



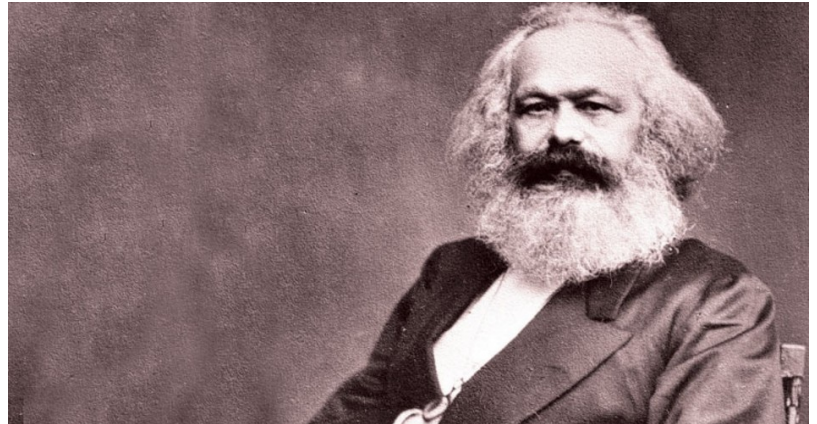
Written by [Steve Byas](#) on May 23, 2019

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Communist Party USA Is 100 Years Old This Year

It was in 1919 that a majority of the membership of the Socialist Party of the United States voted to join the Comintern, established by the Bolsheviks who had seized power in Russia in late 1917, as a way of promoting world revolution.

This year, 2019, marks 100 years of the Communist Party USA, founded as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Soviet Union, yet the importation of communist ideas to America precedes even the founding of the United States. The notion that communal, or communist, ownership of property was morally and practically superior to the private ownership of property actually goes back to the earliest days of American history. Both the colonists at Jamestown and the colonists at Plymouth attempted what can best be described as “small c” communism, leading to starvation.



Despite this example of the foolhardiness of such a plan, when the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth, they believed that they could make a communal system work. They couldn't, of course, and Governor William Bradford explained what happened in his book, *Of Plymouth Plantation*: “This community ... was found to breed such confusion and discontent and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For the young men that were most able and fit for labor and service did repine that they should spend their time and strength to work for other men's wives and children without any recompense.... They deemed it a kind of slavery.”

One would think that such history would have been enough, yet throughout American history there have always been some with sympathy for such a system. For example, Horace Greeley was the publisher of the *New York Tribune* and a member of the Communist International. He even hired Karl Marx, the author of *The Communist Manifesto*, as a European correspondent. Another prominent American member of the Communist International was Senator Charles Sumner.

Many such examples could be offered, but it was not until the Bolsheviks staged a violent coup d'état against the Russian government in 1917 that revolutionary communism had actually captured a country. They quickly formed the Third Communist International (the Comintern), and plotted world revolution. Hungary briefly went communist and Germany almost followed.

Cooking Up Communism in America

But no greater prize could be imagined in the Communist Conspiracy to establish their one-world government than to take over the United States, and this was the avowed goal in the establishment of



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the Communist Party USA in 1919.

This group was led by John Reed and Benjamin Gitlow, but they were denied admission into the Socialist convention. Reed had been in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution, and was so thrilled with what had transpired that he wrote a book about it — *Ten Days That Shook the World*. (Not surprisingly, Hollywood eventually made a laudatory movie, *Reds*, based on Reed's book). Reed, Gitlow, and others then met on August 31 and formed the Communist Labor Party of America (CLP).

Among those who helped swell the ranks of this new fledgling Communist Party were members of the communistic International Workers of the World (I.W.W.). I.W.W. members, sometimes known as "Wobblies," had used sabotage and violence to protest during the First World War. The Soviet Union's leaders quickly saw how important an American Communist Party would be to their ultimate goal of world revolution and world government, and dispatched C.A. Martens to give the American communists direction.

Before the new American Communist Party was allowed full membership in the Comintern, however, its officers were required to sign the "Twenty-one Conditions of Admission." These 21 conditions of admission to the Comintern made it quite clear that the Communists in the Soviet Union would dictate what happened in America's Communist Party. In 1953, the U.S. Subversive Activities Control Board concluded after several hearings and investigations, "We find upon the whole record that the evidence preponderantly establishes that [the leaders of the Communist Party USA] and its members consider the allegiance they owe to the United States as subordinate to their loyalty and obligations to the Soviet Union."

Among the 21 conditions were the following: "The Communist Party [of the USA] must carry on a clear-cut program of propaganda for the hindering of the transportation of munitions of war to the enemies of the Soviet Republic." Another said, "All decisions of the Communist International ... are binding upon all parties belonging to the Communist International," while another stipulated that, "The duty of spreading Communist ideas includes the special obligation to carry on a vigorous and systematic propaganda in the Army. Where this agitation is forbidden by exceptional laws, it is to be carried on illegally."

Labor unions were to be targeted for takeover: "Every party wishing to belong to the Communist International must systematically and persistently develop a Communist agitation within the trade-unions." Similar agitation was to be employed in rural areas. "Iron discipline" was to be maintained, and "periodic cleanings" of membership rolls were necessary to get rid of dissenters. Finally, any member who rejected these conditions and the "theses of the Communist International, on principle, must be expelled from the party."

From the very beginning, however, American communists had to contend with factionalism and differences in advancing their cause. A rival to the Communist Labor Party did not believe that the Labor Party was truly communistic, and the CLP responded in kind. The rival group called itself the Communist Party of America. It was led by Charles Ruthenberg (he died in 1927 and his ashes are buried in the Kremlin), and was launched on September 1, 1919. Yet another splinter group in Michigan was the Proletarian Party.

Another problem was that a strong majority of the "American" communists were not native-born, with some even having difficulty speaking English. *The Communist* lamented in June of 1920, "The



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Communist Party, from the very beginning of its existence found its work hampered because it had in its ranks only a few men capable of expressing Communist principles in the English language.”

The Executive Committee of the Comintern soon ordered the rival parties to consolidate “in the shortest possible time.” In case there was any misunderstanding, the directive was emphatic: “Unity is not only possible, but absolutely necessary. The Executive Committee categorically insists on its immediate realization.”

With a representative of the Comintern present, a “unity” convention was held in May 1920 at Bridgman, Michigan, which resulted in the formation of the United Communist Party of America. Still, some refused to go along with this “united” Communist Party, with some desirous of the right to leave the party, or differ with the Comintern on some issues.

It took another year of bickering, but finally, in May 1921, the United Communist Party and some splinter groups formed the Communist Party of America, at Woodstock, New York. They agreed to work together for violent revolution, as “armed insurrection” was the “only means of overthrowing the capitalist state.” They also reiterated their complete subservience to Moscow.

The party would have both a legal element, which would disseminate communist propaganda in the public arena and run candidates for office (the Workers Party), and an underground aspect to conduct illegal activities, such as operating a spy network for the Soviet Union. In this regard, many American communists — William Z. Foster, Earl Browder, Jay Lovestone, Benjamin Gitlow, and John Reed — made several trips to Moscow.

Foster remarked that a 1921 visit with Soviet dictator Vladimir Lenin “was one of the most inspiring moments” of his life.

Gitlow, who later left the Communist Party, wrote in his book *The Whole of Their Lives* about the very early days that he was inspired by what Lenin had accomplished in Russia and believed a successful revolution was imminent in the United States. “On September 2, 1919, the communist movement was officially launched. September 9 the Boston Police strike began. September 22, the nation-wide Steel strike led by William Z. Foster started. At the end of October, the soft-coal miners under the leadership of John L. Lewis staged a nation-wide coal strike stretching from the Appalachian coal range to the Pacific in defiance of a government order not to strike.”

Photo credit: AP Images

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Gitlow noted that Alexander Howatt, president of the Kansas miners and a member of the Communist Party, defied the courts and the government: “We’ll call their bluff. The strike can’t be stopped.” In New York, the police “swooped down” on the Russian branch of the Communist Party and arrested four Russian communists on charges of criminal anarchy. Manifestoes were published calling for a nationwide strike for November 8, and the overthrow of the U.S. government by armed force and the dictatorship of the proletariat — as Karl Marx had dreamed.

A New York dentist, Morris Zucker, told a hall full of communists in New York City, “We are here tonight to celebrate the second anniversary of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and the birth of a new revolutionary movement here. The day is soon coming when the proletariat will be able to meet the capitalist class bayonet for bayonet and machine gun for machine gun. The government that will send



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armed men to the coal regions to deal with strikers is on its last legs.”

Soviet Saboteurs

The Soviet Union had dispatched Ludwig Martens to the United States as its first “ambassador” to help the American communists carry out their plans. Gitlow noted, “Though not recognized by the United States, Martens maintained an embassy at 110 West Fortieth Street, New York City. His staff, with a few rare exceptions, was made up of members of the American communist movement.”

Martens admitted under oath to a committee of the New York State Legislature that he received a minimum of \$30,000 a month from Europe, but failed to disclose that he received additional funds from some wealthy pro-Bolshevik American businessman — almost a million dollars. He also admitted that his bosses in Moscow were more interested in world revolution than diplomacy. Martens bluntly told the committee that he was in America to help American communists establish a communist system in the United States — either through peaceful means, or if necessary, by violent revolution.

“The change may come by purely pacific means,” Martens testified, “or through a bitter struggle. They [the Soviets] do not care how it comes.”

Despite these words, which leave little room for any interpretation, that the Communist Party USA, was a violent, revolutionary organization intent on overthrowing the U.S. government and establishing a dictatorial communist regime, most history textbooks tend to dismiss the “Red Scare” that followed the First World War as much ado about nothing. *United States History: Preparing for the Advanced Placement Examination* is typical, calling it “anti-Communist hysteria,” asserting, “From November 1919 through January 1920, over 6,000 people were arrested, based on limited criminal evidence.”

The late Professor Clarence Carson offers a different view, however, in his *The Growth of America*, asserting that communism was an assault on civilization, Christianity, and all other traditional religions, as well as on private property and the family. “Lenin had proclaimed a coming world revolution, and communism claimed to be international in purpose.”

Carson explained the background of the so-called Red Scare: “It looked for a brief period as if Germany might do a replay of the Bolshevik Revolution, hard on its heels,” in which a group calling itself the Spartacists, who formed the Communist Party of Germany, almost took over the German government in the aftermath of the World War. Hungary actually did fall briefly to a communist dictatorship under Bela Kun.

Attorney General Mitchell Palmer announced that evidence had been obtained that the coal strike was being supported by the Communist Party, “urging the workers to rise up against the government of the United States.” A wave of strikes (2,600 in all) during 1919 was accompanied by a wave of bombings. The maid of Senator Thomas Hardwick of Georgia had her hands blown off when she opened a package addressed to the senator. The New York post office turned up 16 bomb packages, with 20 more in other post offices, addressed to several Americans associated either with the U.S. government or American industry. Palmer’s house was destroyed by a bomb. In 1920, a wagonload of explosives was detonated on Wall Street, killing 38 people and injuring 200 others, causing \$2 million in damages. Some buildings today still show the marks of this attack.

Palmer hired a young man, J. Edgar Hoover, to lead a General Intelligence Division within the Justice Department (which evolved into the Federal Bureau of Investigation) to gather information on the



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communist menace. Both the federal and state governments carried out raids on alien members of the Communist Party, who were quickly deported. Citizens were turned over to local authorities for possible prosecution under criminal syndicalist laws.

These raids provided much of the impetus for the founding of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which provided legal assistance to many accused communists. Roger Baldwin, the director of the ACLU for several years, “was pro-Soviet in posture,” according to Carson, and “many of the governing board members had an assortment of Communist associations.”

While the civil liberties of even accused revolutionary communists should be respected, one must pose the question: Does an alien have some constitutional right to remain in a country when he is openly intending to overthrow its government by force and violence? After all, the Communist Party was quite open in its goal of establishing a dictatorship in the United States, and was very willing to use violence to achieve that goal. The waves of bombings in 1919 and 1920 powerfully demonstrate that the “Red Scare” was not a figment of Palmer’s imagination.

But twisting the facts has been a tactic of Communist Party propagandists and their allies since the party’s creation. Textbooks, movies, and media have often turned the enemies of communism, such as Palmer and Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s, into the “real” villains. A prime example of this tactic was the largely successful effort to turn Niccolo Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti into victims of an American criminal justice system intent on punishing two Italians, not for robbery and murder, but for being radicals.

After the paymaster for a shoe factory in Braintree, Massachusetts, along with another man, was robbed and murdered in April 1920, Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested and found guilty by a jury. But because they were also revolutionaries, the Left in America and around the world claimed their political beliefs were on trial. Sacco told the judge at sentencing in typical Marxist rhetoric: “I know the sentence will be between the two classes, the oppressed class and the rich class.” Vanzetti similarly said, “I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian.”

Forgotten, of course, were the real victims: Frederick Parmenter and Alessandro Berardelli, both murdered on the afternoon of April 15, 1920. In his book *Sacco-Vanzetti: The Murder and the Myth*, Robert Montgomery wrote, “When arrested, Sacco had on his person a .32-caliber pistol containing nine bullets and in his pocket twenty-three additional .32-caliber bullets. The fatal bullet found in Berardelli’s body had been fired from a .32 Colt, and proof was to come that it had been fired from Sacco’s pistol.”

Montgomery concedes that there may very well have been some concern in Massachusetts, where the trial was held, about the violence sweeping the country in 1919 and 1920, but he notes that the “Red Scare” had nothing to do with their convictions. “Moreover, it was not until long after the trial, if at all, that Sacco and Vanzetti confessed to radical activities or opinions that would have subjected them to hatred, deportation, or punishment or caused them to be feared.”

But as the men’s appeals dragged on for years (unusual at the time), the international Left crafted a narrative that these two men were simply victims of a “Red Scare,” for which there was nothing to be concerned about, anyway.

Renewed Calls for Communism



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Once the initial concern about the bombings and strikes faded, the nation, under Presidents Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge, enjoyed several years of economic expansion and unprecedented prosperity, blunting much of the communist propaganda about desperate poverty caused by the capitalist system. The Communist Party suffered the fate of most such radical movements — the average person is much less likely to listen to extremists like them when the economy is booming.

With the coming of the Great Depression, however, things began to look up for the Communist Party, USA. It was in the throes of that depression that the party's chairman, William Z. Foster, felt emboldened enough to explicitly put into a book, *Toward Soviet America*, what was in store for Americans should the communists actually come to power.

There would be a "revolutionary collectivization of land," and "the liberation of the Negro," along with the "foreign-born, women, youth, the aged" and so on, who Foster claimed were, for one reason or another, to defend themselves in the class struggle, as communists called it. "The American Soviet government will drastically eliminate such special discrimination." It has been a strategic method of the Communist Party and other leftists, at least as early as the French Revolution, to pit one part of society against another. When a real division exists, they exploit it, and when it does not exist, they work to create such a division so as to foster the conditions that will make a violent communist revolution possible. According to the *Program and Constitution of the Communist Party of America*, "Every class struggle is a political struggle."

Foster also promised the emancipation of "the woman." "Either she is a gilded butterfly bourgeois parasite, or she is an oppressed slave." In diminishing capitalism, he said, "Capitalism sees in her mainly a breeder of wage slaves and soldiers.... To free the woman from the enslavement of the perpetual care of her children is also a major object of socialism. To this end in the Soviet Union there is being developed the most elaborate system of kindergartens and playgrounds in the world." This will free the woman to work, being sure that "her child is being well-taken care of" — and no doubt being indoctrinated to be a good and obedient communist slave.

In words that also sound amazingly prescient, Foster said he wanted to unshackle the youth, arguing that if they are "old enough to work, [they] are old enough to vote." (As if there would be anything meaningful to vote on in the dictatorship of the proletariat, ruled by an oligarchy of men such as William Z. Foster.)

He also boasted that the communists would abolish the "militaristic Boy Scouts." Modern leftists are accomplishing that by taking the *Boy* out of the Boy Scouts, creating in its place a unisex organization.

Another goal of Foster's communists was a national department of education. Once they were in control of all education, he promised, "The studies will be revolutionized, being cleansed of religious, patriotic, and other features of bourgeois ideology. The students will be taught on the basis of Marxist dialectical materialism, internationalism.... Present obsolete methods of teaching will be suppressed by a scientific pedagogy."

Furthermore, he proposed to tax the churches and abolish all religious schools. Organized religious training would be prohibited. Instead, the young would be treated to anti-religious propaganda in the government schools. Science would also be used to advance communism, as God would be banished from the laboratories as well as from the schools.

In short, Foster explained, "There will be no place for the present narrow patriotism, the bigoted



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nationalist chauvinism that serves [the capitalists] so well.”

Benjamin Gitlow, who left the party and became its avowed enemy, warned in *The Whole of Their Lives*, “To judge the influence and potentialities of a Communist party by the size of its membership is to make a serious blunder, for the communist organization extends far beyond the limitations of its dues-paying members.” One only has to read the goals of the party, as explained by Foster, and compare those goals with our modern political scene today, to judge that the Communist Party has been very successful in advancing its agenda.

The other principal way that the Communist Party had an impact was in supplying a number of spies for the Soviet Union. According to Gitlow, “The Checka, later to be known as the GPU, the OGPU and NKVD [and later, the KGB], always maintained connections with the [American] Communist Party, the party serving as an important vehicle in its espionage activities in the United States.... The Communist Party of the United States is proud of the spies it has supplied to the Soviet government out of its own ranks.”

Some of the spies did great damage to the United States, such as Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, atomic scientists who surrendered atomic secrets to the Soviet Union.

One of the more infamous Communist Party members who betrayed America as a Soviet spy was Alger Hiss. Christina Shelton wrote in *Alger Hiss: Why He Chose Treason* that Soviet intelligence sources during World War II “obtained information from nearly 70 American ministries, departments, directorates, committees, and subcommittees in the governmental structure of the United States.” In his book *The Naked Communist*, W. Cleon Skousen related the story of an American officer, Major George Racey Jordan, who was in charge of facilitating the American Lend-Lease program to Russia. Jordan intercepted a suitcase bound for the Soviet Union, which contained a file of information about U.S. industry, harbors, troops, railroads, and communications. In the suitcase, he found a letter on White House stationery signed by Harry Hopkins and addressed to the number three man in the Soviet hierarchy. Attached to the letter was a map of the top-secret Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bomb. One folder in the suitcase had written on it, “From Hiss.”

But Hiss, a top State Department official, did far more damage than simply deliver documents, as bad as that was. In his book *Blacklisted by History*, M. Stanton Evans noted that Hiss was heavily involved in the campaign to destroy Chiang Kai-shek in China. Representative Karl Mundt (R-S.D.) said, “There is reason to believe that [Hiss] organized within that department one of the Communist cells which endeavored to influence our Chinese policy and bring about the condemnation of Chiang Kai-shek.”

While the Yalta Conference in February 1945 is fairly well-known for its role in surrendering eastern Europe to the Soviets, the conference also was vitally important in cementing the American foreign policy that led to China going communist. According to Shelton in *Alger Hiss*, Hiss played a “major role in all nonmilitary, substantive issues” at Yalta. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius’ private papers reveal that he “relied heavily on Hiss for his expertise on a variety of issues.”

Hiss’s status was so great that he was named the acting secretary-general of the United Nations conference that opened in San Francisco, California, in 1945.

In 1948, the American public was shocked when Hiss was publicly uncovered as a Soviet spy. He later was convicted of lying to Congress about his spying activities and spent time in federal prison. Sadly, Hiss was only one of untold numbers who placed their loyalty to a foreign power above that of their own



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country, all in service to the brutal ideology of communism. The extent of these betrayals will never be known, but it is safe to say that it was immense.

Unfortunately, this history is largely unknown to most Americans. Instead they are told the fairy tale that American communists were never a threat, and if anything, they were victims of a hysteria much like the Salem witchcraft trials of the 17th century. Today, much of the communist agenda has been mainstreamed in American politics, academia, popular culture, and media.

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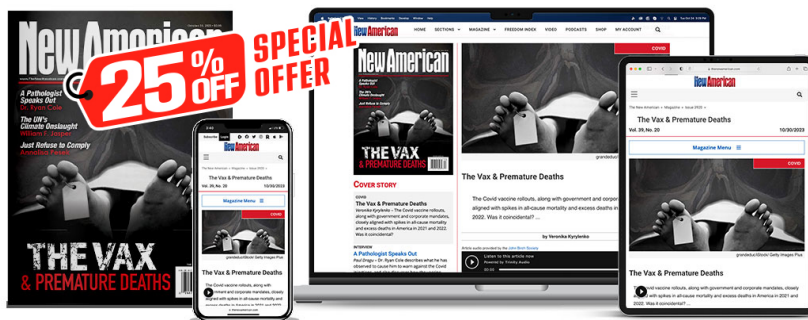
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