

INTRODUCTION

A Brief Overview of War Resistance and Counter-Resistance in the History of American Democracy

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In this collection of essays we will discover the logic of war resistance and counter resistance as a parallel development to imperialist economic growth. Today, new technologies provide a hope for imperialist interests, which aim at a more thorough control of society, in a future where all wealth is privatized and divided unequally and where new modes of “security & surveillance” produce self-censorship and complicity on the part of the victims. Nevertheless, as we shall see in the following pages, such a *dystopia* where colonization of the human mind, with constant expose to an ideological indoctrination, is not without contradictions. It would seem that reliance on technological innovations is not a sound basis for optimism in an imperialist future.

The United States of America was born in a furnace of imperialist expansion, and throughout American history wars have given rise to resistance movements which were repeatedly met, in turn, with state-led tactics of repression. At the time of the American War of Independence, only one-third of the approximately 3.5 million people living in the 13 colonies supported the war; one-third was indifferent to the outcome, and wished only to avoid loosing their lives, while the remaining third of the population were openly opposed to the war and wished to remain colonies under British protection. Among the latter group of Americans was the governor of New Jersey Colony, William Franklin, the son of Benjamin Franklin. History, we are told, is written by the victors : William Franklin was disowned by his illustrious father, and vanquished from history before the end of the war. As a *persona non-grata* in the new Republic, the former governor of New Jersey Colony took up residence in England, where he lived for the remainder of his life.¹

In class warfare as well, resistance and counter-resistance is recorded in American history. At the time the United States Constitution, vigorous debates occurred (between 1787 and 1791) over the ratification of the Constitution revealing an array of strategies and tactics which ultimately constrained the power of the ruling class property owners, whose objectives involved depriving most working Americans of their human rights to self-defense. Daniel Shays' rebellion in western Massachusetts was the most famous of these popular post-war movements. It aimed at challenging the new monopoly of power which threatened ordinary citizens in the recently formed American Republic. Movements such as Shays' provided the context both in which the consolidation of political power was attempted by the new national elite, who had gathered in Philadelphia, between 25 May and 17 September 1787, to participate in the formation of a new government. The conservative authors of the U.S. Constitution found themselves in the midst of social class warfare and were obliged to launch a counter attack in the form of public debates to resist the democratic sharing of political power. For three-and-a-half years the “Federalist,” as they called themselves, were forced to confront the “Anti-Federalist” until a compromise was reached, and in 1791 which allowed Rhode Island and North Carolina to finally join the other states to ratify the federal

¹Virginia Bernhard, et al., *Firsthand America, A History of the United States*, 3rd edition (St. James, New York: Brandywine Press, 1993), p.117.

Constitution of the Republic of the United States of America. The document now necessarily included the famous “Bill of Rights.” In this case, the elitist counter-resistance movement won a victory over the democratic movement, whose slogan was “No taxation without representation!” But still conservative American property owners who were intent on resisting the decentralization of political power in the fledgling Republic, had to compromise. This political confrontation of resistance and counter-resistance produced the first 10 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, which most notably included the guaranteed freedoms of speech, religion, the press, and the right to assemble peacefully. These amendments were ratified along with the Constitution and became national law only in 1791.²

After the beginning of the French Revolution, French citizens living in the United States were forced to flee the country due to Federalist persecution. It was decided that the U.S. should be quarantined against “the revolutionary virus” carried by French citizens. In 1798, the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts made it much more difficult for foreigners to become U.S. citizens, and the Acts empowered the President of the United States, as well, to order “any alien” from the country and in time of war to imprison any foreign citizen living in the United States.

“The Sedition Act” provided for fines and imprisonment for anyone speaking, writing, or publishing “with intent to defame” the President of the United States or other members of the U.S. government. Federalist judges closed down many Republican newspapers and jailed and fined some 70 American citizens under this Act. The grandson of Benjamin Franklin, Benny Franklin Bache (1769-1798), whose mother was Sarah Franklin Bache and whose uncle was William Franklin, the British loyalist, had inherited his grandfather’s printing equipment and library. In 1790, seventy years after his famous grandfather began publishing his first American newspaper, *The New England Courant*, Benny Bache created his own paper, *The American Aurora*, in which he defended the French Revolution and attacked the conservative Federalist Party in defense of the Jeffersonian Republican Party.

In 1798, Benny Bache wrote a series of articles which were critical of President George Washington, who was also the richest man in the Republic. He wrote that President Washington, at the time he was commanding General of the Continental Army during the War of Independence, had “secretly collaborated with the British.” In another article, he wrote that: “If ever a nation was debauched by a man, the American nation has been debauched by Washington.” Under the articles of the “Sedition Act,” Benny Franklin Bache was arrested. He died in prison in 1798 while awaiting trial, at the age of 29.³

The legal rights of U.S. citizens were suspended at the time of the French Revolution for reasons of “national security,” and again during the War of 1812 Federalist Party opposition to the English, who were at war with Napoleon, created a counter-resistance within the United States. This war, which ended only in 1814, was not (as usually depicted in American textbooks) just a war against the English for survival, but a war for expansion of the new nation, into Florida, into Canada, into Indian territory. The War originated with the maritime policies of Great Britain and France during the Napoleonic Wars. In 1806 Napoleon tried to prevent neutral countries from trading with Britain. England retaliated with orders to prevent neutrals from trading with France. The result was a drastic fall in U.S. trade. The U.S. declared war against Britain in June 1812, after it was reported the British Admiralty was

²Howard Zinn, *People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1995), pp.90-99.

³Warren Agee, *Introduction to Mass Communications* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 1997), p.112.

interfering with American ships on the high seas and pressing American sailors into the British navy. The British were also supporting Indian uprisings in the west, which was hindering U.S. expansion. The U.S. was unprepared for this internal conflict, but saw no alternative than to resist British imperialist provocations.⁴

The war ended with the Peace of Ghent, signed on December 22, 1814, the terms of which were essentially a return to the *status quo* before the war. Two weeks later, however, Andrew Jackson, unaware of the peace agreement, defeated British troops at the Battle of New Orleans. Some of the far-reaching effects of this last instance of resistance to British aggressions include the appearance of a new national military identity in the U.S. against the British, a new surge of expansionism into Indian territories, and a growing level of home manufacturing, following the trade embargo imposed by the British and French.⁵

The Napoleonic Wars in Europe gave rise to a new surge of imperialist expansionism in North America, as European-Americans removed indigenous people from their homelands, in the name of “national security.” The Mexican War of 1846-48 was a continuation of this movement westward, armed now with the new ideology of “Manifest Destiny.” The American imperialist project on the North American continent incurred resistance time and time again throughout the 19th Century, but repeatedly this macro-resistance was overcome by an overwhelming counter force of repression, which in turn gave birth to a variety of forms of micro-resistant activities. Henry David Thoreau’s classic essay, “On Civil Disobedience” (1849) speaks to the recognition of individual conscience -- that “march to a different drummer”-- and the transcendental “duty of conscientious citizens” . . . “to stop the machine” when it was “working injustice.” Eventually, the Republic of Mexico was conquered by the United States military and this defeat was formally acknowledged by the Treaty of Guadelupe-Hidalgo (1848), which all of northern Mexico, 50% of its entire homeland, to its Yankee neighbor. But paradoxically, at a cultural level, a myriad of micro-resistant elements began to proliferate after this military “victory” of power over justice.⁶

Later, during the American War of Secession (1861-65), resistance and counter-resistance is again seen in the opportunism of President Abraham Lincoln, whose commitment to abolishing slavery was compromised by pragmatic considerations for improving the advantages of American industrialists after the war. Meanwhile, the Second Empire of France, under the leadership of the French Emperor, Louis Napoleon, maintained French troops in Mexico to protect the unpopular Holy Roman Catholic Emperor of Mexico, Maximiliano, and his wife, the Empress Carlota, from social revolution led by the indigenous revolutionary Benito Juarez. The French-Mexican imperial alliance with the Confederacy was a European gamble against a Union victory by the rapidly industrializing United States. The resistance of the Confederacy against the consolidation of a “new industrial state” in North America found a willing ally in the French Empire. But at another level, resistance in Europe to French imperial ambitions in North America would serve to unite and eventually industrialize the new state of Germany under the strategies of Otto von Bismarck.⁷

⁴Bernhard, et al., *op. cit.*, pp.216-225.

⁵Zinn, *op. cit.* pp.125-126.

⁶See Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution, Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. from French by Rosemary Sheed (New York: Penguin Books, 1984).

⁷Robert Lerner, *Western Civilizations, Their History and Their Culture* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), pp.771-772 & pp.795-797. See also, Edward McNall, et al., *World Civilization*. vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), pp. 1068-1071.

At the end of the 19th Century, again an imperialist war –the Spanish-American War (1898)—brought with it resistance and counter-resistance movements, as the American nation became divided --nearly 50-50-- between pro- and anti-Imperialist forces. National figures as diverse as multimillionaire philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, literary satirist Mark Twain, and philosopher William James spoke against this imperialist project abroad; while pro-war propagandists, such as newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst and western artist Frederick Remington brought images of glory to the minds of the American public, promoting “heroes” of this imperialist campaign, such as Teddy Roosevelt (of “San Juan Hill” fame) and Admiral George Dewey (the Battle of Manila Bay). The pro-war advocates were joined by other intellectuals, like U.S. Navy Captain Alfred Mahan and Presbyterian Pastor Robert E. Speer, and also by many politicians, such as Indiana Senator and presidential hopeful Albert Beveridge and the U.S. President himself, Republican William McKinley. Resistance and counter-resistance during this war, at the turn of the century, was a battle for the hearts and minds of the American people. This battle was fought in the media, in the public schools, and in churches across the continent.⁸

At the time the United States entered the First World War in April 1917, socialists in America were already organizing war resistance movements. In response to this anti-war sentiment, Congress passed the Espionage Act in June 1915, which provided for a \$10,000 fine and up to 20 years in prison for anyone convicted of disloyalty or opposition to the draft. The following year, the Sedition Act of May 1918 was passed as an amendment to the Espionage Act. It extended the 1917 law to forbid the use of "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language" in reference to U.S. government officials, the national flag, or the U.S. armed forces during the war. It also allowed the Postmaster General to deny mail delivery to anyone protesting government's policy during this war.

Eugene Debs, the American Socialist Party leader, received a sentence of 10 years in 1918 for his anti-war activities and served time in prison, from 1918 to 1921. Some nine hundred pacifists were imprisoned during the war, and another 2,000 people were tried under these laws. There were four famous free speech cases brought before the courts in this period.⁹

1. Schenck vs. U.S. (1919).

The socialist Charles Schenk was arrested in Philadelphia in 1917 for distributing 15,000 leaflets denouncing the military draft and the war.

His defense was based on the 1st Amendment right of free speech and the 13th Amendment guarantee of protection against “involuntary servitude,” but after he was arrested, he was tried and found guilty of violating the Espionage Act. He was sentenced to six months in jail.

His lawyers appealed the court’s decision at the level of the Supreme Court, where the unanimous decision was written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who judged that Schenck was not protected by the First Amendment: “The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.”

⁸see Zinn, *op. cit.*, chapter 12, “The Empire and the People.”

⁹Eric Foner & John A. Garraty, eds., *The Reader’s Companion to American History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), “Conscientious Objection and “Conscription”, pp. 214-217.

2. Kate Richards O'Hare (July 1917).

The socialist Kate Richards O'Hare was sentenced to five years in Missouri State Penitentiary for delivering a speech in North Dakota in which she was reported to have said: "the women of the United States were nothing more or less than brood sows, to raise children to get into the army and be made into fertilizer."

3. U.S. vs. Debs.

Chief Justice Holmes again upheld the government's case, believing Eugene Debs' words against the war were "a clear and present danger." Debs served 3 of his 10-year sentence before receiving a pardon by President Harding in 1921.

4. Abrams vs. U.S. (1921).

Jacob Abrams, a Russian immigrant and a professed anarchist, was arrested in New York City with four others for handing out leaflets in New York City urging workers not to produce arms that could be used to suppress the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louise Brandeis dissented from the majority conviction. Holmes wrote the minority view: In an eloquent argument, Holmes defended "the free market of ideas" and opposed the government's 20-year prison sentence for Abrams.¹⁰

Following the historical dialectic of resistance and counter-resistance imminent to the context of the Second World War, we discover immersing events which serve to illustrate "the unity of opposites," where pacifist resistance, side by side with pro-fascist opposition to U.S. entry into the war. The New England pacifist and poet Robert Lowell (1917-1977) went to prison for his opposition to this war, at the same time that Walter Teagle, Chief Executive Officer of David Rockefeller's Exxon Corporation, was severely interrogated by the Senate Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program.¹¹ [fnt # 11: For a discussion of pro-fascist sentiments on Wall Street, see

<http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1982/08/mayer.html> See also Christopher Simpson's remarkable book, *The Splendid Blond Beast* for a carefully documented account of the pro-fascist political economy within the United States before 1942.]

Fred Korematsu vs. U.S. (1944).

Another example of resistance to U.S. war strategies was an action taken by Fred Korematsu, who was arrested in the San Francisco Bay Area for not reporting to a detention center on the West Coast. As an American citizen of Japanese ancestry he was required by martial law to forfeit his civil rights during the war and to retire to a compound totally enclosed by barbed wire and guarded by armed U.S. soldiers for an indefinite period of time. He contested this violation of his civil rights, but his arrest was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1944. His conviction was not overturned until 1983, when the U.S. Congress voted that he, like

¹⁰See Zinn, *op. cit.*, chapter 13, "The Socialist Challenge".

¹¹[fnt # 11: For a discussion of pro-fascist sentiments on Wall Street, see <http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1982/08/mayer.html> See also Christopher Simpson's remarkable book, *The Splendid Blond Beast* for a carefully documented account of the pro-fascist political economy within the United States before 1942.

thousands of other Japanese Americans, should receive a financial compensation for this violation of their liberties.

The chronology of U.S. war continues into the second half of the 20th Century, as does the series of related resistance movements which in turn were met with repressive counter-resistance tactics by the state. In light of this dialectical movement, we recognize the so-called “McCarthy Era” (1950-54) as a counter-tactic to defeat electoral candidates of the Democratic Party which was accused of being “soft on Communism,” of “loosing China” in 1949, and of accepting U.S. defeat at the end of the Korean War, because Democratic President Harry S Truman refused to use the Atomic bomb on China. President Truman had resisted expanding the Korean War into China, and instead, in April 1951, he removed the popular Republican General Douglas McArthur as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan. It is in this context that McCarthyism can be understood as a political tactic of counter-resistance to the less militarist Democratic Party which resisted expanding the Korean War into China, and which attempted to contain McCarthyism by launching an anti-organized crime campaign led by Senator Estes Kefauver, a Tennessee Democrat, to distract attention from Republican Party anti-Communist attacks.¹²

In the Vietnam War era, once again war resistance was met with the repressive state tactics. Within public schools and universities, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) began organizing as early as 1960. Very quickly resistance within the Armed Forces appeared and expanded rapidly after 1961. The threat of disrupting the U.S. “war machine” quickly gave rise to repressive counter measures. Police informants and *agents provocateurs* were sent in again and again to disrupt the anti-war movement. The government spared no expense in issuing the best pro-war propaganda money could buy, but the various liberation movements at the time seemed impervious to sophisticated attempts to shape U.S. public opinion in support of this war, which was widely perceived as a criminal conspiracy. The counter resistance took a steep turn to the right when police violence escalated to conspiracies to commit murder on a national level. Both the CIA and the FBI became involved in tactics of domestic intervention, far beyond simply gathering information on movement supporters.¹³

Between 1965 and 1975, the federal government was faced with more than 100,000 draft resisters. Some 22,500 of these draft offenders were indicted, of whom 8,800 were convicted and 4,000 served time in federal prisons. After 1968, the Supreme Court redefined the criteria for conscientious objector status to include non-religious moral and ethical objections, and the number of CO exemptions grew in relation to the number of inductees, from 8 percent in 1967 to 43 percent in 1971, and 131 percent in 1972. Between 1965 and 1970, 170,000 American men were classified as conscientious objectors.¹⁴

The most common resistance to the draft during the Vietnam War era was evasion. Of the 26.8 million young men who were of draft age between 1964 and 1973, 16 million, (60 percent) did not serve in the military. Of those who avoided service, 15.4 million received legal exemptions or deferments, and something like 570,000 evaded the draft illegally. Among these draft evaders, 360,000 were never caught, another 198,000 had their cases

¹²Michael Schaller, et al., *Present Tense, The United States Since 1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996), pp. 88-89.

¹³For a description of the planned police assassinations in this period, see Zinn, *op. cit.*, chapters 18 & 19.

¹⁴Foner ed., *op. cit.*, p.218.

dismissed, 9,000 were convicted, and 4,000 served time in prison. In addition, some 30 to 50,000 young men fled into exile, largely to Canada, Britain, and Sweden.¹⁵

During the 1972 election campaign, President Nixon reduced draft calls and stopped forcing draftees to go to Vietnam. On 27 January 1973, the administration announced it would stop drafting altogether. Compulsory draft registration was suspended by President Gerald Ford in 1975, and resumed only in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter in reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. President Ronald Reagan extended compulsory draft registration to 1982, but more than 500,000 young men resisted registration and only a very few were prosecuted. For all practical purposes the All Volunteer Force (AVF) had made draft registration irrelevant. The AVF of around 2.1 million soldiers (including 775,000 in the Army) remained popular after the Vietnam War. It was believed that in the future the rate of American war casualties could be reduced with the help of advanced technical, but the civil controversy continues that the AVF is drawing disproportionately from lower socioeconomic groups, particularly people of color and immigrants. The rising cost of financing the AVF was also a factor in 21st-century push by the neo-liberal administration of George W. Bush to privatize large sections of the American military.

From the start of these “democratic reforms,” which were introduced to stabilize the American military establishment, the danger of a police state was so broadly acknowledged that members of the U. S. Congress found themselves obliged to enact the famous Freedom of Information Act with the amendment in 1974, permitting any citizen to obtain records of all activities of police spying into their private lives. Resistance to U.S. imperialism had taken on a diversity of forms, from massive desertions from the military, and Draft resisters leaving the country in large numbers, to ideological struggles within major cultural institutions, such as media broadcasting, public education, and religious groups. Beginning in the 1960s, virtually every American citizen became implicated at some level with the anti-war dialectic. Involvement was virtually unavoidable, and African American intellectuals found themselves at the vanguard of this resistance.

The *Black Panther Party for Self-Defense* was founded in northern California 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton. It represented a cultural revolution in African American relations in the United States. During the anti-war movement it formally recognized Racism as a Counter-Revolutionary Strategy to Secure a “Permanent War Economy” in the United States since World War II. The famous “Ten Point Program” issued by the Black Panther Party in April 1967 reflected their determined resistance in the class warfare in which most African Americans were implicated. This defiant challenge to capitalist classes in America was perceived as a real threat to the very matrix of capitalist growth in the United States :

- *We want power to determine the destiny of our black and oppressed communities.*
- *We want full employment for our people.*
- *We want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of our Black Community.*
- *We want decent housing, fit for the shelter of human beings.*
- *We want decent education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.*
- *We want completely free health care for all black and oppressed people.*
- *We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people, other people of color, all oppressed people inside the United States.*

¹⁵Ibid.

- *We want an immediate end to all wars of aggression.*
- *We want freedom for all black and oppressed people now held in U. S. Federal, state, county, city and military prisons and jails. We want trials by a jury of peers for all persons charged with so-called crimes under the laws of this country.*
- *We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, peace and people's community control of modern technology.*

This political program, in conjunction with practical social service programs such as the Panthers' Free Breakfast for Children Program, constituted a positive socialist strategy which attracted great resistance by pro-capitalist forces, including infiltration, harassment, sabotage, and assassinations. Our discussion on April 11 will attempt to place the Panthers' initial struggle against racism in its historical context and outline the evolution of this movement from 1966 until today.¹⁶

All would-be strategists learned important lessons following the U.S. military defeat in Vietnam. One lesson that was learned by U.S. military strategists was that *defeatism* at home must be brought under tight controlled, if not entirely eliminated. In the context of mass resistance to U.S. imperialist aggression, pro-war collaboration on the part of the U.S. media became an essential element in the new logistics designed to enable imperialist warfare. War Resistance within the United States during the Vietnam War had already given birth to a new genre of counter-resistance tactics: geopolitical wars would be fought increasingly by proxy armies.

Beginning in 1980, the longest war of the 20th Century had begun. It was fought between Iran and Iraq (1980-1988), both of whom were the “beneficiaries” of American “largess,” the entirely cynical strategy of weakening both sides of this conflict in order to create a power vacuum in the oil-rich region of the Persian Gulf which United States corporations could easily fill, with no U.S. casualties. This war which lasted nearly nine years resulted in a huge casualty rate, with the number of war dead in Iran and Iraq rising to almost 2,000,000.¹⁷

At this same moment in history, U.S. wars in Latin America were also fought by proxy. The covert wars against the people of socialist Nicaragua (1980-1988) fought by U.S. financed “Contras” and the American supported death squads in El Salvador (reported to have killed some 35,000 people between 1980, when Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated, and 1983) were both American wars fought by proxy. Once again a resistance movement emerged in the United States, and against it a counter resistance was orchestrated by U.S. government agencies. War-resistance tactics in the 1980s mobilized Hispanics of the American Southwest as never before, in such anti-imperialist organizations as the Committee in Solidarity People El Salvador (CISPES).

Pro-imperialist ideological extremism in the 1980s within the ranks of the Reagan-Bush Administrations led to an enthusiastic extension of the *Nixon Doctrine* by turning U.S. military interventions increasingly toward air warfare, proxy armies, and more capital-intensive, high-tech weapons systems, which smaller, specialized units could operate. But despite the U.S. government’s persistent imperialist innovations, grass-roots resistance

¹⁶Alphonso Pinkney, “Contemporary Black Nationalism”, in *Black Life and Culture in the United States* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1971), ed. by Rhoda L. Goldstein, pp. 243-262.]

¹⁷Michael Schaller, et al., *Present Tense, The United States Since 1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996), pp. 501-502.

continued and succeeded in preventing a full-scale U.S. invasion of Nicaragua or El Salvador. Nevertheless, this resistance came at a price, for counter resistance took the form of financial impoverishment, and more than ever before economic warfare, which included the cutting of social services, was conducted against the general population of America, reducing all forms of resistance, including simply self-defense, and giving rise to an increasingly apolitical culture of consumerism and nameless insecurities throughout the 1980s and 90s.

The U.S. military invasion of Granada in 1983, and the killing of the Marxist Prime Minister, Maurice Rupert Bishop was given very little attention in the U.S. media. Likewise, in 1989, U.S. media coverage of the U.S. military invasion of Panama was carefully censored. These so-called “wars” (which were actually more like laboratories for military experimentations involving a highly asymmetrical balance of forces) incurred popular wrath inside the countries affected, but with the help of “sanitized” media coverage within the United States, counter resistance had taken the offensive, leaving the American public ignorant of events and generally confused and apathetic.

However, it was the Gulf War of 1991 that prompted President George Bush (*père*) to publicly declare: “By God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all !” Again, with indispensable help from the U.S. media, this imperialist aggression of the early 1990s was presented to the American public in virtual, video-game-style images. With the use of sophisticated techniques of psychological warfare, which dehumanized “the Arab enemy,” an atmosphere was created in which public dissent became almost impossible. At the same time, the military halted all Conscientious Objector discharges in the military, forcing many U.S. soldiers to face court-martial.

Another counter-resistance tactics deployed by the state was the attempt to shorten imperialist wars. After 1996, with the introduction of the U.S. military “rapid dominance” doctrine (also known as “Shock-and-Awe”), U.S. imperialist leaders sought to end military confrontations quickly (usually at a considerable cost which they accepted as “collateral damage”) before popular dissent could gain momentum. After the Gulf War, the Clinton Administration repeatedly bombed Iraq, Serbia, and other countries, creating the impression that warfare bore little if any cost for U.S. military forces.

Pre-emptive counter-resistant tactics served to induce public complacency until the attacks by terrorists on September 11, 2001. The invasion of Afghanistan and the occupation of Iraq revived the anti-war movement, and with it the counter-resistance movement. A major change since the anti-Vietnam War movement was that the public now had access through the Internet to alternative sources of information.. The Internet was an important factor in raising consciousness within the military community, as well as among the public in general.

Historic opposition within the U.S. military after three years into the Iraq War, beginning 20 March 2003, was far greater than it was after the first three years of the U.S. phase of the Indochina War. More than 8,000 personnel have deserted since the war began (according government statistics), about 400 of whom have gone to Canada. The military has been reluctant to punish war resisters beyond discharging them. By 2006, it became clear to most Americans that the U.S. military presence in Iraq to "protect" Iraqis was a farce, and a violation of international law, against the will of most Iraqis.

As of 18 February 2009, according to U.S. government reports, 4,245 US Soldiers have been killed in Iraq, and another 31,035 seriously wounded, many with brain and spinal injuries.

The number of war veteran suicides has climbed since 2002: a *Foreign Policy in Focus* report in 2008 stated that “eighteen American war veterans kill themselves every day, one thousand former soldiers receiving care from the Department of Veterans Affairs attempt suicide every month, and more veterans are committing suicide than are dying in combat overseas.

In the face of these statistics, it is no wonder that war resistance has also increased. The number of U.S. soldiers reported missing from Iraq reached more than 5,000 by the February of 2009, and the number of U.S. military personnel applying for conscientious objector status between 2002 and 2006, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, was 425. There are no reliable government statistics available on C.O. applications since 2006.¹⁸

The American cultural tradition of war resistance and determined capitalist state efforts at counter-resistance can be seen as the dialectical engine force producing the germs of democracy within American institutions. As one of the many unintended side-products of imperialist warfare, the production site of democracy cannot be easily targeted and destroyed by imperialist interests, no matter how desirable the elimination of democracy might be to capitalist interests. The contradictions that produce democracy cannot be entirely controlled; they are the genuine products of conflicting interests and urges, and as long as capitalist growth requires imperialist warfare, there will be resistance and counter-resistance, the atelier in which the many species of democratic expression are created.

¹⁸For more on the history of war resistance, see Zoltan Grossman’s essay, “A Brief History Of Military Resistance” (July 6, 2006), on the *Z Magazine* Internet site, at <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/3617>.