

# RECOVERY, HOPE, DEFEAT, DESPAIR

## 1920, 1970, 2020

One hundred years ago, the country was recovering from the horrid 1918 flu pandemic. There was hope that the triumph in World War I would achieve permanent peace and prosperity. But it was also a time of mass upheavals.



Violence ripped Denver in August 1920 when armed mercenaries came to town to smash the strike of streetcar workers. Corporate Denver's triumph in the clash opened the door for the ascendancy of the Ku Klux Klan in the city.

Washington and Wall Street responded to a wave of strikes in 1919 with massive union busting, red-baiting, and repression.

In 1920, the Socialist Party candidate for president, Eugene V. Debs, received nearly a million votes. He did so despite the ultimate social distancing imposed on him by the federal government: it locked him up in a penitentiary because he had opposed World War I as a fight between imperialist robbers. Massachusetts did its part by arresting Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco in 1920 for opposing the war and the government—it eventually executed them on a framed-up murder charge. Locally, Denver Tramway, owned by the Boettcher family, received the willing compliance of city hall to bring in armed strikebreakers in August 1920. The goons murdered upwards of a dozen people as they smashed the union representing streetcar workers. Out of this, came a period of despair, including the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, a group soon having upwards of 55,000 Mile High members.

Fifty years ago was also a time of recovery, hope, defeat, and despair. It was a period when the country was trying to recover from the massive chasms of the 1960s. There was hope that a new world based on alternatives to the old society—the Age of Aquarius—was arising. Included was the emergence of a promising new ecology movement. But it was a period of defeat, complete with the National Guard shooting down unarmed students in May 1970 at Kent State. Some despaired, turning to suicidal violence, assuring repression.

All of this and much more will mark a free celebration of Colorado Day at:

**Casa Mayan**  
**Sunday, August 2, 2020**  
**2:00–3:30 pm.**  
**1040 Ninth Street Park on the Auraria Campus**

(Enter the campus on Ninth Street, which is opposite Mariposa Street on West Colfax Avenue. This is the road directly west of the Auraria light rail stop. Go one-half block to the northwest to where Ninth Street dead ends. A white frame house is on the left, Casa Mayan. Free parking is available south of Colfax along Mariposa Street.)

Featured will be a talk by the city's leading historian, **Phil Goodstein**, who has widely probed alternatives to the status quo while telling the story of the area from the bottom up. Included will be the hope that the community is in recovery from the devastations of COVID-19. There is also the fear that the cowardice and manipulations of the Democrats will assure renewed defeat, leading to the despair of having to face four more years of Donald Trump.

Goodstein will sell at a substantial discount copies of his volume **Robert Speer's Denver**, which includes the tales of the 1918 flu and 1920 streetcar strike. He will also have out his new **The Denver School Busing Wars**. This is a book that probes the chaos produced by mandatory school busing imposed by federal courts while being administered by a recalcitrant, uncooperative, brutal school administration.

Casa Mayan, 303-477-9220. Phil Goodstein, 303-333-1095.

