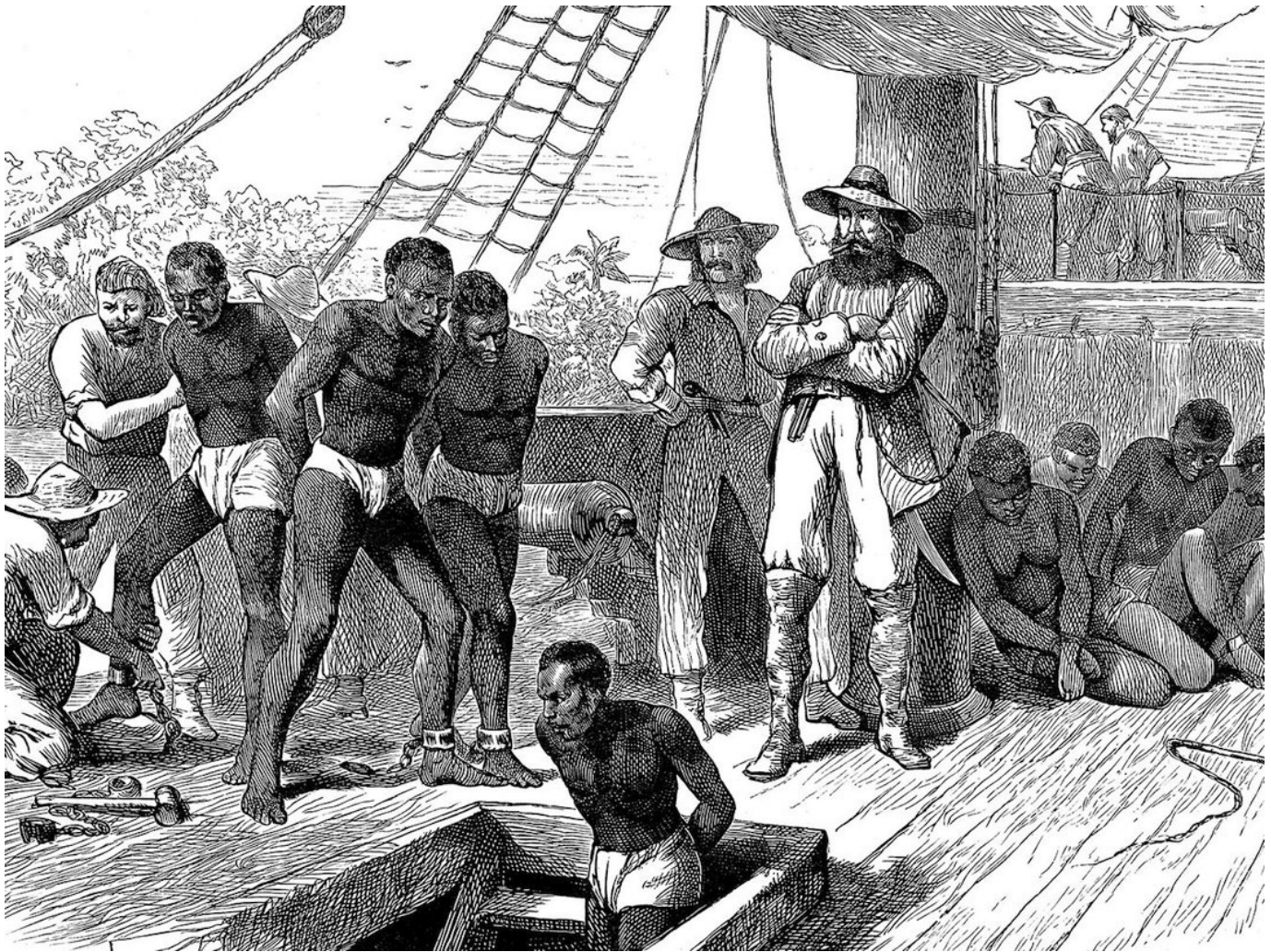


Who are the real looters?

written by Stephen Millies

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Tens of millions of people were stolen from Africa in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Whenever the cops kill somebody, you can count on two things: 1) Fox News and other Trump supporters will smear the victim, and 2) the TV networks and newspapers will focus on “looting,” almost drowning out the murder of a human being by police.

Isn't this what happened after 20-year-old Black man Daunte Wright was shot to death for having an air freshener in his car? Media coverage splurged on people taking stuff from stores in Brooklyn Park, Minn., just outside Minneapolis.

[President Joe Biden chimed in](#), declaring: “There is absolutely no justification — none — for looting.”

Mr. President, looting made America great. The White House you live in was built on stolen land by enslaved Africans.

The entire country was stolen from Indigenous nations. Millions were killed by massacres and smallpox. The Pilgrims looted more than Bernie Madoff could dream of.

“Those sober virtuosi of Protestantism, the Puritans of New England, in 1703, by decrees of their assembly set a premium of 40 pounds on every Indian scalp,” [wrote Karl Marx](#) in “Capital.” Marx was the founder of scientific socialism, also known as communism.

Tens of millions of people were stolen from Africa in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. By 1860, the cotton grown by enslaved Africans accounted for [61% of U.S. exports](#).

Wall Street became the U.S. financial center as bankers for the slave masters. While today New York City has municipal farmers' markets, there was once a municipal slave market on Wall Street.

It was the African Holocaust and the Holocaust of Indigenous peoples that jumpstarted the capitalist world market.

Reparations are overdue for Black and Indigenous people. As the December 12th Movement says, "They stole us, they sold us, they owe us!"

The Walton family crime gang

What is poor people taking food, clothing and other items from a Walmart compared to the Walton family's \$235-billion stash? Every cent of this filthy-rich family fortune is stolen from over 2 million poorly-paid workers.

The starting wage for Walmart's 1.5 million employees in the U.S. is [just \\$11 per hour](#). Walmart's 700,000 workers in other countries are paid even less.

Banksters are the biggest looters. They stole [nearly 7.8 million homes](#) from families between 2007 and 2016.

These foreclosures threw over 20 million people on the street. If that's not looting, nothing is.

Forty-five million people in the United States are trying to pay off [\\$1.7 trillion in student loans](#). Banksters and other loan sharks will collect hundreds of billions in interest.

President Biden, won't you stop this real looting by wiping out the debt for millions of people and tell the banks to go to hell?

Even worse looting is committed by payday lenders who in many states are allowed to charge over 100% annual interest.

[Malcolm X declared](#), "You show me a capitalist, I'll show you a bloodsucker." The United States exported [\\$28.6 billion of blood and plasma](#) in 2017.

That's \$6 billion more than the \$22.5 billion of [all the corn, beef and wheat](#) exported that year. Millions of poor people depend on their blood being looted so they can eat.

Over 40 bloodsucking plasma centers are located along the U.S.-Mexican border so Mexican people there can have their blood looted, too. Half of Mexico was stolen by the U.S. in order to expand slavery.

Wage theft is looting

Because of inflation, the federal minimum wage would have to be at least \$12.39 per hour in order [to match the 1968 minimum wage](#) of \$1.60.

The current federal minimum wage is instead just \$7.25. That's an additional \$5.14 that's looted from minimum-wage workers every hour. If a worker is lucky enough to be able to work 40 hours per week for an entire year, the annual wage theft amounts to \$10,691.

Workers who are tipped — most of whom are women — have an even lower minimum wage, as do many disabled workers. Over a million workers who get paid “under the table” aren't guaranteed any minimum wage.

Capitalism is looting in general. The source of capital is the difference between the value produced by the working class and the much smaller amount we get in wages.

Capitalists loot the difference, which Karl Marx called “surplus value.” The wealthy and powerful use this surplus value — usually called profits, rent or interest — to buy their mansions, jet planes and yachts.

They also use it to purchase more automated machinery in order to compete with other capitalists and throw us out of work.

Marx and his co-worker Frederick Engels [pointed out in the “Communist Manifesto”](#)

that capitalists can't "exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production." This is unlike previous social systems where "conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence."

In 1991, General Motors sent Christmas greetings to 70,000 autoworkers by [announcing plans to fire them](#). Twenty-one plants filled with billions of dollars of perfectly good machinery were shut down.

As a result of this massive vandalism, [GM's stock price almost doubled](#) over the next two years.



Ruins of the Old Summer Palace in Beijing, looted by the British Army during the

Second Opium War.

Real vandalism

European capitalist armies destroyed magnificent, well-planned African cities because their mere existence refuted claims of white supremacy.

In 1897, a British army burned Benin City, in what is now southern Nigeria. [Priceless pieces of art were looted](#) and are displayed in London's British Museum and New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Chinese people can't forget the [looting of Beijing's Summer Palace](#) by a British army in 1860. Dozens of museums around the world have a million pieces of art that were looted from it.

This crime occurred during the Second Opium War, which was waged so British and U.S. drug lords could sell their poison. Among the big-time drug dealers was Warren Delano, a grandfather of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

To this day, the British government refuses to return the [marble sculptures scraped off the Parthenon](#) in Athens by Lord Elgin. Melina Mercouri, who starred in "Never on Sunday," was rebuffed when she asked for them back as Greek minister of culture.

Then there's New York City's original Pennsylvania Station, a real palace inspired by the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. It was torn down starting in 1963 so the railroad could make a few million bucks from renting the space above to Madison Square Garden.

Sculptured eagles and columns were dumped in New Jersey's Meadowlands. None of this saved Penn Central from going bankrupt in 1970, although it did lead to historical preservation laws being passed.

Building the old magnificent structure was also vandalism, since it drove out thousands of Black residents before it opened in 1910.

So whenever you hear the talking heads on TV denounce “looters” and “vandals,” remember who the real criminals are and join the struggle to overthrow them.

