000 to 600,000 Filipinos were killed in an orgy of racist slaughter that evoked much congratulation and approval from the eminent journals and men of the era who were also much concerned about progress and stability at home. From their inception, the great acts of violence and attempted genocide America launched against outsiders seemed socially tolerated, even celebrated (1976, 287).

Race War

One might venture the proposition that even before the Filipino American War started, it was already a thoroughly racialized conflict. This is no longer news. Historian Richard Welch observed that the attitudes of the invaders then demonstrated “colorphobia,” and the Filipinos to be subjugated were considered “monkey men” and “niggers” (1979, 101). A recent book by Paul A. Kramer, The Blood of Government, elaborates on what W.E.B. Du Bois observed about the “race questions” of the United and those of the world becoming tightly “belted” together by imperialism. Du Bois identified the US “ownership of Porto Rico, and Havana, our protectorate of Cuba, and conquest of the Philippines” as constituting the “greatest event since the Civil War,” confirming how the space between America “and the islands of the sea” was dissolving, and with it, the former boundaries between the “race questions of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.” He urged the unity of “Negro and Filipino, Indian and Porto Rican, Cuban and Hawaiian,” to struggle for “an America that knows no color line in the freedom of its opportunities” (1997, 102).

Kramer’s book is one of the most sustained exposition of how race and imperial
ideology coalesced to produce the exceptionalist politics of US global hegemony, with the conquest of the Philippines as a kind of experimental laboratory for its invention. It rehearses what many previous historians have noted: the racial formations in the US were exported and renegotiated anew in the Philippine scene, with the Filipino savages labeled “niggers,” “gugus” (forerunner of “gooks”), Indians, etc., but with a difference in function. The racial imaginary justified extermination of the enemy race. Though self-limited in its focus on “race” as an amorphous, protean concept, Kramer convincingly demonstrates that on all sides, the US conquest of the Philippines was a “race war” with profound implications that resonate up to today’s thinking about ethnicity, racial relations, and a viable multicultural democracy.

Let us situate Fagen in the context of a “race war” that initially claimed to be a civilizing, benevolent project, but no longer a mission to liberate the Philippines from Spanish tyranny. The US, as Du Bois says, seized this “group of colored folks half a world away…. [to rule] them according to its own ideas” (1970, 184). It is certain that Fagen experienced the bitter race hatred that black soldiers experienced when they were in Tampa, Florida, where a race riot began; black soldiers retaliated against drunken white soldiers. Twenty-seven African American soldiers and three whites were severely wounded. The chaplain of a black regiment in Tampa asked: “Is America any better than Spain?…Has she not subjects in her own borders whose children are half-fed and half-clothed, because their father’s skin is black…Yet the Negro is loyal to his country’s flag.” That loyalty was severely eroded and dissolved in Fagen when he landed in the Philippines in 1899 to help carry out a “regime change.”

Forging of Collective Conscience

From the start, African Americans in the media and the leadership of civil-society groups demonstrated strong opposition to the colonial intervention. The ambivalence toward the war in Cuba was replaced with vigorous opposition to the war in the Philippines. As part of the Anti-Imperialist League (founded on October 17, 1899), Du Bois condemned the war as an unjust imperialist aggression, the slaughter of Filipinos a “needless horror.” The League recalled Fredrick Douglass’ view, enunciated sixty years earlier, that the interests of the Negro people were identical with that of the struggling colonial peoples: “We deny that the obligation of all citizens to support their government in times of grave national peril applies to the present situation” (Foster 1954, 415). In Nov. 17, 1899, the American Citizen, a black paper in Kansas City, Kansas, stated that “imperialist expansion means extension of race hate and cruelty, barbarous lynchings and gross injustice to dark people.” Bishop Henry Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church called the
US occupation of the Philippines an “unholy war of conquest” (Welch 1979, 110).
Another newspaper (Broad Ax, Sept. 30, 1899) called for the formation of a
“national Negro Anti-Expansionist, Anti-Imperialist, Anti-Trust, Anti-Lynching
League.”
On July 17, 1899, a meeting of African Americans in Boston protested the
“unjustified invasion by American soldiers in the Philippine Islands.” They resolved
that “while the rights of colored citizens in the South, sacredly guaranteed them by
the amendment of the Constitution, are shamefully disregarded; and, while the
frequent lynching of negroes who are denied a civilized trial are a reproach to
Republican government, the duty of the President and country is to reform these
crying domestic wrongs and not to attempt the civilization of alien peoples by
powder and shot” (The Boston Post, July 18, 1899). Whether Fagen knew or was
aware of this sentiment, can not be ascertained for now. But he certainly was
aware that in general US troops treated Filipinos as “niggers” who were “therefore
entitled to all the contempt and harsh treatment administered by white overlords to
the most inferior races,” as a correspondent of the Boston Herald wrote (Schirmer
1971, 21).

Fagen no doubt shared many of the sentiments expressed by black soldiers who
felt they were sent to the Philippines to take up “de white man’s burden.” One of
them wrote in a letter of 1899: “Our racial sympathies would naturally be with the
Filipinos. They are fighting manfully for what they conceive to be their best
interests.” A black infantryman wrote from Manila in June 1901 to an Indianapolis
paper: “This struggle on the islands has been naught but a gigantic scheme of
robbery and oppression.” Amid the burning of villages and massacre of supporters
of the insurgents in Batangas and Samar, African Americans in Massachusetts
addressed a message to President McKinley about how Negroes in Wilmington,
North Carolina, “guilty of no crime except the color of their skin and a desire to
exercise the rights of their American citizenship, were butchered like dogs in the
streets;” and how “black men were hunted and murdered in Phoenix, South
Carolina,” while McKinley catered cunningly to Southern race prejudice” (Zinn
1980, 312-13).

Lifting the Veil

It was in this environment suffused with racialized exterminist sentiments that
David Fagen enters the scene. I cannot describe all the varied and forceful
sentiments expressed by African American soldiers and other participants in the
war found in letters compiled by Willard Gatewood, “Smoked Yankees” and the
Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902—an extremely
valuable primary sourcebook. As a sample, I cite an anonymous black soldier who
complained that white troops, after seizing Manila, began “to apply home treatment for colored peoples: cursed them as damned niggers, steal [from] them and ravish them” (Gatewood 1987, 279). Patrick Mason, a sergeant in Fagen’s 24th Infantry regiment, wrote to the Cleveland Gazette: “I feel sorry for these people and all that have come under the control of the United States. I don’t believe they will be justly dealt by. The first thing in the morning is the “Nigger” and the last thing at night is the “Nigger”…You are right in your opinions. I must not say as much as I am a soldier”(Gatewood 1987, 257). A black lieutenant of the 25th Infantry wrote his wife that he had occasionally subjected Filipinos to the water torture (Dumindin 2009). Capt. William Jackson of the 49th Infantry admitted that his men racially identified with Filipinos but stated that “all enemies of the U.S. government look alike to us… hence we go on with the killing.” Fagen occupied the same position, but he drew a necessary demarcation between his being a soldier for the Empire, and his being an insurgent for an occupied community on the defensive, struggling for national/communal self-determination.

Most often quoted is the statement of Sgt. Maj. John W. Galloway who accused whites of “establish[ing] their diabolical race hatred in all its home rancor in Manila.” He wrote about how white soldiers told Filipinos of “the inferiority of the American blacks—[their] brutal natures, cannibal tendencies” (1987, 253); and speculated that “the future of the Filipino, I fear, is that of the Negro in the South.” As a reprisal and warning to African Americans, the US military accused Galloway of sympathizing with the insurgents. He was jailed, deported, and discharged dishonorably. Completely informed of the history of racial conflict in the U.S., the Filipino resistance used what one black soldier called “affinity of complexion,” revealed, for example, by a comment made by a Filipino lad: “Why does the American Negro come…to fight us when we are much a friend to him…Why don’t you fight those people in America who burn Negroes, that make a beast of you?” The Filipino resistance claimed to speak as “black brothers” of African Americans, distributing pamphlets addressed “To the Colored American Soldier” with the appeal:

It is without honor that you are spilling your costly blood. Your masters have thrown you into the most iniquitous fight with double purpose—to make you the instrument of their ambition and also your hard work will soon make the extinction of your race. Your friends, the Filipinos, give you this good warning. You must consider your situation and your history; and take charge that the blood of…Sam Hose proclaims vengeance (Gatewood 1997, 258-59).

Another soldier wrote on Christmas Eve, 1900, to Booker T. Washington: “These people are right and we are wrong and terribly wrong.” One African American
enlisted man learned from his experience that “Filipinos resent being treated as inferior” and thus set “an example to the American negro.” After surveying the archive of sentiments expressed by numerous participants, Anthony Powell concludes that throughout the war African American soldiers would be continually plagued by misgivings about their role in the Philippines…Their racial and ideological sympathy for colored people struggling to achieve freedom seemed always to be at war with their notions of duty as American citizens and their hope that the fulfillment of that duty would somehow improve the plight of their people at home” (1998).

One might interpolate here that during the war years, an epidemic of anti-black violence swept the South. Howard Zinn notes that between 1889 and 1903, “on the average, every week, two Negroes were lynched by mobs—hanged, burned, mutilated” (1980. 308). In Lakeland, Florida, during that same period, black soldiers confronted a white crowd because they were refused service by a drugstore owner. Du Bois described the outburst of racist violence, such as the lynching of Sam Hose in Newnan, Georgia, in 1899. These and other incidents were known to the Filipino revolutionaries. Despite the Filipino appeal of racial solidarity against white oppressors and the offer of commissions to defectors, there were only twenty-nine desertions among the four regiments of African American regulars; and only nine actually defected to the rebels (Robinson and Schubert 1975, 73). Other researchers cite 20 defectors, seven of them blacks (including Fagen). Various reasons dissuaded them, among others, their long-standing loyalty, the hazards of war, severance of cultural/social ties, the threat of long imprisonment, capture and certain death. Why and how David Fagen surmounted these risks and dangers, remains a persistent subject of speculation, speculators being attracted more to the personality rather than to the convictions or collective meanings invested in his actions.

Journey to the Liberated Zone

Born in 1875 in Tampa, Florida, Fagen’s early life is unknown. Described as a “dark brown young man with a carved scar on his chin, standing five feet six inches tall,” Fagen worked then at Hull’s Phosphate Company. At the age of 23, on June 4, 1898, Fagen enlisted in the 24th Infantry, one of the four black regiments based in Tampa at that time, and was sent to Cuba. Upon its return, Fagen accompanied the regiment to Fort Douglas, near Salt Lake City, Utah, where he was discharged. After his father died, Fagen re-enlisted on February 12 at Fort McPherson, Georgia, where his character was validated as meeting “all requirements.” He trained at Fort D.A. Russell, near Cheyenne, Wyoming, before being shipped to the Philippines from San Francisco in June 1899. Immediately after his arrival, he
was engaged in a major campaign in the fall of 1899. General Samuel Young led the northeast thrust to Central Luzon, fighting the insurgents near Mount Arayat and then garrisoning key towns in the vicinity. Fagen's Company 1, together with three others, occupied San Isidro, the principal town of Nueva Ecija province, from which President Aguinaldo fled.

It is said that Fagen encountered difficulties with his superiors. But the cause could not be incompetence since he was promoted to corporal in the months after his arrival at Fort Russell. Reports indicate that he could have been court-martialed for refusing to do all sorts of “dirty jobs.” While a person does not form important decisions based simply on personal discomfort, this adversity may have reinforced that sharpened awareness of how thoroughly racist the war was conducted, with Filipinos regarded as “black devils,” “niggers,” thieves, and other insults. All these converged in that “particular solution” to a dilemma that Fagen selected on November 17, 1899. There is no doubt that his decision to defect was prepared and planned in advance. Assisted by a rebel officer with a horse waiting for him at the company barracks, Fagen cut off his ties with Company I and headed for the guerilla sanctuary.

Subsequent reports describe how Fagen wreaked havoc on the invading army. One veteran recounts how Fagen, in the midst of raging battles, would taunt US soldiers; during one encounter, he reportedly shouted, “Captain Fagan’s done got yuh hite boys now” (Ganzhorn (1940, 191). But there was more to it than getting back at white supremacists. Instead of simply escaping to an isolated native community and withdrawing from the conflict, Fagen embraced the revolution with such boldness and energy that no one could be blind to the depth of his commitment to the Filipino cause, especially in the light of George Rawick’s reminder that Afro-American slaves “do not make revolution for light and transient reasons.”

Avatar of the Underground Detachment

From November 1899 to September 1900, we have no record of Fagen's activity as a leader of the Filipino resistance. On September 6, 1900, General Jose Alejandro, commander of the Republic's army in Nueva Ecija, promoted Fagen from first lieutenant to captain “on account of sufficient merits gained in campaigns.” His valor and audacity, as well as popularity, were acknowledged by his soldiers who referred to him as “General Fagen.” The New York Times (October 29, 1900) deemed Fagen important enough to cover his exploits, remarking that Fagen was a “cunning and highly skilled guerilla officer who harassed and evaded large conventional American units and their Filipino auxiliaries. From August 30, 1900 to January 17, 1901, Fagen figured in eight
clashes with the US army. In one daring raid, he led 150 rebels in capturing a steam launch loaded with guns on the Rio Grande de la Pampanga river and escaped unhurt into the forest before the American infantry arrived. In two of the skirmishes mentioned, Fagen clashed with General Frederick Funston, the US army's famous guerrilla hunter. John Ganzhorn, a member of General Funston's elite scouts, recalled confrontations with Fagen whose shrewd tactics led to successful ambushes (Ganzhorn 1940, 190-92; Funston 1911, 380).

A new development alarmed the US military. In February 1901, six members of the 9th Cavalry regiment deserted and joined the insurgents in the province of Albay: John Dalrymple, Edmond DuBose, Lewis Russell, Fred Hunter, Garth Shores and William Victor. Except for Dalrymple, who died of a fever, the five others surrendered with the other Filipino insurgents. All were court-martialled, only DuBose and Russell were publicly hanged before a crowd of three thousand people on February 7, 1902. Records prove that their execution was deliberately agreed upon by the military to serve as a warning to soldiers not to emulate Fagen. The Judge Advocate General reported to the Secretary of War that the execution of the two black soldiers was necessary because “great injury has been done the United States by deserters from the service, chiefly of foreign birth or of colored regiments, who have gone over to and taken service with the enemy” (quoted in Brown 1995, 171). The other soldier, Fred Hunter was killed while trying to escape; Victor and Dalrymple were sentenced to life imprisonment in Leavenworth. Shores and another soldier from the 25th Infantry regiment were sentenced to death for entering “the service of the insurrectionists," but President Roosevelt commuted their sentence to dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of pay, and imprisonment at hard labor for life (Powell 1998). In May and June 1901, two volunteer regiments of African American troops were shipped home.

Of some twenty deserters sentenced to death, only these two black privates were executed (Robinson and Schubert 1975, 78). While the insurgency continued for more than a decade, Roosevelt had to terminate that “dirty war” (Boehringer 2008) on July 4, 1902 to allay public sentiment against the war and prevent further desertions.

Birth of a Legend

In March 1901, Funston captured Aguinaldo by devious means, thus emerging as one of the few heroes of the ugly and brutal war. As recorded in his memoirs, Funston’s frustration at his failure to capture or kill Fagen became an obsession, contributing to the rise of a collective phantasy. Throughout 1901, Funston continued to pursue Fagen around Mt. Arayat—sightings of him were reported by the Twenty Second Infantry in February and April. Rumors of his exploits, stories of
his cunning and audacity, led to the creation of a public image, a myth larger than
the man—not unlike Nat Turner’s. While the infantry was chasing him in Nueva
Ecija, a Manila Times report narrated his visit to a brothel in the capital city, with
the following account:

[Fagen] wore a crash blouse, similar to those of the native police, with a broad
white trimming such as officers wear. The insignia on the shoulder straps were a
braid of Spanish bugles. His trousers were dark in color, neat fitting, and topped a
pair of patent leather shoes. A brown soft felt hat completed his apparel (Feb. 26,
1901).

When two civilians approached him, Fagen supposedly “rose from the chair,
placing his foot upon it, and grasping his concealed revolver in his right [hand] and
a small sword or bolo in his left.” His escape from the military cordon around the
city is considered “as daring as he is unscrupulous.” He is even reported to have
recklessly boarded a troop ship headed back to the United States.

American prisoners of Fagen also repudiated the charges of atrocities and
brutalities. At least two of them, George Jackson, a black private of the Twenty-
fourth Regiment, and white Lieutenant Fredrick Alstaetter, testified that they were
treated kindly by Fagen. Nonetheless, Funston and other officers called him “a
wretched man,” “a rowdy soldier,” “good for nothing whelp,” lacking intelligence
because of his “unusually small head,” and so on. Belying these rather malicious
d dismissals is the gravity with which senior officers like General Adna Chafee
(veteran of the ferocious and brutal suppression of the Boxer rebellion in China)
expressed grave concern about black turncoats and defectors. Of the twenty
defectors, black and white, who were condemned to death, only two were actually
executed: the two black privates noted earlier. President Roosevelt supported
these executions while commuting all other death sentences for other guilty
soldiers. The other victim of this drive to persecute disloyal soldiers involved
Sergent Major Galloway (already mentioned earlier), also from Fagen’s regiment.
His letter to a Filipino acquaintance condemning the war as immoral was captured
in a raid on the Filipino residence and used to judge him as “exceedingly
dangerous” and a “menace to the islands,” for which he was jailed, demoted to
private, and dishonorably discharged.

Fagen operated as a guerilla commander, persisting in a relentless and protracted
struggle against the US army, even when his immediate superior, General
Alejandro, surrendered on April 29, 1901. During the negotiation for his
surrender, General Alejandro asked an American officer if Fagen and two other
deserters would be allowed to leave the islands; the answer was negative. When
Alejandro’s successor, General Urbano Lacuna himself surrendered to Funston
on May 16, 1901, General Lacuna also sought amnesty for Fagen. Funston’s response was not surprising: “this man could not be received as a prisoner of war, and if he surrendered it would be with the understanding that he would be tried by a court-martial—in which event his execution would be a practical certainty” (1911, 431).

Prophecy of An Ending

On March 23, 1901, General Emilio Aguinaldo was captured by Funston. He accepted US sovereignty and called on his followers to do so. His generals, Lacuna and Alejandrino, soon followed. But not Fagen. It was reported that he left the revolutionary camp with his Filipino wife and a small group of nationalist partisans for the mountains of Neva Ecija. Throughout the year, Fagen was hunted as a bandit, with a reward of $600 for his head, “dead or alive.” Funston rejoiced over Fagen’s branding as a common criminal, “a bandit pure and simple, and entitled to the same treatment as a mad dog.” Civilian bounty hunters and civilian law enforcement agencies joined forces in pursuing Fagen.

On December 5, 1901, a native hunter Anastacio Bartolome turned up at the American outpost of Bongabong, Nueva Ecija, with a sack containing the “slightly decomposed head of a negro,” which he claimed was Fagen’s. He also produced other evidences, such as weapons and clothing, Fagen’s commission, and the West Point class ring of Fagen’s former captive, Lt. Frederick Alstaetter. But the military officers who reviewed the report were not convinced, and called the official file “the supposed killing of David Fagen.” And there is no record of payment of a reward to Bartolome. There are two explanations for what happened: Either Bartolome found Fagen’s camp and stole the evidence he presented, together with the head of an Aeta, a tribe of black aborigines; or Bartolome colluded with Fagen in order to fake his death and thus get relief from further pursuit. Fagen could then have fled further to live with the natives in the wilderness of northern Luzon where Jim Crow could not pester him. Shrouded in mystery, Fagen’s “death” becomes the birth of his legendary career in academic minds. On October 30, 1902, a Philippine Constabulary unit recounted their pursuit of Fagen and other insurgents ten months after he had allegedly been hacked to death by Bartolome. The most plausible explanation, assuming Bartolome’s story as fabricated, is that Fagen survived and remained for the rest of his life with the aborigines and local folk with whom he identified.

Our pioneering biographers, Michael Robinson and Frank Schubert, conclude that Fagen’s rebellion is significant in revealing the “intensity of black hostility toward American imperialism,” a militant act of self-determination that can cross
boundaries and seize opportunities anywhere:

[Fagen’s] career illustrates the willingness of Afro-Americans to pursue alternatives outside the caste system when such options become available. Militance does not distinguish him from the civilians who razed Tiptonville, Tennessee. The difference is in the circumstance. The Philippine insurrection offered him a choice similar to the one Nat Turner gave Southampton slaves and the Seminole wars gave escaped slaves like Abraham (1975, 82).

The editor of the Indianapolis Freeman supplied an obituary to Fagen’s supposed death on December 14, 1901, by attempting to extenuate the “traitor’s death” with the plea that he was a man “prompted by honest motives to help a weaker side, and one to which he felt allied by ties that bind.” Indeed, the specific historical circumstance inflected individual choice. Unlike the slaves who revolted from the plantations in South America and the Caribbean and formed runaway communities—maroons, cimmarones, quilombos—Fagen joined a community already up in arms against an invading and occupying power. In that process of affiliation, his rebellion from a white-supremacist polity mutated into a revolutionary act. His decision exemplified what Eugene Genovese calls (in his study of how Afro-American slave revolts helped fashion the modern world) a visionary emblem of dialectical transformation: “Ignorant and illiterate as the slaves generally were, they grasped the issue at least as well as others, for their own history of struggle against enslavement in the world’s greatest bourgeois democracy led them to recognize and to seize upon the link between the freedom of the individual proclaimed to the world by Christianity and the democratization of the bourgeois revolution, which was transforming that fateful idea into a political reality” (1979, 135).

Unwarranted Testimony

Before returning to the socially symbolic and prefigurative value of Fagen’s act, I want to cite here the testimony of the Filipino general under whom Fagen served. General Jose Alejandrino wrote a memoir in Spanish entitled La Senda del Sacrificio (The Price of Freedom, published in 1933). He recounts how when he confronted Funston to discuss the terms of his surrender, Funston brusquely demanded that his surrender cannot be accepted without his first delivering Fagen, otherwise he remains a prisoner. Alejandrino refused because it would be an infamy since (as he told Funston) if you catch him, “you would be capable of bathing him in petroleum and burning him alive” (1949, 173). General Alejandrino met Fagen around August 1899 when Aguinaldo was in full retreat. Alejandrino provides us ingredients for a portrait of Fagen that might flesh out the legend, tidbits loved by the spinners of our mass media infotainment industry. I quote a small
portion from Alejandrino’s valuable memoir:

Fagen was a Negro giant of more than six feet in height who deserted the American Army, taking with him all the revolvers that he could bring, and who served in our forces with the rank of captain. He did not know how to read or write, but he was a faithful companion. He was very affectionate and helpful to me, going to the extent of carrying me in his arms or on his shoulders when I, weakened by fevers and poor nutrition, had to cross rivers or ascend steep grades. The services which he rendered to me were such that they could only be expected from a brother or son… I had heard narrations of the feats of valor and the intrepidity of Fagan, but his most outstanding characteristic was his mortal hatred of the American whites…..When our surrender was effected, I really felt very sorry in having to leave Fagen (1949, 174-76).

Neither Alejandrino nor Fagen appear in the recent provocative book on the colonial occupation, Policing America’s Empire (2009), by Alfred McCoy, a leading authority on Philippine-American relations. But Fagen’s example of imperial “blowback” casts a shadow on the putative origin of the hegemonic security state in the US subjugation of Filipino resistance. McCoy argues that the establishment of modern sophisticated policing, covert techniques, systematic surveillance, and internal security apparatus employing native soldiers and acquiescent Filipino elite, succeeded in pacifying the Philippine colony. However, numerous peasant insurrections, seditious revolts, and workers’ strikes occurred from 1902 to 1946 (Constantino 1975). Contrary to McCoy’s thesis, the US deployed various non-legal tactics to control the recalcitrant “body politic” (see Boudreau 2009). Aside from rewarding Filipino rebels who surrendered, the US applied maximum counterinsurgency terrorism in the Samar and Batangas campaigns (the latter illustrated the classic “scorched earth” tactic of destroying food supplies, farm animals, villages, and concentration camps where eleven thousand civilians died in a few months)—a “systematic destruction of the countryside” later replicated in Vietnam (McCoy 2009, 81).

Coercion and persuasion were combined and modulated according to local and inter-state contingencies. Such methods of the “dirty war” which McCoy catalogues—clandestine penetration, psychological warfare, disinformation, media manipulation, assassination, torture (such as the infamous “water cure”), and other sub rosa techniques—functioned within the larger program of violent colonial subjugation beginning with McKinley’s “preemptive warfare” in starting hostilities on February 4, 1899 to legitimize the military occupation of the islands after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in December 1898 (Corpuz 2002, 298-301; Sheridan 1900). These expedient methods supplemented political instrumentalities and
ideological agencies that tried to coopt Filipino “revolutionary nationalism” through bribery, appointments to state offices, concessions, “divide and rule” schemes, etc. Though they dampened public sentiment and decapitated the native leadership, they never really stifled the durable Filipino hunger for sovereignty nurtured for over 300 years. Fagen’s heirs today are the ingenious guerillas of the communist-led New People’s Army and the formidable combatants of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, not to mention countless Filipino militants inspired by African American “civil rights” movements in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Boston, etc. Imperial mimesis thus worked both ways, intensifying the internal colonialism of Black ghettoes after the demise of “Reconstruction” in the South (Marable 1983).

Pacification of annexed territory implied persistent refusal of the natives to yield consent to domination. Despite the elaborate institutionalization of the Philippine Constabulary and Philippine Scouts by the end of 1901-1902—the ambush of 48 American soldiers in Balangiga, Samar, on September 28, 1901 was used to justify the blanket punishment of all civilians “under ten” (Tan 2002, 141), Fagen was never captured, nor was incontrovertible data of his whereabouts gathered. Policing and surveillance failed, at least in this instance. After Fagen’s “supposed death” in December 1901, he was still being blamed for inflaming the Filipino resistance, as in the Samar disaster, and the renewed fighting in the other islands. His legendary figure begins to haunt popular memory and civic conscience. We might encounter Fagen again in the persons of African Americans who found themselves in the Philippines when the US army returned to “liberate” the colony from the Japanese occupiers, with the son of Gen. Arthur McArthur leading the forces to liberate the colonized from Japanese tyranny. Their sense of affinity was no longer based on complexion but on shared ideals and political solidarity.

Alternative Mutualities

After a hundred years, the situation of David Fagen and six other African Americans who were labeled by the Manila Times as “vile traitors” still await understanding and judgment by the peoples in the United States and the Philippines, as well as by the international community. This topic is still a tabooed subject, too dangerous to handle. Ngozi-Brown reminds us again of their “extremely difficult situation,” serving as “foot soldiers for a racist ideology in which white Americans characterized Filipinos as they did African Americans as inferior, inept, and even sub-human. When the United States military occupied the Philippine islands, it installed a racist society which alienated Filipino and African American soldiers” (1997, 42). The official authorities of course have pronounced them traitors and renegades, though one novelist, Robert Bridgman (author of Loyal Traitors) believed that their commitment to American ideals compelled them
to resist the immoral course of their country and that a “higher patriotism” prompted them to commit treason (Powell 1998). Can such ambivalence of judgment be maintained? After the war, over 1,200 African Americans opted to stay in the Philippines. One soldier explained why those soldiers preferred to make the Philippines their home and explains why: “To an outsider or one who has never soldiered in the Philippines the question would perhaps be a hard one to answer, but to the initiated the solution is easy and apparent at once… They found [the Filipinos] intelligent, friendly and courteous, and not so very different from themselves” (1901).

World War II gave the opportunity for African American soldiers to “return,” as it were, to the Philippines as part of MacArthur’s “liberation” army. In his autobiography, Black Bolshevik, Harry Haywood mentions his brief sojourn in Manila, Philippines, where he met a group of revolutionary students and intellectuals with ties to the Hukbalahap, Communist-led anti-Japanese guerillas. He was told how American troops disarmed these peasant guerillas in the underground who helped in the capture of Manila. Writes Haywood: “They were bitter and sharply critical of MacArthur’s hostility toward the popular democratic movement. His clear intention was to return to the status quo of colonialism” (1978, 526), a return to the days of his conquering father, General Arthur MacArthur, and his notorious “stringent” and “drastic” measures under General Order 100, punishing non-uniformed guerillas as criminals (Linn 2000, 213).

During the same period, Nelson Peery, bricklayer and political activist, participated in World War II as a soldier in the all-black 93rd Infantry Division. He details the momentous political awakening that he experienced in the Philippines in the first volume of his autobiography, Black Fire (1994). Peery made contact with the same groups and confirmed Haywood’s observation. The entire apparatus of the US State, its intelligence agencies and armed forces, had mounted a ruthless plan to crush the national liberation movement as they did forty-five years before. Peery noted that MacArthur quickly moved to re-establish a fascist, privileged officer corps in the Philippine army to protect the investments and control the islands for the United States.” Peery recalls how the activists knew the story of David Fagen and how the “US army would never have allowed this talented black soldier to become an officer. Captain Fagen, with his black comrades, fought to the death for Philippine independence” (1994, 277).

Homage to the Peasant Insurrection

Peery goes on to indict the hundred thousand US (mainly Southern) white soldiers who slaughtered over a million Filipinos, introduced the water cure, burning of villages, killing of civilians as part of the “scorched earth” tactics, while they “routinely brutalized the black troops.” Nevertheless, he goes on: “The black
Twenty-fourth and the Twenty-fifth Infantry murdered right along with them. The Philippine people would not surrender. In 1914, black troops were sent in to crush the Moro rebellion. This time, however, the black soldiers refused to fight their black Filipino brothers. The people of Mindanao never forgot that" (1994, 278). Peery’s testimony arrives at this eloquent judgment that, in my view, delivers a powerful rhetorical thrust that is quite unforgettable and prognostic at the same time in terms of what is going on right now in the Philippines:

If the Americans had never committed genocide against the Indian; if they had never incited wars of annihilation between the native peoples of this land; if there had never been a Trail of Tears; if America had never organized and commercialized the kidnapping and sale into slavery of a gentle and defenseless African people; if it had never developed the most widespread, brutal, exploitative system of slavery the world has ever known, if it had never held carnivals of torture and lynching of its black people; if it had never sundered and fractured and torn and ground Mexico into the dust; if it had never attacked gallant, defenseless Puerto Rico and never turned that lovely land into a cesspool to compete with the cesspool it had created in Panama; if it had never bled Latin America of her wealth and had never cast her exhausted peoples onto the dung heap of disease and ignorance and starvation; if it had never financed and braced the Fascist dictatorships; it if had never pushed Hiroshima and Nagasaki into the jaws of hell—if America had never done any of these things—history would still create a special bar of judgment for what the American people did to the Philippines (1994, 276-77).

Although Peery did not join the Huks (the Filipino communist guerillas) then, he may be said to have traced Fagen’s footsteps in forging solidarity with Filipino revolutionaries opposing US neocolonialism, imperialism mediated through the native client oligarchy. A politics of linkages and reciprocity afforded a new internationalism, a global perspective, a synthesizing "double-consciousness."

Kevin Gaines observes that the Spanish-American War and the Philippine campaign accomplished little in the way of improving African American social conditions since political disfranchisement persisted, culminating in the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906. However, Gaines believes that African American soldiers, even within their contradictory position in an imperialist war and within a segregated army, provided symbols of heroism and "a boost of morale" (Interview PBS). The fusion of the struggle for civil rights at home and self-determination for colonized peoples abroad constitutes a paradigm-shift from the dualistic polarity of isolationism and messianic nation-building, from the social-Darwinistic and evolutionistic stance of Anglo-Saxon, Eurocentric triumphalism.
Theorizing Elective Affinities

The most incisive formulation of this transformation may be found in Harold Cruse’s reflections on his passage through World War II as a soldier radicalized by contact with the anti-colonial movement in the French colony of Algeria. Chiefly responding to Albert Camus’ existentialist theory of metaphysical rebellion in a 1966 essay published in Sartre’s review, Le Temps Moderne, Cruse’s project of conceptualizing the black “idea of revolt” germinated from his part in the war effort. It was a unique catalyzing experience that connected fragments of his world picture into some kind of concrete universality. Cruse’s perception of the global arena pervaded by revolution and counter-revolution crystallized from a reflexive rationality:

The Army was the beginning of my real education about the reality of being black. Before the war, being black in America was a commonplace bore, a provincial American social hazard of no particular interest or meaning beyond the shores of the Atlantic. It was simply a national American disability—a built-in disadvantage to us all that we had to put up with, similar to a people that has to endure the constant imminence of droughts, floods, famines, or native pestilences. Race in America is her greatest “natural calamity,” but it has today become internationalized into a global scandal because she is so rich in everything else, including democratic pretensions. A global war has made all this a global fact. But it is also a fact that it took this global war to initiate a personal metamorphosis that has culminated in what I am in 1966, as an American black (1968, 169).

Cruse’s metamorphosis parallels Fagen’s, except that Fagen and his fellow African Americans were plunged into a war of colonization, while Cruse was engaged in the fight against fascism and reaction. But Cruse’s realization of his collective plight and the ethico-political imperatives required to resolve the division between his abstract citizenship and his humanity, between his racialized self and his potential species-being, resembles Fagen’s. It approximates what Frantz Fanon would refer to as the passage from the racial/national sensibility to a liberatory social consciousness transcending national boundaries and other socially constructed differences. This is not the occasion to elaborate on this Fanonian theory of collective self-determination (for Fanon’s dialectics, see San Juan 2004). Meanwhile I would like here to add the insight of C.L. R. James on how the revolt of the colonized subalterns in Africa, Latin America and Asia, joining the insurrection of the racially oppressed peoples/nations (African Americans, indigenous communities, etc.), could act as the “bacilli” or ferment that would mobilize the proletariat and usher the beginning of world revolution against capitalism. Whether this is still applicable today or not, remains to be discussed. In
any case, Fagen’s metamorphosis prefigured what Cruse and others went through as their minds entered the stage of world-history, in a moment when the Owl of Minerv (to use Hegel’s worn-out trope) has not yet awakened from the night of the problematic, duplicitous Enlightenment and its contradiction-filled “civilizing mission.”

From Solidarity to Community

After more than a hundred years of Americanization, however, the attitude of the “natives” would no longer be hospitable to Fagen, or even to Haywood, Peery, and their kind. Filipinos have chosen to be on the other side of the Veil, have exchanged their identity for that of their erstwhile colonizers. That is, they have chosen to be “white” in body and soul, a testimony to a century of McKinley’s not-so-“Benevolent Assimilation.” The majority of Americanized Filipinos seems to confirm the fructifying power of what scholar David Joel Steinberg called “the U.S. policy of self-liquidating colonialism, in which the ‘little brown brother’ [Taft’s patronizing epithet] was permitted to achieve independence when he grew up, a maturation process that took forty-five years” (1982, 50). Nonetheless, Filipinos have celebrated some other personalities of foreign descent, including two Spaniards who served as generals of the Philippine army (Generals Manuel Sityar and Jose Torres Bugallon), and a Chinese (Gen. Jose Ignacio Paua), but Fagen has so far eluded such recognition. The reason is simple: the Philippine elite, vulnerable to blandishments, corruption, and patronage, has absorbed American Exceptionalism and perpetuated the Veil, fearing that to elevate Fagen to heroic stature would offend the fabled “special relations” with Washington and stir up the guardians of White Supremacy.

Vibrant solidarity with the Philippine struggle by progressive African Americans – one recent example is that of former TransAfrica Forum president and long-time activist Bill Fletcher, Jr. (2004) who denounced the knee-jerk “terrorism” label imposed by the Bush administration on the Communist Party of the Philippines fighting the brutal, corrupt US-supported regime of Gloria Arroyo – testifies to the enduring legacy of David Fagen’s early commitment (via support for national-liberation struggles) to a universal ideal of socialist emancipation. This motive-force of a synthesizing historical process may also be illustrated in the way the South African struggle against apartheid, led by the African National Congress of Nelson Mandela, generated a catalyzing effect on the pan-African praxis in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s (Johnson 2004). From the diasporic intellectual tradition initiated by Marcus Garvey in the 1920s to Du Bois’ Pan-African conferences to Malcolm X’s diasporic populism, an African American internationalist outlook has continued to evolve up to the present. It is a totalizing
trend that found its civic embodiment in the Black Panther Party’s support for the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions, among others, and (to cite a major artist) in the border-crossing lives and aesthetic performances of Amiri Baraka (1984), Jayne Cortez, and other African American artists.

Before and after the Paris Commune of 1872, Marx and Engels theorized the proletariat as a universal subject or agent of humanity’s emancipation. But Marx in his last years envisaged a multilinear process of global emancipation that took into account the intersectional dynamics of class with race, ethnicity, and nationalism (Anderson 2010, 240-44). With the rise of imperialism, the revolt of colonized peoples became for Lenin a vitalizing force in the growth of world socialist revolution, the “weak link” of oppressed emergent nations, delineated in his 1916 theses on “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination” (1971). The unfinished struggle for Filipino national self-determination from the Cavite Mutiny of 1872 onwards has been obscured if not denigrated by U.S. scholarship on the Philippines. Peter Stanley (1974) and David Steinberg (1982), just to cite two experts, categorized U.S. occupation as “tutelage,” or “compadre colonialism” in which rulers and ruled negotiated compromises on an equal basis, both sides collaborating in underwriting the Cold War’s prime “showcase of democracy” in Asia. Using an empiricist-functionalist methodology, Stanley Karnow sums up the orthodox apologists of neocolonialism: “After World War II, American negotiators did indeed force Filipino leaders to accept onerous conditions…But the majority of Filipinos, then yearning to be part of America’s global strategy, would have been disappointed had the United States rejected them. So they submitted voluntarily to their own exploitation” (1989, 330; for rebuttal, see San Juan 2000, 2007; Doty 1996). Oriented against global/transnational capitalism, the Philippine project of national liberation does not simply mimic a Eurocentric model but articulates the manifold demands of women, indigenous communities, youth, racial/ethnic, and gendered minorities in a new paradigm of radical collective transformation in this new millennium.

Lenin’s Prophecy

Lenin’s multidimensional vision of social transformation coalescing ethnicity, nation and race in both core and periphery, the imperial metropole and the colonized dependency, was implicit in Du Bois’ heuristic idea of “double consciousness” applied to intercontinental conflicts and controversies. Meanwhile, the British-Boer war in South Africa, the Boxer Rebellion in China, and the Spanish-American War intervened around the composition of The Souls of Black Folk—a historic conjuncture chosen by John Sayles for its contemporary resonance with the Iraq and Afghanistan experience in his forthcoming historical novel, “Some Time in the
Sun” (Getlin, 2010). As though reflecting on Fagen’s situation, Du Bois addressed the complicated dialectic of class, race, ethnicity and nationalism in his 1900 “Address to the Nations of the World.” This was delivered around the time that Fagen separated himself from the occupying army, joining the Philippine insurgents in the plains of Northern Luzon to continue the subversive tradition of Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, George Jackson, and other African American rebels. With serendipitous intuition, Du Bois affirmed Fagen’s internationalist solidarity within an encompassing historical-materialist framework:

[T]he modern world must remember that in this age when the ends of the world are being brought so near together the millions of black men in Africa, America, and the Islands of the Sea, not to speak of the brown and yellow myriads elsewhere, are bound to have a great influence upon the world in the future, by reason of sheer numbers and physical contact…. Let the nations of the world respect the integrity and independence of the free Negro states of Abyssinia, Liberia, Haiti, and the rest, and let the inhabitants of these states, the independent tribes of Africa, the Negroes of the West Indies, and America, and the black subjects of all nations take courage, strive ceaselessly, and fight bravely, that they may prove to the world their incontestable right to be counted among the great brotherhood of mankind.

(Bresnahan 1981: 193f)

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Chalmers Johnson, author of Blowback; The Sorrows of Empire, Dead at 79

The Impact Today and Tomorrow of Chalmers Johnson

by Steve Clemons

Next week, Foreign Policy magazine and its editor-in-chief Susan Glasser will be releasing its 2nd annual roster of the world's greatest thinkers and doers in foreign policy. I have seen the list -- and it's impressively creative and eclectic.

There is one name that is not on the FP100 who should be -- and that is Chalmers Johnson, who from my perspective rivals Henry Kissinger as the most significant intellectual force who has shaped and defined the fundamental boundaries and goal posts of US foreign policy in the modern era.

Johnson, who passed away Saturday afternoon at 79 years, invented and was the acknowledged godfather of the conceptualization of the "developmental state". For the uninitiated, this means that Chalmers Johnson led the way in understanding the dynamics of how states manipulated their policy conditions and environments to speed up economic growth. In the neoliberal hive at the University of Chicago, Chalmers Johnson was an apostate and heretic in the field of political economy. Johnson challenged conventional wisdom with he and his many star students -- including E.B. Keehn, David Arase, Marie Anchordoguy, Mark Tilton and others -- writing the significant treatises documenting the growing prevalence of state-led industrial and trade and finance policy abroad, particularly in Asia.

Today, the notion of "State Capitalism" has become practically commonplace in discussing the newest and most significant features of the global economy. Chalmers Johnson invented this field and planted the intellectual roots of understanding that other nation states were not trying to converge with and follow the so-called American model.
Johnson for his seminal work on Japanese political economy, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* was dubbed by *Newsweek'*s Robert Neff as "godfather of the revisionists" on Japan. Neff also tagged Clyde Prestowitz, James Fallows, Karel van Wolferen and others like R. Taggart Murphy and Pat Choate as the leaders of a new movement that argued that Japan was organizing its political economy in different ways than the U.S. This was a huge deal in its day -- and these writers and thinkers led by the implacable Johnson were attacked from all corners of American academia and among the crowd of American Japan-hands who wanted to deflect rather than focus a spotlight on the fact that Japan's economic mandarins were really the national security elite of the Pacific powerhouse nation.

In the 1980s when Johnson was arguing that Japan's state directed capitalism was succeeding at not only propelling Japan's wealth upwards but was creating "power" for Japan in the eyes of the rest of the world, Kissinger and the geostrategic crowd could not see beyond the global currency and power realities of nuclear warheads and throw-weight. The revisionists were responsible for injecting the economic dynamics of power and national interest in the equation of a nation's global status.

To understand China's rise today, the fact that China has become the Google of nations and America the General Motors of countries -- the US being seen by others as a very well branded, large, underperforming country -- one must go back to Chalmers Johnson's work on the developmental state.

Scratch beneath these Johnson breakthroughs though and go back another decade and a half and one finds that Chalmers Johnson, a one time hard-right national security hawk, deconstructed the Chinese Communist revolution and showed that the dynamic that drive the revolutionary furor had less to do with class warfare and the appeal of communism but rather high octane "nationalism." Johnson saw earlier than most that the same dynamic was true in Vietnam. His work which was published as *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* while a UC Berkeley doctoral student launched him as a formidable force in Asia-focused intellectual circles in the U.S.

Johnson's ability to launch an instant, debilitating broadside against the intellectual vacuousness of friends or foes made him controversial. He chafed under the UC Berkeley Asia Program leadership of Robert Scalapino whom Johnson viewed as one of the primary dynastic chiefs of what became known as the "Chrysanthemum Club", those whose Japan-hugging meant overlooking and/or ignoring the characteristics of Japan's state-led form of capitalism. Johnson was provocatively challenged graduate students in the field to choose sides -- to work either on the side where they acquiesced to a corrupt culture of US-Japan apologists who wanted the quaint big brother-little brother frame for the relationship to remain the dominant portal through which Japan was viewed or alternatively on the side of those who saw Japan and America's forfeiture of its own economic interests as empirical facts.

When Robert Scalapino refused to budge despite Johnson's agitation, Johnson who then headed UC Berkeley's important China Studies program abandoned the university and became the star intellectual of UC San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies. There is no doubt that Johnson but UCSD's IRPS on the
map and gave it an instant, global boost.

But as usual, Johnson -- incorruptible and passionate about policy, theory, and their practice -- eventually went to war with the bureaucrats running that institution. Those who had come in to head it were devotees of "rational choice theory" -- which was spreading through the fields of political science and other social sciences as the so-called softer sciences were trying to absorb and apply the harder-edged econometrics-driven models of behavior that the neoliberal trends in economics were using.

Johnson and one of his proteges, E.B. "Barry" Keehn, wrote a powerful indictment of rational choice theory that helped trigger a long-running and still important intellectual divide that showed that rational choice theory was one of the great ideological delusions of the era. I too joined this battle and wrote extensively about the limits of rational choice theory which I myself saw dislodging university language programs, cultural studies, and more importantly -- the institutional/structural approaches to understanding other political systems.

Johnson once told me when I was visiting him and his long-term, constant intellectual partner and wife, Sheila Johnson, that the UCSD School of International Relations and Pacific Studies no longer either really taught international relations or pacific studies -- and that a student's entire first year was focused on acultural skill set development in economics and statistics. To Johnson, this tendency to elevate econometric formulas over the actual study of a nation's language, history, culture and political system was part of America's growing cultural imperialism. Studying "them" is really about "us" -- as "they" will converge to be like "us" or will fall to the way side and be insignificant.

It was that night that Chalmers Johnson, Sheila Johnson and I agreed to form an idea on had been developing called the Japan Policy Research Institute. Chalmers became President and I the Director. We maintained this working relationship at the helm of JPRI together for more than 12 years and spoke nearly every week if not every other day as we tried to acquire and publish the leading thinking on Japan, US-Japan relations and Asia more broadly. We became conveners, published works on Asia that the official journals of record of US-Asia policy viewed as too risky, and emerged as key players in the media on all matters of America's economic, political, and military engagement in the Pacific. Today, JPRI is headed by Chiho Sawada and is based at the University of San Francisco.

However, this base of JPRI gave Chalmers Johnson the launch pad that led to the largest contribution of his career to America's national discourse. From his granular understanding of political economy of competing nations, his understanding of the national security infrastructure of both sides of the Cold War, he saw better than most that the US had organized its global assets -- particularly its vassals Japan and Germany -- in a manner similar to the Soviet Union. Both sides looked like the other. Both were empires. The Soviets collapsed, Chalmers told me and wrote. The U.S. did not -- yet.

The rape of a 12 year-old girl by three American servicemen in Okinawa, Japan in September 1995 and the statement by a US military commander that they should have just picked up a prostitute became the pivot moving Johnson who had once been a supporter of the Vietnam War and railed against UC Berkeley's anti-
Vietnam protesters into a powerful critic of US foreign policy and US empire.

Johnson argued that there was no logic that existed any longer for the US to maintain a global network of bases and to continue the occupation of other countries like Japan. Johnson noted that there were over 39 US military installations on Okinawa alone. The military industrial complex that Eisenhower had warned against had become a fixed reality in Johnson's mind and essays after the Cold War ended.

In four powerful books, all written not in the corridors of power in New York or Washington -- but in his small home office at Cardiff-by-the-Sea in California, Johnson became one of the most successful chroniclers and critics of America's foreign policy designs around the world.

Before 9/11, Johnson wrote the book *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*. After the terrorist attacks in 2001 in New York and Washington, *Blowback* became the hottest book in the market. The publishers could not keep up with demand and it became the most difficult to get, most wanted book among those in national security topics.

He then wrote *Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic, Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic*, and most recently *Dismantling the Empire: America's Last Best Hope*. Johnson, who used to be a net assessments adviser to the CIA's Allen Dulles, had become such a critic of Washington and the national security establishment that this hard-right conservative had become adopted as one of the political left's greatest icons.

Johnson measured himself to some degree against the likes of Noam Chomsky and Gore Vidal -- but in my mind, Johnson was the more serious, the most empirical, the most informed about the nooks and crannies of every political position as he had journeyed the length of the spectrum.

Chalmers Johnson served on my board when I worked at the Japan America Society of Southern California. He and I, along with Sheila Johnson -- along with Tom Engelhardt one of the world's great editors -- created the Japan Policy Research Institute. Johnson served on the Advisory Board of the Nixon Center when I served as the Center's founding executive director. We had a long, constructive, feisty relationship. He helped propel my career and thinking. In recent years, we were more distant -- mostly because I was not ready, as he was, to completely disown Washington.

Many of Johnson's followers and Chal himself think that American democracy is lost, that the republic has been destroyed by an embrace of empire and that the American public is unaware and unconscious of the fix. He may be right -- but I took a course trying to use blogs, new media, and a DC based think tank called the New America Foundation to challenge conventional foreign policy trends in other ways. Ultimately, I think Chalmers was content with what I was doing but probably knew that in the end, I'd catch up with him in his profound frustration with what America was doing in the world.

Chalmers and Sheila Johnson saw me lead the battle against John Bolton's confirmation vote in the Senate as US Ambassador to the United Nations -- but given the scale of his ambitions to dislodge America's embrace of
empire, Bolton was too small a target in his eyes. He was probably right.

Saying Chalmers Johnson is dead sounds like a lie. I can't fathom him being gone -- and with all of the amazing times I've had with him as well as the bouts of political debate and even yelling as we were pounding out JPRI materials on deadline, I just can't imagine that this blustery, irreverent, completely brilliant force won't be there to challenge Washington and academia.

Few intellectuals attain what might have been called many centuries ago the rank of "wizard" -- an almost other worldly force who defied society's and life's rules and commanded an enormous following of acolytes and enemies.

Wizards don't die -- and I hope that those who read this, who knew him, or go on reading his works in the decades ahead provoke, inspire, jab, rebuke, applaud, and condemn in the way he did.

In one of my fondest memories of Chalmers and Sheila Johnson at their home with their then Russian blue cats, MITI and MOF, named after the two engines of Japan's political economy -- Chal railed against the journal, *Foreign Affairs*, which he saw as a clap trap of statist conventionalism. He decided he had had enough of the journal and of the organization that published it, the *Council on Foreign Relations*. So, Chalmers called the CFR and told the young lady on the phone to cancel his membership.

The lady said, "Professor Johnson, I'm sorry sir. No one cancels their membership in the Council in Foreign Relations. Membership is for life. People are canceled when they die."

Chalmers Johnson, not missing a beat, said "Consider me dead."

I never will. He is and was the intellectual giant of our times. Chalmers Johnson centuries from now will be seen, I think, as the intellectual titan of this past era, surpassing Kissinger in the breadth of seminal works that define what America was and could have been.

My sincere condolences to Sheila, to others in his extended family -- particularly among all of his students and colleagues who were part of the Johnson dynasty -- and to his friends in San Diego who were a vital part of the texture of the Johnson household.

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*Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (2000), US IMPERIALISM IN E. ASIA 1990s, by Dick Bennett

“This book [Johnson writes in his 2003 “Introduction: After 9/11”], in part, surveys the blowback that has already come from the Western Pacific region in the past and that is almost
certain to follow in the future.” I would amend the “in part,” for of the ten chapters, six focus on E. Asian countries (two on China, two on Japan, and one each on S. Korea and N. Korea), and the four other chapters in part deal with these and other E. Asian countries.

The book is a general guide to US foreign policies during the second half of the twentieth century—with particular attention to the 1990s—that generated resentment and retaliation. World politics, he writes, will likely be driven by the US decision “to maintain a Cold War posture in a post-Cold War world.” Leading to this imperial behavior and the pay back by the victim nations are the numerous invasions, occupations, and interventions described case by case by William Blum in his books. The US is reaping what it sowed around the world.

But *Blowback* is mainly about US militarism and arrogance as applied to E. Asia. As my newsletters are revealing, or reminding, US Westward military and economic expansion have been at enormous cost of blood, treasure, and global reputation—the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, the Philippine conquest, the Pacific/E. Asian colonial WWII, sixty hydrogen bomb “experiments” in the Marshall Islands, Korean War, Vietnam War.

As Johnson points out, President Nixon and his adviser Henry Kissinger “ordered more bombs dropped on rural Cambodia,” with which we were not at war, “than had been dropped on Japan during all of World War II, killing at least three-quarters of a million Cambodian peasants and [blowback] helping legitimize the murderous Khmer Rouge movement under Pol Pot,” who then [unintended consequences blowback] murdered a million and a half urban Cambodians. And Johnson often recognizes wrongs not resulting in blowback to the US, but only to the victims themselves. For example, US policies “fostered and then heightened the economic collapse of Indonesia in 1997,” resulting in “staggering levels of suffering, poverty, and loss of hope” for Indonesians.

Except for the Cold War military and nuclear mobilization, where else has the US empire been as lavishly, feverishly lethal? The Middle East? After 9/11 the US was preoccupied with their oil and strategic location, and the resisters and revengers. Yet even then, expenditures in the Middle East—the invasion and occupation of Afghaniatan, the first and second Iraqi wars, the occupation of Iraq, the air and special forces wars in Pakistan and Yemen—will never reach the magnitude and illegality of our Westward Pacific/E. Asia domination.
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 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.
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