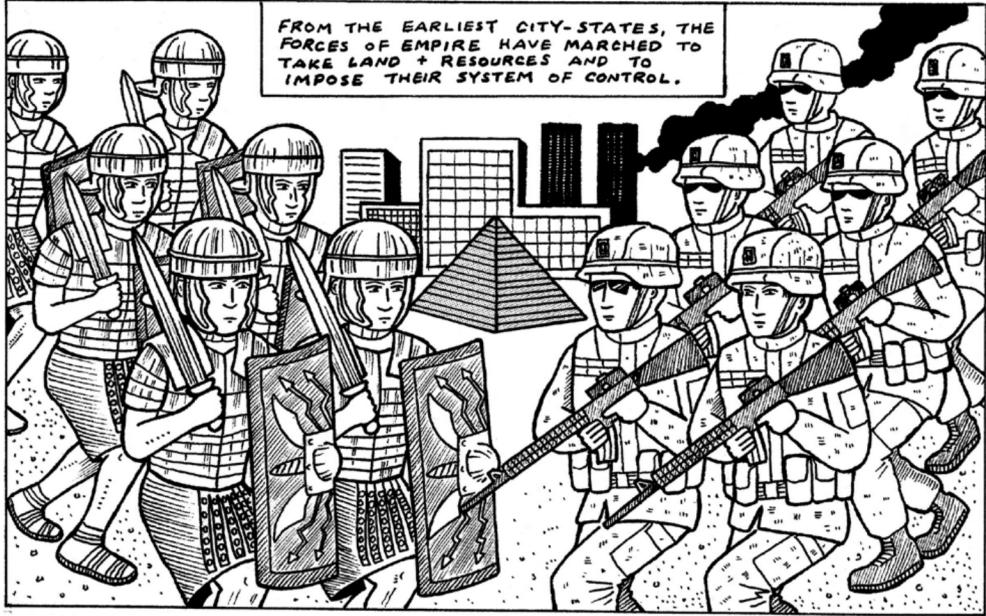


# **PROLOGUE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAPITALISM**





FROM THE EARLIEST CITY-STATES, THE  
FORCES OF EMPIRE HAVE MARCHED TO  
TAKE LAND + RESOURCES AND TO  
IMPOSE THEIR SYSTEM OF CONTROL.



THESE TWO WAYS OF LIFE - URBAN AND TRIBAL - WERE OPPOSED TO ONE ANOTHER BY THEIR VERY NATURE. CIVILIZATION IN FACT REQUIRED EXPANSION DUE TO RESOURCE DEPLETION + OVER-POPULATION.

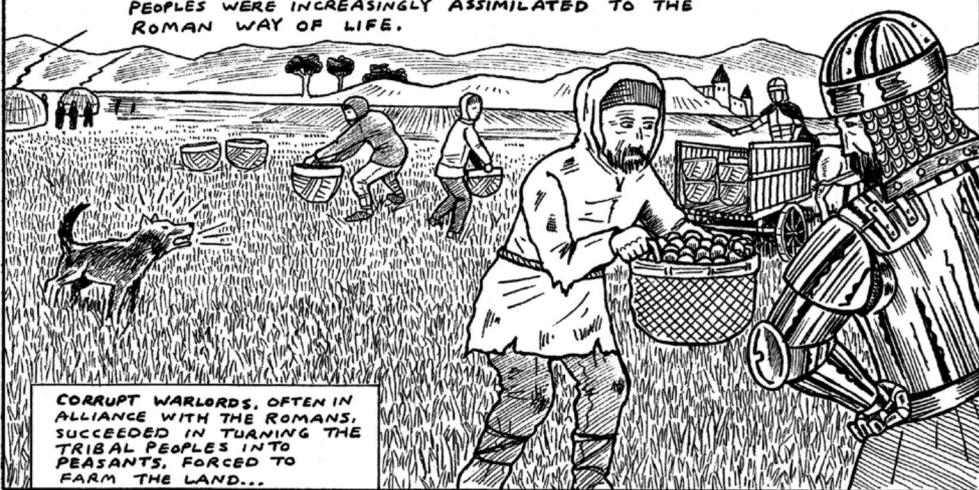


TRIBAL SOCIETY LIVED IN ACCORD WITH THE NATURAL WORLD, ORGANIZED IN AUTONOMOUS + DECENTRALIZED VILLAGES. THE EARTH WAS REGARDED AS A MOTHER, AND WOMEN HAD IMPORTANT SOCIAL ROLES...



CIVILIZATION SAW THE EARTH AS SOMETHING TO CONQUER + EXPLOIT. IT WAS ORGANIZED IN A PYRAMID OF POWER, WITH THE ELITE AT THE TOP. WOMEN WERE LITTLE MORE THAN SLAVES IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY.

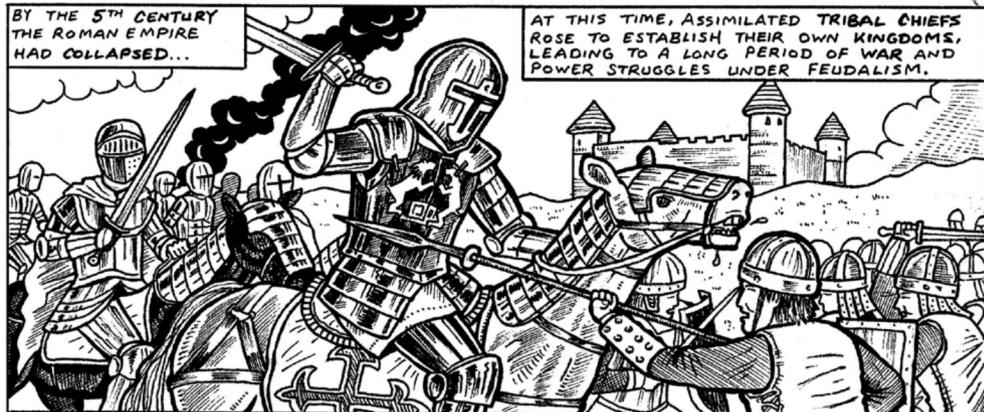
UNDER ROMAN OCCUPATION, LARGE REGIONS OF TRIBAL PEOPLES WERE INCREASINGLY ASSIMILATED TO THE ROMAN WAY OF LIFE.



CORRUPT WARLORDS, OFTEN IN ALLIANCE WITH THE ROMANS, SUCCEEDED IN TURNING THE TRIBAL PEOPLES INTO PEASANTS, FORCED TO FARM THE LAND...

BY THE 5TH CENTURY  
THE ROMAN EMPIRE  
HAD COLLAPSED...

AT THIS TIME, ASSIMILATED TRIBAL CHIEFS  
ROSE TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN KINGDOMS,  
LEADING TO A LONG PERIOD OF WAR AND  
POWER STRUGGLES UNDER FEUDALISM.



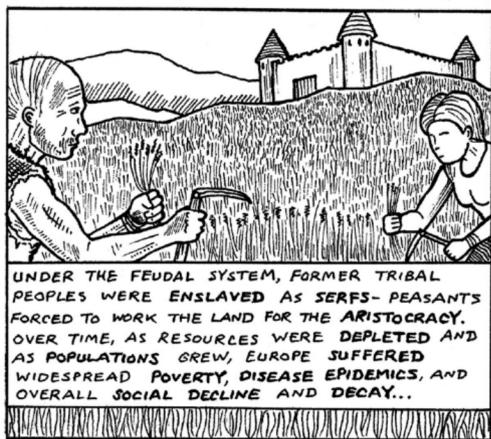
UNDER THE CHURCH, THE LAST  
REMNANTS OF TRIBAL CULTURE  
WERE DESTROYED. DURING THE  
HOLY INQUISITION, MILLIONS OF  
WOMEN WERE KILLED FOR  
BEING WITCHES + PAGANS.

THIS DYING EUROPE WAS  
ONLY REVIVED WITH THE  
INVASION OF THE AMERICAS,  
BEGINNING IN 1492 WITH THE  
VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS TO THE  
CARIBBEAN REGION.



UNDER THE FEUDAL SYSTEM, FORMER TRIBAL  
PEOPLES WERE ENSLAVED AS SERFS - PEASANTS  
FORCED TO WORK THE LAND FOR THE ARISTOCRACY.  
OVER TIME, AS RESOURCES WERE DEPLETED AND  
AS POPULATIONS GREW, EUROPE SUFFERED  
WIDESPREAD POVERTY, DISEASE EPIDEMICS, AND  
OVERALL SOCIAL DECLINE AND DECAY...

THE CHURCH WAS VITAL  
IN MAINTAINING THE  
FEUDAL SYSTEM. A REIGN  
OF TERROR WAS IMPOSED:  
THE 'HOLY INQUISITION.'





THE INVASION OF THE AMERICAS BROUGHT NEW RESOURCES TO EUROPE + CREATED NEW MARKETS. MILLIONS OF AFRICANS WERE IMPORTED AS SLAVES FOR MINES, RANCHES, AND PLANTATIONS.



THIS INFUSION OF WEALTH HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON EUROPEAN STATES...  
EVENTUALLY LEADING TO THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION WITH MACHINES + FACTORIES. PEASANTS WERE FORCED OFF THE LAND TO WORK IN NEW URBAN FACTORIES. REVOLTS REQUIRED MORE + MORE STATE CONTROL TO PREVENT UNREST.



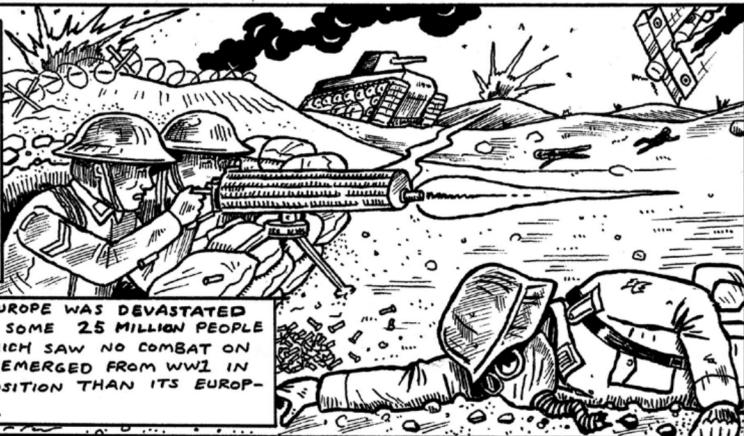
THE CAPITALISTS SOUGHT FREE MARKETS + COMPETITION UNRESTRICTED BY FEUDALISM, WHICH CONTROLLED ALL LAND AND TRADE. TENSION BETWEEN CAPITALISTS + FEUDAL RULE INCREASED...

A NEW CLASS OF TRADERS + MERCHANTS EMERGED WHO CHALLENGED THE FEUDAL SYSTEM. THESE WERE THE CAPITALISTS.  
IN 1789 THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OVERTHREW THE MONARCHY AND ESTABLISHED A REPUBLIC - THE STATE NOW BECAME AN INSTRUMENT FOR CAPITALIST EXPANSION + CONTROL.

ALONG WITH A NEW CAPITALIST CLASS, A NEW CLASS OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS WAS CREATED, TOILING IN THE FACTORIES. THESE WORKERS ORGANIZED + CHALLENGED THE CAPITALISTS. SOME SOUGHT BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS + POLITICAL POWER (THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS); SOME SOUGHT WORKER CONTROL OF THE STATE (COMMUNISTS); OTHERS PROMOTED THE DESTRUCTION + OVERTHROW OF BOTH CAPITALISM + THE STATE (THE ANARCHISTS)...



BY THE LATE 1800S MOST OF THE WORLD WAS CONTROLLED BY EITHER EUROPEAN STATES OR THE U.S. THE STRUGGLE FOR GLOBAL POWER REACHED ITS PEAK WITH THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I, THE FIRST MAJOR INDUSTRIAL WAR WITH TANKS, PLANES, MACHINE GUNS, AND TRENCH WARFARE.



MUCH OF WESTERN EUROPE WAS DEVASTATED BY THE WAR, WITH SOME 25 MILLION PEOPLE DYING. THE U.S., WHICH SAW NO COMBAT ON ITS OWN TERRITORY, EMERGED FROM WWI IN A FAR STRONGER POSITION THAN ITS EUROPEAN COMPETITORS...



EUROPE, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAW RENEWED SOCIAL CONFLICT, WITH A NEAR-REVOLUTION IN GERMANY. IN RUSSIA, SOLDIERS + SAILORS ORGANIZED SOVIETS (COUNCILS) ALONG WITH WORKERS. THEY SUCCEEDED IN OVERTHROWING THE TSAR + ESTABLISHING STATE-CONTROLLED COMMUNISM. THE 1917 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION TERRIFIED THE CAPITALIST RULING CLASSES.



IN 1929, THE STOCK MARKETS COLLAPSED, CAUSING A GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS. MILLIONS LOST THEIR SAVINGS + THEIR JOBS. ARMIES OF UNEMPLOYED POOR PEOPLE APPEARED + SOCIAL CONFLICT INCREASED...

GERMANY, FORCED TO PAY FOR THE COSTS OF WW1, ALREADY SUFFERED POVERTY DURING THE 1920S. THE DEPRESSION MADE CONDITIONS WORSE. THREATENED BY INSURRECTION, A FASCIST STATE WAS IMPOSED UNDER THE CONTROL OF HITLER AND HIS NAZI PARTY. GERMANY BEGAN TO REARM + TAKE INCREASINGLY EXPANSIONIST ACTIONS. BY 1939, THE SECOND WORLD WAR HAD BEGUN. IT ENDED IN 1945 AFTER MASSIVE DESTRUCTION...



AS IN WW1, THE U.S. AGAIN EMERGED MORE POWERFUL, NOW CHALLENGED ONLY BY A GREATLY EXPANDED SOVIET UNION.



WITH EUROPEAN STATES WEAKENED BY WAR, MANY COUNTRIES BEGAN ANTI-COLONIAL REVOLUTIONS, AIDED BY EITHER THE U.S. OR SOVIET UNION...



Vietnam, Algeria, Kenya, Malaya, + many others saw widespread armed revolts, with many achieving independence. Both the U.S. + Soviets used these struggles as proxy wars during the 'Cold War'.



IN 1989, THE SOVIET UNION COLLAPSED DUE TO A CONVERGENCE OF ECONOMIC, ECOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, MILITARY, + SOCIAL CRISES. WITH THE DEMISE OF THE ONLY COMPETING GLOBAL POWER, THE U.S. BEGAN TO OCCUPY THE OIL-RICH PERSIAN GULF, STARTING WITH THE ATTACK ON IRAQ IN 1990/91.

THE CAPITALIST WEST HAD 'TRIUMPHED' OVER ITS MAIN IDEOLOGICAL RIVAL - THE COMMUNIST BLOC. CAPITALISM HAD WON...



CELEBRATE  
500 YEARS  
SINCE THE

DISCOVER  
OF THE  
AMERICAS

THIS TRIUMPHALISM CONTINUED INTO 1992 WITH CELEBRATIONS OF 500 YEARS SINCE THE INVASION OF THE AMERICAS...

BUT IT WASN'T ALL BAD. IN CANADA, THE 'OKA CRISIS' SAW ARMED MOHAWK WARRIOR RESIST THE POLICE + ARMY IN A 77-DAY STANDOFF THAT INSPIRED NATIVES ACROSS THE LAND. DURING THE SUMMER OF 1990.



IN ECUADOR THAT SAME YEAR, NATIVES FIGHTING FOR THEIR LAND SHUT DOWN THE COUNTRY WITH BLOCKADES OF HIGHWAYS, ROADS + RAILWAYS, PARALYZING THE ECONOMY...

ON NEW YEARS DAY, 1994, ZAPATISTA GUERRILLAS SEIZED 7 TOWNS IN THE MEXICAN STATE OF CHIAPAS. THEY WERE OPPOSED TO THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA).

VIVA ZAPATISTA

THEY IDENTIFIED NEO-LIBERALISM AS THE NEW IDEOLOGY OF CAPITALISM.

IN 1992, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES + ANTI-COLONIAL ALLIES CONFRONTED COLUMBUS DAY CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE CONTINENT. IN SAN FRANCISCO, A BLACK BLOC ALSO MARCHED, ONE OF THE EARLIEST IN N. AMERICA.

