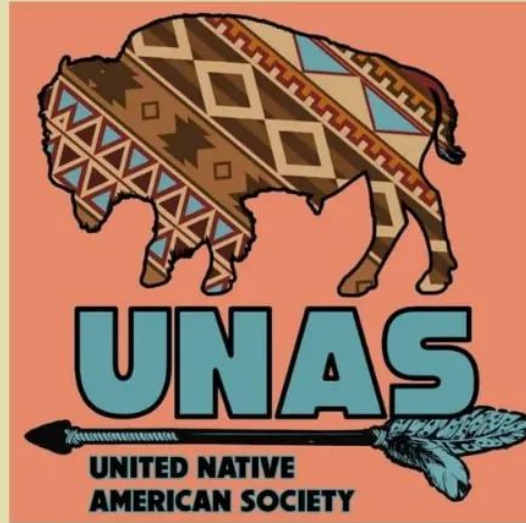




All Nations by Clan/Destine

# PEOPLES SCHOOL FOR MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES™



UNAS Presents Indigenous Peoples Day

PSMLS 10/13/26



# What we'll be learning today:

- What is Indigenous People's Day
- CPUSA Resolution on Native American Liberation
- Native American Activism and Organizations



What is Indigenous People's  
Day?



# A Day for Indigenous Americans

Biden, in 2021, became the first U.S. president to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day officially. That year, he proclaimed to observe the second Monday in October as a day to honor Native Americans, their “resilience and strength” and determination to preserve “land, language, spirit, knowledge, and tradition,” even as they have faced a “centuries-long campaign of violence, displacement, assimilation, and terror,” he said.

Indigenous Peoples' Day advocates say the recognition helps correct a "whitewashed" American history that has glorified Europeans like Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, who have committed violence against Indigenous communities. Native Americans have long criticized the inaccuracies and harmful narratives of Columbus' legacy that credited him with his "discovery" of the Americas when Indigenous people were there first.

"It is difficult to grapple with the complete accomplishments of individuals and also the costs of what those accomplishments came at," said Mandy Van Heuvelen, the cultural interpreter coordinator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.



*The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian*



# Origins



*First Columbus Day Parade, NYC Union Square, 1892*

To understand the history of Indigenous Peoples' Day, it's important to understand how Columbus Day came about. Columbus had been celebrated unofficially around the US since the late 1700s. In 1892, President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation commemorating the 400th anniversary of his landing. As waves of Italian immigrants arrived in the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they faced prejudice and discrimination. To combat negative perceptions, a group of Italian American elites took up the cause of Columbus Day, arguing that the contributions of Italian immigrants had helped make America the nation it was. In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt designated Columbus Day a national holiday.

The narrative around Columbus Day helped uphold “the new racial order that would emerge in the US in the 20th century, one in which the descendants of diverse ethnic European immigrants became ‘White’ Americans,” historian Malinda Maynor Lowery wrote in a 2019 article for *The Conversation*.



# Origins



During WWII, Mussolini's regime promoted Christopher Columbus as an Italian national hero and a pioneer of Italian imperial and cultural expansion. Propaganda portrayed him as an ancestor to Italy's modern colonial ambitions, drawing parallels between his voyages and Italy's military campaigns in Africa during the 1930s.

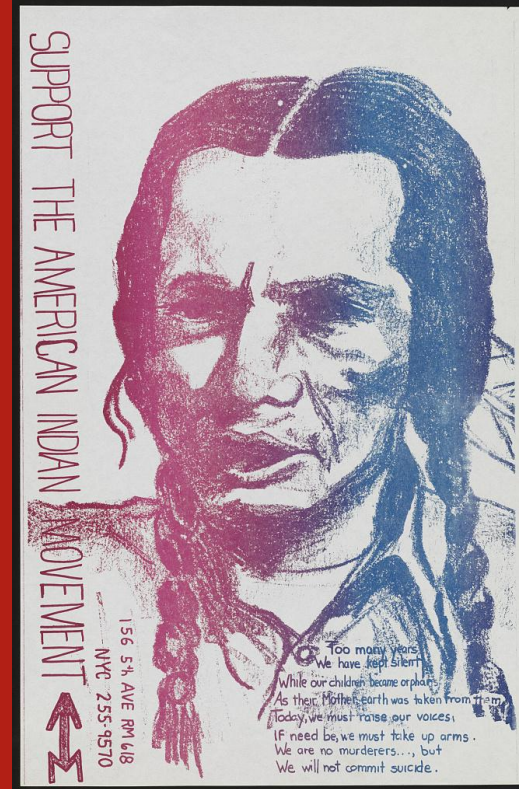
During this time, several Columbus statues were directly financed by Mussolini. These include Columbus Circle in Syracuse, NY, Grant Park in Chicago, Bayfront Park in Florida and Ludington Library in Pennsylvania.



# An International Day of Solidarity

Eventually, Native Americans began to challenge the history behind the holiday. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, Native American activists in the late 1960s formed the Red Power Movement, built on principles of self-determination and cultural pride. At a 1977 United Nations conference in Geneva, Indigenous delegates from around the world resolved “to observe October 12, the day of so-called ‘discovery’ of America, as an International Day of Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.”

It would be longer before their calls were adopted. South Dakota became the first to officially celebrate the day (calling it Native American Day) in 1990. The city of Berkeley, California, embraced Indigenous Peoples’ Day in 1992 as a protest to the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ arrival. Now, numerous states and more than 130 cities observe the holiday.





# A Time to Reflect

For some, Indigenous Peoples' Day is an occasion to consider the history of the US and how it has treated Native people.

“It’s a time to reflect on all that we’ve been through as a people: How much we endured, how much we’ve persevered and how much we still have to continue to fight for — for ourselves, for generations before us and for generations that will come after us,” Weeden said.

Indigenous people have often been erased from the country’s historical record — a survey from the National Congress of American Indians found that 87% of state history standards don’t mention Native American history after 1900, while 27 states don’t mention Native Americans in their K-12 curriculum. Yet Native people continue to have a presence here, while the lands and natural resources that were taken from them became foundational to this country.





# Recognition

What began as an initiative at the UN in 1977 became reality in 1989 in South Dakota, when Indigenous Peoples' Day was first recognized by the state government as an alternative to the Federally-recognized Columbus Day. In South Dakota the day is called Native American Day. In the late 1980's, members of the Sioux Nation organized enough people to get the attention of the then-Governor, George S. Mickelson, who became the first to codify the claim that peace between Indian and non-Indian people could benefit by renaming the holiday. While recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day is now commonplace in many states to honor the day, it is largely symbolic amid the ongoing systemic oppression of Native Peoples under Capitalism. Native Americans continue to be subjected to mistreatment by the US government, including unlawful breaking of treaties, stolen land, and broken promises across the country. The current configuration and economic challenges on Indian Reservation lands remain invisible to Americans, no matter their political affiliations.



*A Photo of one of Sioux Falls Native American Day Parade in South Dakota*



# The Dialectic of Indigenous People's Day

Native communities, while culturally strong in nature, are still recovering from genocide and trauma they endured for two centuries. These include detrimental policies like Indian boarding schools, Christian missions and the brokered deals under the Indian Termination Act. When those deals were “resolved” they often homogenized the character of unique communities and conjoined regional Tribal groups for Federal recognition. The Confederated Klamath Tribes, for example, includes Yahooskin, Klamath and Modoc, that include differing languages and cultures. The physical and legal framework surrounding the self-governance of Tribal Nations in the US continues to evolve and one can observe many encouraging steps that indicate power-building and increased influence on proactive policies. In the Chickasaw Nation for example, more than 14,000 Tribal members are employed in public services. In Yurok Territory, hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been purchased from timber companies to increase their landbase. Notably, the largest dam removal project in US history was led by a coalition of Tribes from the Klamath River watershed, which marked a huge victory for Indigenous peoples everywhere. Indigenous Peoples Day in Southern Oregon has a sour bite, as all of the Tribal communities have been displaced from their homelands and not been allowed to return. Many, including the Shasta, Takelma, and Rogue River Indians were assigned residency to a reservation more than 100 miles away from their native lands and waters. But even amid these insurmountable odds, peoples and cultures persevere and have survived.



# Discussion



# Discussion & New Members Introductions



# New Member Introductions

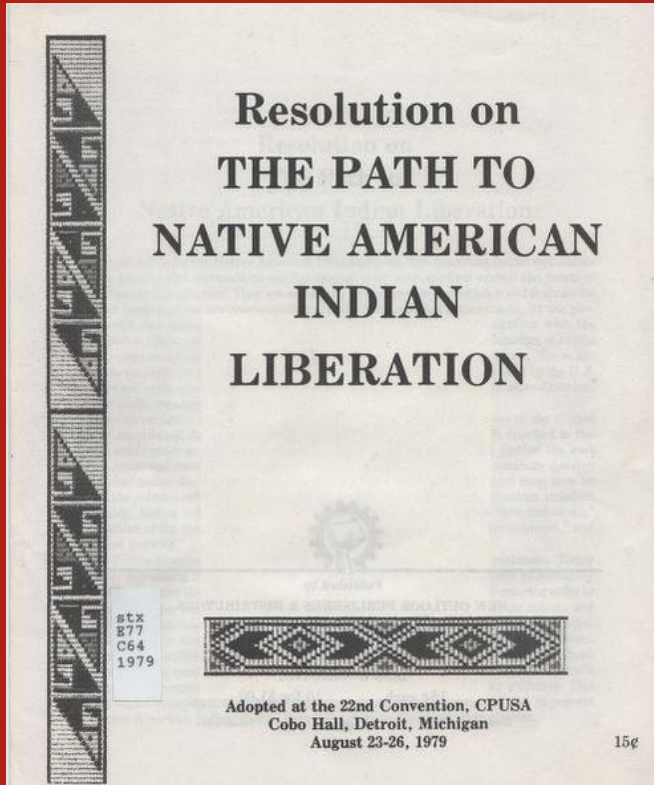
- What is your name, pronouns and state (or country/territory)?
- Where do you work? Is it unionized?
- How did you find out about the People's School?
- What do you think about tonight's class?



# 1979 CPUSA Resolution on Native American Liberation



## Following Material Comes From:



<https://archive.org/details/s/ResolutionOnThePathToNativeAmericanLiberationAdoptedAtThe22nd/mode/1up>



# The Path to Native American Indian Liberation

A crisis exists for the Native American Indian peoples. The American Indian and Alaska Native peoples and nationalities are fighting for their very survival against the power of state monopoly capitalism. They are victimized by the wanton exploitation and destruction of their lands and energy resources by powerful transnational corporations, by the government's neo-colonialist policies in Indian affairs and its full cooperation with the monopolies. The result is astronomical unemployment and the super exploitation of Indian labor, extreme social and economic deprivation, social and cultural genocide. These immediate realities are justified by a racist and national chauvinist ideology used by the U.S. ruling class as the cover and pretext for the continued lucrative plunder of Native American Indian lands, resources and labor.



# The Path to Native American Indian Liberation

The expropriation of the lands and resources of the indigenous peoples of the United States constituted the economic basis for genocide in past centuries. It resulted in the brutal extermination of over 90 percent of the original population and yielded the vast fertile lands and natural resources needed by the capitalist class to economically develop and industrialize the United States. To the genocidal practices of the past must now be added the policies and techniques of the contemporary age—such as sterilization, uranium poisoning, Indian “education,” Bureau of Indian Affairs tyranny, FBI “law and order,” destruction of the ecology and environment through stripmining and “development,” and enforced poverty.

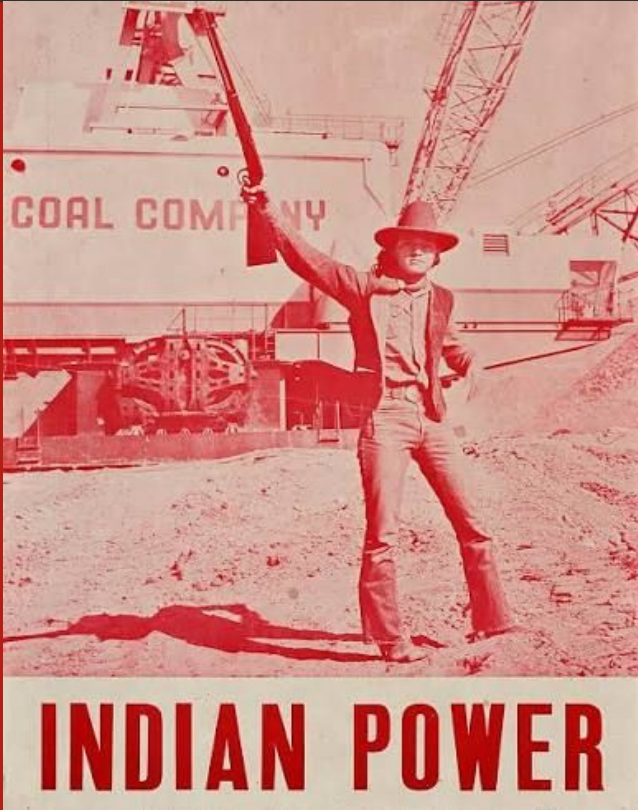


# The Path to Native American Indian Liberation

The Native American Indian peoples have a glorious history of militant resistance. Today they are continuing their long struggle by resisting the onslaught launched by monopoly capitalism to drive them off their remaining lands and resources. There is growing unity in their struggle for land rights, for sovereignty over rich resources, for their culture and self-government, which has resulted in some significant victories. At the same time, however, Native American militants are being subjected to severe forms of repression. Leaders of the political movement have been killed, jailed unjustly, and harassed. There are currently a number of unsolved and uninvestigated murders of Indians in South Dakota, some committed by police against American Indian Movement militants. This occurs within the context of the general oppression, such as the fact that as high 35 percent of Native American Indian women have been sterilized without their consent.



# Indian Power



Leroy Keams, a prominent member of the American Indian Movement and Diné at protest against the strip mining of Black Mesa by Peabody Coal Company



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

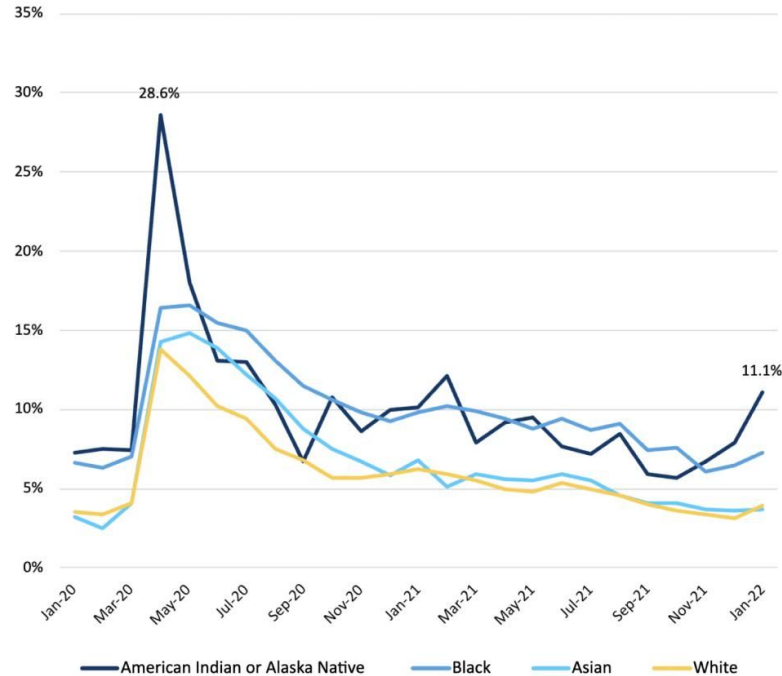
The official overall unemployment rate in 1970 was 10.7 percent. The official rate, however, hides real unemployment, which averages about 37 percent for those living on or near reservations and rural villages; 55 percent when those with temporary employment are included. Only 63 percent were in the workforce in 1970, compared to 75 for Blacks and 80 percent for whites. Tens of thousands of Indian and Alaska Native workers have become part of what Marx termed “the Lazarus layers of the permanently unemployed.”

Excluding people from economic life is the structural basis for the social genocide practiced by capitalism against the Native American Indian peoples, and is a present-day extension of the genocide of the past.



# Continued Discrimination

**Figure 1. Unemployment remains higher for Native Americans than other racial groups**



Source: Brookings analysis of BLS data  
Note: Data not seasonally adjusted to allow for comparison



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

The key aspect of the Native American Indian struggle is that it is being waged by oppressed indigenous nationalities for survival. The Indian and Alaska Native populations, about two million strong, are in reality comprised of many smaller peoples and nationalities. Despite capitalism's policy of cultural genocide, the majority of these still maintain their respective language, culture and identity. These oppressed nationalities have territories comprising some 2.4 percent of the United States and containing an estimated \$1,000 billion worth of coal reserves alone. For most of these peoples and nationalities there exist treaties, agreements and laws which define territory and recognize a limited sovereignty. This provides a legal basis for the struggle that must be developed into a larger mass struggle for fuller sovereignty over their existing land bases and for the full benefits from their natural resources.



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

The Native American Indian political movement is a just people's movement against some of the world's most rapacious and powerful monopolies—Continental Oil, Exxon, AMAX, Shell, Gulf Oil, Peabody Coal and Utah International Mining. It is therefore an integral part of the developing anti-monopoly struggle and movement.

Marxist-Leninist science teaches that there are both positive and negative aspects to a national movement, its class content being the determining factor. The Native American Indian struggle is part of the overall struggle to curb monopoly power. The full support of the working class—the trade union movement in the first place—must be won for the just demands of the Native American Indian peoples. This is in the best self-interest of the working class and the vast majority of the people of the United States, and is fundamental to any winning perspective.



# Native Led Anti-Pipeline Protests



Protest against Dakota  
Access Pipeline



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

The original or primary accumulation of capital in the United States was at the expense of both the Afro-American and Indian peoples. The enslavement of millions of Africans provided a vast source of labor for superexploitation, while the genocidal dispossession of the Indians provided the soil on which Afro-Americans were forced to toil. Thus the fate of these oppressed peoples was linked in history, although in different ways, to the accumulation of the great wealth of U.S. capitalism. Karl Marx' historic words should not be forgotten:

“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement, and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production” (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 751).

And, “if money . . . ‘comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek,’ capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt” (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 760).



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

The loss of land continues, but it is the gobbling up of natural resources that is the hallmark of the dispossession today. Rich resources have been discovered on Native American Indian lands. According to the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT), the 23 Indian nationalities of 10 western states, representing some two-thirds of the total population, have 33 percent of the country's low-sulphur, strippable coal, 80 percent of its uranium reserves, and three to 10 percent of all petroleum and gas. Alaska, with its large Native American Indian population, has an inestimable wealth in natural resources. Now that the technology has been developed, the energy monopolies plan to extract these resources at an even higher rate of profit than in the past.

Theoretically, energy-rich Native American Indians should be receiving substantial royalties. The Department of the Interior and the Department of Energy, in the service to Exxon et al, however, set mineral royalty rates at a minimum. As a consequence, the corporations get richer while reservation Indians continue to live in poverty. The Jicarilla Apache, for example, received a mere \$685,000 in bonus money for oil leases that would be worth at least \$80 million if the fair royalty value had been paid.



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

*It is in this context that we propose and support the following general demands:*

1. The right of Native American Indian peoples to be recognized as distinct nationalities, with sovereignty over reservations, including the right to levy taxes on corporate property, to self-government, and full jurisdiction over trial and punishment for violation of laws. The administration of Indian affairs must be radically restructured so that all Federal agencies, including the BIA, and the reservations are under full Indian control and the economic benefits are realized by the masses.
2. The right of Native American Indian peoples to retain and expand their land bases, to control their resources, which include historic water, fishing and mineral rights, and recognition of the treaty relationship as a basis for reclaiming jurisdiction over land and resources.
3. An immediate end to all forms of harassment, to violent and criminal assaults against Native American Indian peoples and their leaders by State and Federal agencies, including the terrorist police agencies (FBI, CIA, etc.). The immediate release of all political prisoners now illegally incarcerated or pending trial for fighting for their human rights as Native American Indian peoples.



## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

4. The right to receive full value for all resources taken from their lands and waters, and the right to take over monopoly enterprises and place them under cooperative or other forms of people's control, and to develop their own industries and resources.
5. An end to all genocidal practices, such as sterilization and medical experimentation, being carried out against Native American peoples.
6. The right to use their respective languages, religions, customs and traditions, and to the sanctity of religious sites and burial grounds.
7. Prompt turning over to the indigenous peoples of Alaska all of the 40 million acres due them under the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act. Also add to reservation and village lands contiguous to towns and mineral areas, so as to improve the economic viability of Alaska Native peoples.



# Genocidal Practices





## The Path to Native American Indian Liberation Cont.

8. The right to full representation in all levels of government, thus giving Native American Indian peoples and nationalities a voice in those bodies that make laws and decide policies that affect their lives and interests. One possible way of helping to achieve this could be the granting of the right to elect one Congressman from each reservation with a population of, say, 2300 or more, and one U.S. Senator from each nationality with a population of 20,000 or more. Also, the right to elect representatives to State legislative bodies on a similar basis.

9. The right to job training and employment on the basis of affirmative action, to union protection, on-the-job safety, in health, education, housing, economic and job development, in order to counter centuries or oppression. Benefits to be received irrespective of place of residence, on or off the reservation.

10. Support the fight of Native American Indian peoples in their demands for reparations, technical and financial aid, and governmental aid to those Native peoples living in urban areas who choose to be repatriated to their homelands.



# Discussion



# Native American Activism & Organizations



# Native American Activism

- American Indian Movement (AIM)
  - Started in Minnesota
  - In the 1960's
- Women of All Red Nations (WARN)
  - Founded in 1974
- Dakota Access Pipeline Protesters
- Tohono O'odham Protesting the Border Wall
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- Every Child Matters
- Every Native American movement has and will always be for Native Survival.
- From the Trail of Tears, forced removal, environmental and cultural destruction, children that survived boarding schools, Indian Child Welfare Act.

**let this be a WARNING**

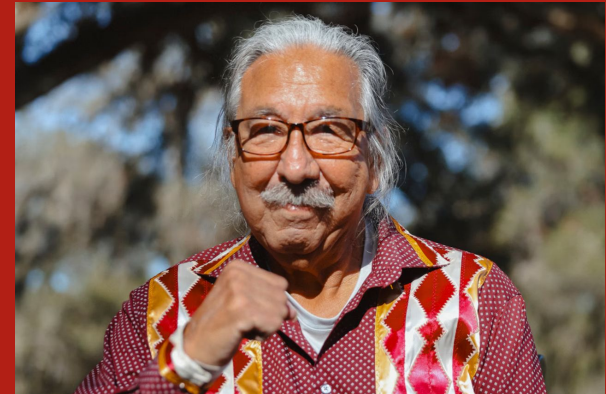


*Presiding at WARN conference (left to right): Yvonne Wanrow, Pat Bellinger, and Madonna Gilbert*



# Native American Activists

- Clyde Bellecourt (1936-2022): Born and grown on the White Earth Indian Reservation. Head and founding member of A.I.M. in 1968, member of the Ojibwe tribe, Leader, Organizer, and Activist.
- Leonard Peltier: Born in N. Dakota, raised on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. One of the Founding members of A.I.M., Leader, Organizer, and Activist. Is currently imprisoned for his political activities.





# Native American Activists

- Vernon Bellecourt (1931-2007): Brother of Clyde Bellecourt. One of the Founding members of AIM. Leader, Organizer, and Activist. In his final days, he attended the First International Congress of Anti-Imperialist Indigenous Peoples of America
- Dennis Banks (1937- 2017): was a Native American activist and long time leader of the A.I.M. which he co-founded in 1968 in Minneapolis to represent urban Native Americans . His protests created national attention on the deplorable conditions for Native Americans.





# Native American Activists

- Lorelei DeCora Means: Born on the Winnebago Reservation in Nebraska. Proponent of the Red Power Movement., Nurse, and Co-Founder of Women of All Red Nations. Youngest members on the board of directors for A.I.M.
- Madonna Thunder Hawk: Born on the Yankton Sioux Reservation. Belongs to the Oohenumpa band of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. Early proponent of the Red Power Movement. Joined the American Indian Movement in its early years. Leader, Organizer, and Activist





# Lonnie Nelson

- Daughter of Communist Party leader and founding member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Burt Gale Nelson
- Her uncle joined Abraham Lincoln Brigade
- Participated in the Wounded Knee Occupation
- Wrote for The People's World



# UNAS



**UNITED NATIVE  
AMERICAN SOCIETY**



The United Native American Society seeks to educate the American Public on the current and past conditions of Native American Peoples. Today, a crisis exists for the Native American population of the United States, including the indigenous people of Alaska. Native American Peoples of North America are fighting for their survival against continued encroachment by corporate America. Native Americans are victimized by powerful transnational corporations centered in Washington D.C. who seek the ruthless exploitation and destruction of their lands, natural resources, and traditional values. The U.S. Government's neo-colonial policies in the affairs of Native Americans are in direct cooperation with corporate interests. This results in the attempts to challenge past agreed-upon Treaty negotiations and resulted in a protracted epidemic of unemployment, unacceptable social and economic deprivation— a history of social and cultural genocide.



# Discussion & Wrap Up



# Announcements

- PCUSA Cell Chairs need to call members of their cells to remind them about attendance.
- The next issue of New Masses (2026) has begun production. If you have art you want us to feature, email it to [info@partyofcommunistsusa.net](mailto:info@partyofcommunistsusa.net).



## Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers for the staff of the People's School! Here's a few roles we need filled:

- People to help manage posting on our social media and podcast platforms
- Video Editors, Audio Editors, Graphic Designers, Artists, Narrators
- Web Controls, Moderators

Email [info@peopleschool.us](mailto:info@peopleschool.us) if you're interested and try to attend our next staff meeting if possible.



# View From Left Field

<https://viewfromleftfield.libsyn.com>



The Old PSMLS Youtube is now the Youtube of View From Left Field, a podcast of analysis and discussion of current events from a progressive perspective.

Like the Youtube videos and subscribe with 5 star ratings on your podcast platforms.

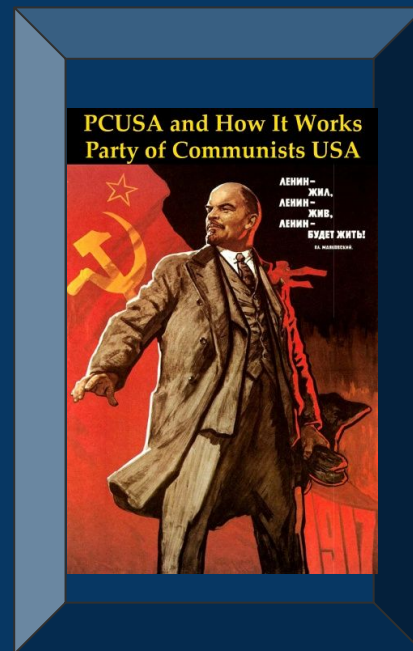
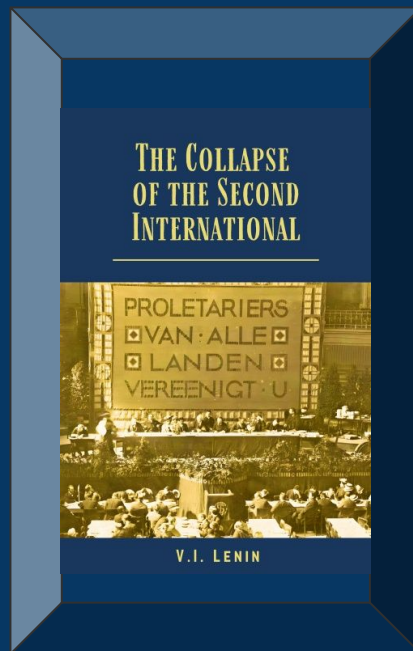
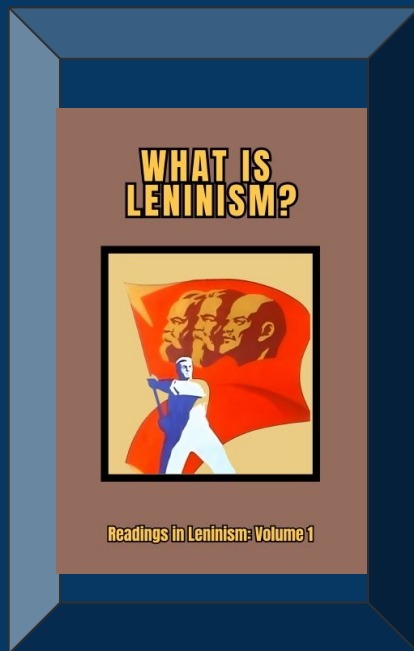
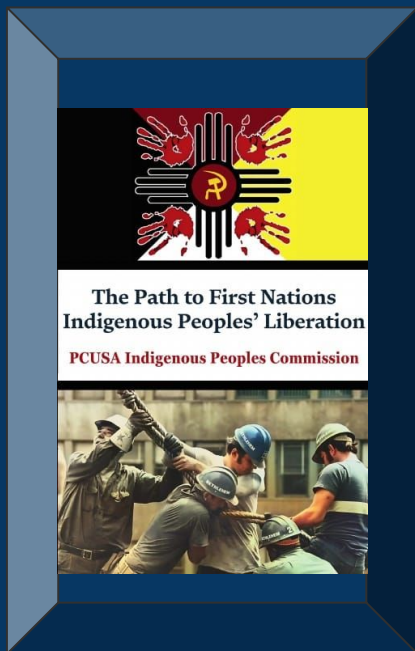




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# Harry Bridges School of Labor

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The Harry Bridges School of Labor is a monthly class covering a variety of topics aimed at building class consciousness among union members. For class schedule and other information, please visit the website at [luel.us/laborschool/](http://luel.us/laborschool/).





Dancing to be Free - Clan/Destine