

References and reading list:

Porzig, Mary. "Lincoln Detox Center: The People's Drug Program -Interview with Vicente "Panama" Alba". The Abolitionist, A Publication of Critical Resistance. No. 19, 2013

Dr. Mutulu Shakur: On the History of Acupuncture and COINTELPRO

Baird, Lisa. The Community Acupuncture Movement: Care for the Community. The peak, Issue 2, Volume 53

Michael "Cetewayo" Tabor . Capitalism Plus Dope Equals Genocide

Miriam Lee. Insights of a Senior Acupuncturist (Blue Poppy Press, 1992)

Lisa Rohleder. "The Remedy", "Acupuncture is like Noodles", and

"Acupuncture Points are Holes: a Case Study in Social Entrepreneurship

Young, Patrick Esq. "When a Ban on the Chinese was Proposed and Frederick Douglas Spoke Out" February 8, 2017 found at longislandwins.com

Jew, Victor "The Anti-Chinese Massacre in Los Angeles as a Reconstruction-Era Event"; Oxford Research Encyclopedia: American History

"Silver City, 1862, Wild West Medicine" found at bascoejoenevada.com

Everett, George "Butte's Far Eastern Influences" found at butteamerica.com

Fian J.D. John "Pioneer Chinese Doctor was a Municipal Treasure in John Day" June 22, 2014 found at offbeatoregon.com

"I Wor Kuen's 12 Point Program and Platform" found at historyisaweapon.com

Special Thanks to Tyler Phan whose work inspired this rewrite.

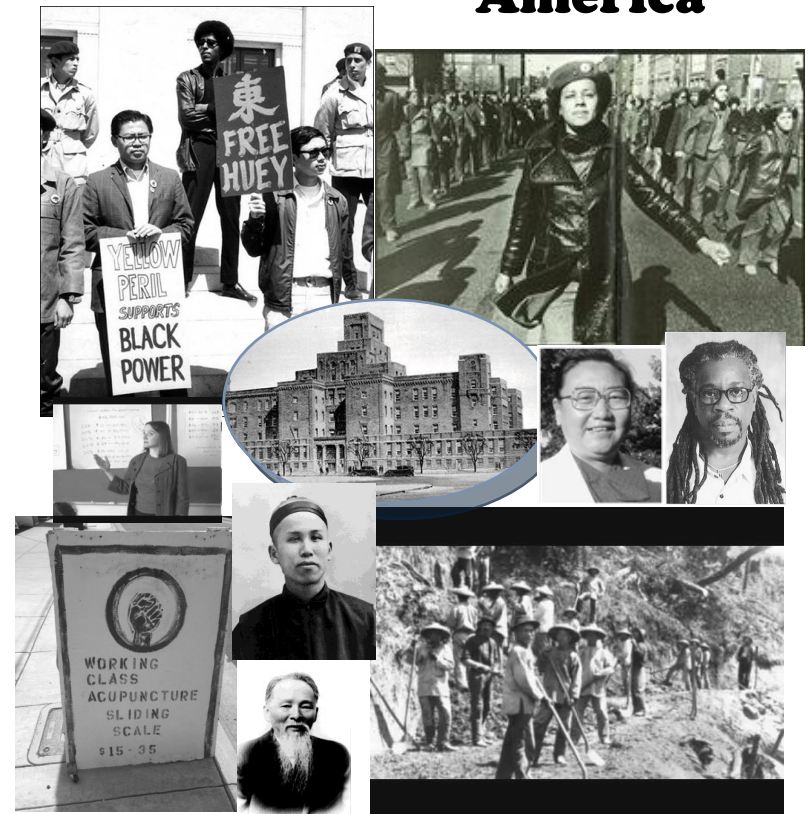
Check out:

[LiberationAcupuncture.org](http://LiberationAcupuncture.org)

[pocacoop.com](http://pocacoop.com)



# A Radical History OF Acupuncture in America



...better lives have been lived in the margins, locked in the prisons and lost on the gallows than have ever been enshrined in palaces.

-propagandhi

## Working Class Acupuncture,

### The People's Organization of Community Acupuncture,

### and The Rise of the Acu-punk!

By the end of the 20th Century, Acupuncture had been mostly taken in by mainstream America. It was stripped of its revolutionary roots and long history as a people's medicine, and through a lens of white privilege was being focused into an upper middle class commodity. Through increased regulation and higher prices, acupuncture was quickly becoming inaccessible to the people who had effectively used it to better the health and well-being of their communities.

In 2002, in Portland, Oregon, an acupuncturist named Lisa Rohleder, after 7 years of working in a variety of public health settings which utilized the NADA protocol, was facing the prospect of beginning a private practice. She began to realize that none of her neighbors, friends, and family members in her working class neighborhood could afford the going rate for acupuncture. Out of a desperate attempt to make acupuncture affordable and accessible to the people in her own neighborhood and make a living herself, facing much criticism and hostility from some of her peers, she opened the first community acupuncture clinic which would become Working Class Acupuncture.

*...to be a revolutionary doctor or to be a revolutionary at all, there must first be a revolution  
- che guevera*

Working Class Acupuncture quickly grew to be an extremely successful acupuncture clinic which this year alone provided nearly 50,000 acupuncture treatments. Realizing, that she couldn't effect a large enough change on her own, she began to reach out to other acupuncturists. She taught anyone who would listen what she had learned and freely disseminated any information and ideas that she had. Eventually with the help of many allies, a co-op was formed called the People's Organization of Community Acupuncture (POCA). Through POCA the community acupuncture movement has grown quickly. There are now over 160 community clinics across the country that provide over a million acupuncture treatments offered at a sliding scale rate that is affordable and accessible to the whole community.

*"I think it's part of POCA's responsibility to spread the word about what really happened. And who we really owe our thanks (and our work) to. In my mind that's the Black Panthers, Young Lords, NADA, and Miriam Lee. Imagine how different the profession would look if their visions shaped it." -Lisa Rohleder*

*Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right - Ani Difranco*

Community acupuncturists, or acupunks, are working to affect social change through the tools we have available to us, acupuncture. Working to recognize and expose our own privilege and how it shapes our world view is a difficult process, as privilege is invisible to those who have it, but necessary if we are to learn from history and create our own future based on reality. This is our history. It's our responsibility to learn from it and get to work building the future.

Acupuncture can change the world!

## Miriam Lee

Meanwhile in California in the late 60's early 70's an acupuncturist named Miriam Lee was quietly practicing acupuncture out of her home. Miriam Lee was a nurse-midwife who eventually became an acupuncturist. She was born in China in 1926 where she lived through WWII and the brutal Japanese occupation until she left for Singapore in 1949. She lived and worked in Singapore for 17 years before coming to America in the late 60's.

It was illegal to practice acupuncture in California at the time, so she worked on an assembly line at Hewlett-Packard. She quietly treated a few people that she went to church with successfully using acupuncture. Word quickly spread and people began lining up outside her house. So many people came that the back staircase to her home broke from having too many people waiting on them. Eventually, in 1973, even though acupuncture was illegal, a doctor offered to share office space with her.

*"If you don't press the olive seed, there will be no oil" -old Chinese Saying*

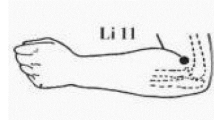
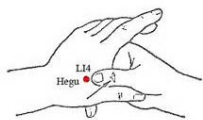
More and more people came to receive acupuncture. She was treating 75–80 patients per day, 14–17 patients per hour with no help. The pressure on her at this time was great. She had to dig deep to come up with ways to treat the incredible amount of people who sought her for help. Staying true to her roots, she developed a radically simple acupuncture protocol that could treat the majority of the problems faced by people in the modern, western world. This 10 point protocol is still widely used by busy community acupuncturists all over America and the rest of the world.

*"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will" - Frederick Douglass*

The next part of her story should come as no surprise. On April 15, 1974, Governor Ronald Reagan vetoed a bill legalizing the practice of Acupuncture in California. At 6:45am on April 16 the police shut down her clinic and arrested her for practicing medicine without a license. At her trial her patients overwhelmed the courtroom, demanding the right to make their own decisions for their health, the right to receive acupuncture treatment. Within days the Governor and state legislator were forced to compromise and a loophole was created to allow Miriam Lee to continue practicing. Acupuncture was formally legalized in California in 1976 thanks in large part to the work of Miriam Lee and the actions of her supporters.

Miriam Lee's Great 10 Needle Treatment: (considered safe even in new hands)

On each arm: *He Gu* (LI 4), *Qu Chi* (LI 11), *Lie Que* (Lu 7)



On each leg: *Zu San Li* (St 36), *San Yin Jiao* (Sp 6)



## Introduction:

Our culture's stories are most notable, not by the facts that are told, but by the facts that are left out. That's how we can be told nothing but factual information about our history and still be learning a lie. Most stories about acupuncture in America start when Nixon opened communication with China and James Reston wrote his article about his famous experience. This story is based all on true facts but to tell it like it is the beginning or the center of the story is a lie.

I made the same mistake when I compiled the first edition of "A Radical History of Acupuncture in America". I sought to tell the story from other points of view, to include voices that are too often silenced and marginalized. I was proud of the results but through my own cultural conditioning and inadvertent racism, I left out a rather large and very important part of the story as well. The true story begins to take shape around the time of the California Gold Rush, and begins with the people who originally brought acupuncture to these shores, who it was ultimately stolen from, stripped of its roots and cultural context, and sold back to privileged white people.

## Background:

When gold was discovered on January 24, 1848 at Sutter's Mill it set off a massive wave of immigration to California. This in turn helped stimulate the American economy while triggering the "California genocide" which destroyed whole indigenous societies and killed over 100,000 Native Californians over the next 20 years. The Taiping Rebellion, one of the bloodiest wars in human history (the death toll has been estimated at between 20 – 30 million) began in the southern province of Guangxi, China on January 1, 1851. These two events, along with the construction of the first transcontinental railroad from 1863-69 (Chinese laborers made up 90% of the entire workforce of the Central Pacific Railroad), led to a large influx of Chinese immigrants to the US during the 1850's & 60's bringing with them many aspects of Chinese culture, including Chinese Medicine. "Doc" Ing Hay of John Day, Oregon and Dr. Huie Pock of Butte, Montana are two relatively famous representatives of the early history of acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in America.

It is impossible to tell the story of these men or the history of acupuncture in America without telling the story of the Chinese experience in the context of the American West at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. With the completion of the railroad, the end of the major Indian wars (The last true Indian wars were against the western Sioux (Lakota) in 1876 and the Nez Perce of the Pacific Northwest in 1877.), the reservation system in place (The Reservation system for Native Americans began in the 1850's and spread across the West), the Homestead Act of 1862, as well as devastation from the Civil War and its aftermath (Reconstruction unofficially ended in 1877), western migration grew. The economic depression after the end of the gold rush and the large-scale labor projects, such as the railroads, as well as the influx of whites (many who were fleeing the ashes of the Confederacy) led to the growth of anti-Chinese sentiments and eventually to discriminatory laws being passed and barbaric acts of violence being perpetrated against Chinese-Americans.



The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first law implemented to prevent a specific ethnic group from immigrating to the United States and legalized racial discrimination of Chinese-Americans. It also denied Chinese people living in the US the right to citizenship and effectively tore families apart.



**The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed by the Magnuson Act on December 17, 1943 when the US officially replaced its hatred of Chinese people with a new hatred of Japanese people.**

*"...I reject the arrogant and scornful theory by which they [whites] would limit migratory rights, or any other essential human rights to themselves, and which would make them the owners of this great continent to the exclusion of all other races of men "*

- Frederick Douglas speaking in defense of Chinese immigrants (1869)

*"We want free passage of all people to and from Amerika. The people of the world have built Amerika, and they must now determine its destiny"*

-from point 11 of I Wor Kuen's 12 Point Program and Platform (1969)

### Los Angeles: Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871

The Chinese massacre of 1871 was a racially motivated riot which occurred on October 24, 1871 in Los Angeles, California, when a mob of around 500 white men entered Chinatown to attack, rob, and murder Chinese residents of the city. It has been reported that women and children participated in the lynching as well.

Practically every Chinese-occupied building on the block was ransacked and almost every resident was attacked or robbed. A total of 18 Chinese immigrants, including the beloved Dr. Gene Tong, were tortured and then hanged by the mob, making the event the **largest mass lynching in American history**. All Eight white men convicted in the massacre had their convictions overturned on a technicality and were set free.



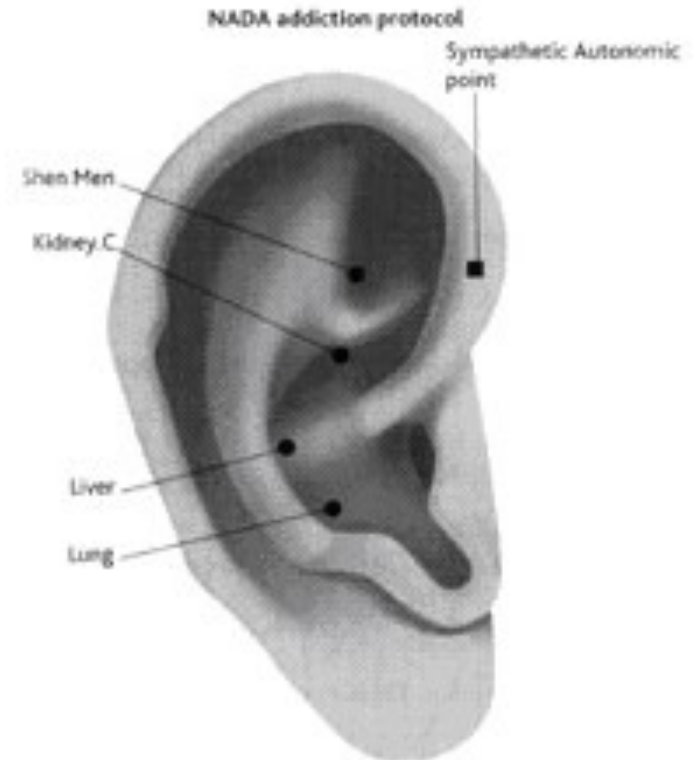
*"Although the Los Angeles events occurred far from the American South, the Los Angeles anti-Chinese massacre paralleled the anti-black violence that rose in the South during Reconstruction. Although the immediate causes of the violence in the post-Civil War South and California were far different, they shared one key characteristic: they employed racial disciplining to preserve traditional social orders that old elites saw as threatened by changing times and circumstances."* – Victor Jew

## National Acupuncture Detoxification Association

Michael Smith, who was director of Lincoln Detox after his predecessor Richard Taft was murdered in 1974, founded the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) in 1985. Today, every acupuncturist knows the five points in the ear known as the NADA protocol, but few have heard about its roots and development at Lincoln Detox.

The protocol developed after the staff read a paper by Dr. H.L. Wen of Kwong Wah hospital in Hong Kong. Dr. Wen used electrical stimulation of the Lung point in the ear to treat opium withdrawal symptoms. The patients and staff had been looking for a more natural method of detox than methadone, so began experimenting with acupuncture. They soon learned that needles alone were more effective, flexible, and cost-efficient.

The five points in each ear ease cravings and the emotional roller coasters of addiction and withdrawal, and also provide potent treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. The five-needle protocol treats sleep disturbances, depression, and anxiety, often achieving instant results. (Baird, 2013)



**"you can now receive acupuncture treatment for drug withdrawal as an alternative method of treatment. And that exists today because many men and women were put in jail, shot, and killed"** - Mutulu Shakur

**Lincoln detox was an extremely successful program that focused on exposing and treating the root cause of addiction. It consisted of three important components: Acupuncture treatment, Political education, and Community service.**

"From the first day, November 10, 1970, we had a constant influx of people everyday seeking help. Hundreds and hundreds came—I'm not talking about one or two-dozen people—as the word spread about Lincoln Detox, the opportunity for people to walk in and get effective help from everyday people (not white professionals but their own people) who had a loving heart, developing an understanding of things they needed to articulate. People came from all over New York and Connecticut, Long Island, New Jersey, too. The Lincoln Detox program became so successful and effective that a United Nations delegation visited and gave us recognition for it."

- Vicente "Panama" Alba

"...our ability to get involved with acupuncture and to learn it, and to learn it from a very fundamental basis was an important contribution to that struggle." ..."acupuncture, in the hands of revolutionary thinking, Puerto Rican, Blacks, Progressive White people, was an intervention that the government was not willing to accept at the time because it attacked and exposed the intention of the government to impose a chemical warfare on a certain segment of the community. And it exposed the fact that the government wanted to control the flow of drugs into the community". -Mutulu Shakur

"We became a threat to the city of New York and consequently with the development of the barefoot doctor acupuncture cadre, we began to move around the country and educate various other communities instead of schools and orientations around acupuncture drug withdrawal and the strategy of methadone and the teaching the brothers and sisters the fundamentals of acupuncture to serious acupuncture, how it was used in the revolutionary context in China and in Vietnam and how we were able to use it in the South Bronx and our success. Primarily because we had a love for our people and we had a commitment to our people." - Mutulu Shakur

"The existence of the program was a thorn in the government's side. We were revolutionaries and radicals doing work, recruiting people to do work the government didn't want to happen."

- Vicente "Panama" Alba

"The concept of self-determination within the minimum context of community control and control of one's own health, was too much of a significant barometer for our community to see the potential of freedom, the potential of self-determination, so we became the target."

- Mutulu Shakur

**After the forced shut down of the Lincoln Detox Center by a force of 200 police officers in 1979, Mutulu Shakur an acupuncturist and asst director at Lincoln Detox, went on to co-found the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America (BAAANA) and opened an acupuncture clinic in Harlem where he continued working with drug addiction. BAAANA also provided treatment for thousands of elderly and poor patients who otherwise would have received no treatment of this kind. Patients were able to receive quality health care at reasonable prices. Over 100 students were trained as acupuncturists through the BAAANA affiliate, the Harlem Institute of Acupuncture. BAAANA was shut down in 1982. Mutulu Shakur is currently in prison.**

## The Rock Springs massacre, 1885

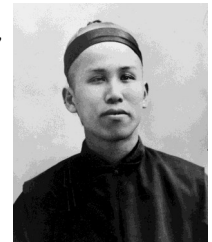
The Rock Springs massacre occurred on September 2, 1885, in Rock Springs, Wyoming. The massacre (or riot as some called it), was the result of racial tensions and an ongoing labor dispute over the Union Pacific Coal Department's policy of paying Chinese miners lower wages than white miners. This policy caused the Chinese, who as a whole already had the well-deserved reputation of being hard workers (earned during the building of the railroads), to be hired over the white miners. This fanned the flames of hatred among white miners in the area. When the rioting ended, at least 28 Chinese miners were dead and 15 were injured. Although other sources report that the number of dead is most likely closer to 40 or 50, because some who fled were never heard from again. 75 Chinese homes were also burned in the melee.

The attacks at Rock Springs were extraordinarily violent. Chinese miners were burned alive, scalped, mutilated, branded, decapitated, dismembered, and hanged from gutter spouts. Reportedly a group of women looked on from a bridge, cheering and firing shots as the onslaught happened. The sheer brutality of the violence amounted to nothing short of racial terrorism.

After the riot, sixteen men were arrested, but a grand jury refused to bring indictments. They explained that there was no cause for legal action, stating, that "no one has been able to testify to a single criminal act committed by any known white person that day." Upon their release they were met with cheers by several hundred men, women, and children. Stories such as this were a frighteningly common occurrence among Chinese-Americans all across the western US.

## "Doc" Ing Hay

Even as the violence and anti-Chinese sentiment was growing, Doc Hay, a "Chinese Doctor" in John Day, Oregon, was so well respected that the folks of his community would "Posse up" to protect him. Doc Hay arrived in the US in 1882. He and his friend Lung On (known as a boisterous but well-liked businessman) started the The Kam Wah Chung company.



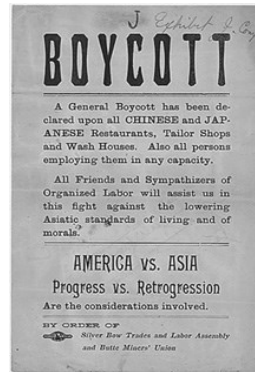
Among his many achievements, Doc Hay developed an herbal decoction (that he would cook up in his store and seal in quart beer bottles) that was extremely effective against sepsis, known as blood poisoning, which was a leading cause of death in rural 1880s Oregon. It was also reported that not a single one of his patients died during the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1919 which killed many worldwide, including 3500 in Oregon alone.

Over the first few decades of the 20th century another threat emerged. Conventional doctors joined the fledgling American Medical Association in trying to have Doc Hay prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license. In what should have been an easy open and shut case (as he had no license or formal credentials of any kind) no jury in Grant County would convict him.

Doc Hay died in 1952. After his death his place was boarded up and wasn't opened again until 1967. Under Doc Hay's bed they found a box containing \$23,000 in uncashed checks — checks from people who, he'd told a friend, needed the money more than he did.



In Montana, labor unions organized boycotts to evict Chinese businesses. In the winter of 1896-1897, union members blocked doorways and discouraged customers from entering Chinese restaurants and laundries. As the boycott went on, some Chinese fearing the violence that had already erupted in riots against Chinese in Rock Springs and other cities, decided to leave for the safety of larger Chinatowns on the west coast. Butte, Montana, however, around the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, was home to a large Chinese community despite the on-going organized efforts to evict them.



Dr. Huie Pock

Dr. Huie Pock was a Chinese physician who practiced herbal medicine, acupuncture, and surgery in Butte. Dr. Pock, along with businessman Quon Loy, and restaurant owner Hum Fay fought back against the powerful labor leaders organizing the boycotts. They protested to the governments of China and the United States and then filed suit against the leaders of the boycott.

They eventually won their case in court but they were unable to collect damages, although they were reimbursed for their legal fees and expenses.

In a time and place where the city's daily paper once editorialized that "a Chinaman could no more become an American citizen than could a coyote." Dr. Pock became relatively well-known and well-respected. Western medicine, especially on the remote frontier, was primitive by comparison to the herbal medicine practiced in China. He developed an effective herbal poultice using banana stalks to treat various ailments, which he used in his local practice and also shipped through the mail all over the country. During the influenza epidemic that killed hundreds in Butte in 1918, his herbal treatments saved many lives. He also successfully treated the ulcers of the daughter of William Andrews Clark, one of the famous Copper Kings of Butte and one of the wealthiest men in America, which helped him gain local fame.

If he had decided to give up and leave instead of opting to stay and fight, many of the people in his community (including, I'm sure, some who tried to make him leave) would not have survived.

Doc Hay and Dr. Pock are just two relatively famous stories. Reports indicate that among the Chinese workers in many of the smaller mining camps in Nevada and elsewhere were "Chinese Doctors". According to some accounts many of the white miners recognized that their best hope if they were ill or became injured was either a Native medicine man or one of the "Chinese Doctors". We don't know their names or anything really about them except that they humbly took care of the people in their camps. This is what inspires our work

"WE WANT AN EDUCATION THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE HISTORY OF WESTERN IMPERIALISM IN ASIA AND AROUND THE WORLD: WHICH TEACHES US THE HARDSHIPS AND STRUGGLES OF OUR ANCESTORS IN THIS LAND AND WHICH REVEALS THE TRULY DECADENT EXPLOITATIVE NATURE OF AMERIKAN SOCIETY. "

- Point #6 of I Wor Kuen's 12 Point Program and Platform (1969)



## The Black Panthers, The Young Lords, & Lincoln Detox Center (The People's Drug Program)

### Background

Late 60's: "On the one hand we had the drug epidemic, but there was also revolution in the air—change was something that you could breathe, that you could taste, that you could feel, because the movement was very vibrant".—Vicente "Panama" Alba

COINTELPRO, an F.B.I. program of the 50's, 60's & 70's, was a low level war waged against Black, Latino, Asian, and Indigenous struggles and their allies as well as other progressive movements. The US government employed a very effective strategy of "chemical warfare" against these communities, flooding them with heroin and other illicit drugs. The strategy was effective on several levels:

1. Profitability—increased extraction of wealth and resources from affected communities
2. Destruction of the hearts, minds, and revolutionary will of the people "they realize that as long as they can keep our Black youths standing on the street corners "nodding" from a "shot" of heroin, they won't have to worry about us waging an effective struggle for liberation". – Michael "Cetewayo" Tabor *Capitalism Plus Dope Equals Genocide*
3. Serves as a pretext for a stronger police presence (occupation force) in targeted communities without intensifying revolutionary fervor
4. Serves as a legal means for the harassment of colonized people and their allies with programs such as "no knock" warrants and "stop and frisk" under the pretext of looking for narcotics and "other evidence".

"Now, anyone who thinks that this law will be confined to just suspected drug dealers is laboring under a tragic and possibly suicidal delusion" ... "It should come as no surprise when the homes of revolutionaries and other progressive and true freedom-loving people are invaded by the police on the pretext of searching for drugs and "other evidence"." - Tabor

5. Serves to effectively criminalize a large portion of targeted communities.
6. State-sanctioned methadone clinics were eventually recognized as a continuation of "chemical warfare" which allowed the state to exert further control over the flow of drugs into the communities and lower morale by effectively taking away the people's ability to help themselves and each other.

The Black Panther Party and the Young Lords were revolutionary, anti-imperialist organizations who approached their struggle from many fronts. Both groups emphasized the need for material support of the people and implemented many programs and actions to improve public health, healthcare, nutrition, and quality of life for their respective communities (I can't convey the enormity of the scope of these programs. Look it up!). They realized that heroin addiction was a threat to their communities as well as their movement.

By 1970, Lincoln Hospital, known as the "butcher shop of the South Bronx", was the only medical facility in the area. The Young Lords and The Black Panther Party took over the facility briefly in early 1970 to demand better health care for the community and confronted the administration about the lack of services for people addicted to heroin. This failed to produce any real change.

On November 10, 1970 members of The Young Lords, the Black Panther Party, and other allies and supporters took over Lincoln Hospital and established a drug treatment program called The People's Drug Program which became known as the Lincoln Detox Center.