This week in history: January 2-8

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25 years ago: NASA's Lunar Prospector launched into orbit around the moon

On January 7, 1998, NASA launched the Lunar Prospector on a successful 19-month journey as part of its Discovery Program. The $63 million mission's objective was to circle the Moon at an altitude of 62 miles in an orbit crossing the poles. Previous missions concentrated on narrow equatorial orbits, which left approximately 75 percent of the surface geology insufficiently mapped.

Before the Lunar Prospector, the last mission to the moon was by Apollo 17 in December of 1972. The Soviet Union's moon orbiter program ended in 1976. In January of 1990, Japan sent its Hiten orbiter to the moon. The Galileo spacecraft, which was sent to Jupiter in 1991, made some observations of the moon on its way. But for a quarter-century, Earth's moon had been largely abandoned in favor of exploring other planets and their moons.

The Lunar Prospector orbited around the moon and discovered evidence of frozen water in craters through a Neutron Spectrometer, one of its five scientific instruments. The spectrometer was designed to detect neutrons that escape the lunar surface as a result of cosmic-ray bombardment. Based on this data, scientists were able to estimate that around 800 billion gallons of lunar ice may exist on the surface of the moon.

The other tools included a Gamma Ray Spectrometer, a Magnetometer, an Electron Reflectometer, an Alpha Particle Spectrometer, and a Doppler Gravity Experiment. The Gamma Ray Spectrometer was designed to record gamma rays. The Alpha Particle Spectrometer was damaged during the launch, but the data it recorded was later recovered. It was designed to detect outgassing events, which are believed to be the result of low-level volcanic and tectonic shifts on the moon.

The mission ended on July 31, 1999, following the successful detection of the presence of hydrogen.

50 years ago: Pentagon Papers trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo begins

On January 3, 1973 the trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo began in Los Angeles. The pair faced prosecution for the release of the Pentagon Papers to the public in 1971. The papers provided undeniable evidence that the United States government had lied to the public about the true nature of US involvement in Vietnam going back to the Kennedy administration.

Ellsberg and Russo were charged with eight counts of violating the Espionage Act of 1917, six counts of theft, and one of conspiracy. The pair had been employees of the RAND Corporation, a think tank that provided foreign policy analysis and strategic advice to the United States military.

In 1969, after becoming politically opposed to the war in Vietnam, Ellsberg, with the assistance of Russo, made copies of classified documents that he had helped author and to which he had access. After struggling for over a year to find publications willing to publish a report on the Pentagon Papers, they finally succeeded with the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in June 1971.

Among the most significant revelations was that the Johnson administration had been aware early on in the war that a US military victory was impossible. Other information included details of US attacks against civilian populations and raids against North Vietnam that the public had no knowledge of.

Ellsberg took a principled stance against the charges brought against him. Just before turning himself in to the police he told reporters, "I felt that as an American citizen, as a responsible citizen, I could no longer cooperate in concealing this information from the American public. I did this clearly at my own jeopardy and I am prepared to answer to all the consequences of this decision."

Like all prosecutions under the Espionage Act, the trial was political. After having lost a legal battle to censor press publication of the papers, the Nixon administration prosecuted Ellsberg and Russo as retribution for the embarrassment and as a threat to others who may have become encouraged to expose other government crimes.

This was of great importance to Nixon, as the Watergate scandal that would force his resignation was still for the time being mostly hidden below the surface. It was actually linked directly to the campaign against Ellsberg, since in September 1971, Nixon had ordered the same group of former intelligence operatives involved in Watergate, dubbed by the White House the "plumbers," to break into the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in an attempt to find information that would discredit him.

As the trial opened, clear attempts were made to select a jury that would be hostile to Ellsberg and Russo. The judge overseeing the case, Matt Byrne Jr., did not allow the defense to ask any political questions of potential jurors, making it difficult to ascertain pre-existing biases against Ellsberg. Questions banned included asking jurors their attitude toward the anti-war movement, or whether they approved of Congress.

Further, during the trial, when Ellsberg took the stand and attempted to explain his motives and his belief that the documents he brought to light were themselves illegally classified, the judge ordered him to cease his testimony. When Ellsberg's lawyer protested, arguing that there had never been a case where a defendant was not permitted to tell the jury why he did what he did, Judge Byrne responded, "Well, you're hearing one now."

However, despite the hostile judge, over the course of the trial new evidence emerged that the FBI had illegally tapped Ellsberg's phone

and had been spying on him without a warrant. In addition, Judge Byrne admitted during the trial that he had met with top Nixon aide John Ehrlichman, who had attempted to bribe him with the position of FBI director if he saw to it that Ellsberg went to prison.

With overwhelming evidence showing that the only criminal activity in the case was perpetrated by the US government, Byrne was forced in May 1973 to throw out all the charges against Ellsberg and Russo. He told the court, "The totality of the circumstances of this case which I have only briefly sketched offend a sense of justice. The bizarre events have incurably infected the prosecution of this case."

75 years ago: Anti-British uprising begins in Iraq

This week in January, 1948, protests began in Baghdad, Iraq, which would develop into what became known as the Al-Wathbah ("The Leap") uprising. In the space of less than a month, the police would carry out a bloody crackdown against protesters, and the government of Prime Minister Salih Jabr would effectively fall.

On January 3, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fadil al-Jamali revealed that the Iraqi government was "sensitive to the merits" of the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, which was due for expiration. That agreement had given British troops unlimited access to Iraqi facilities. It was also a pillar for the maintenance of the weak British-installed monarchy of King Faisal II, the nominal ruler.

It rapidly became apparent that the Jabr government and the monarchy had been in secret negotiations with the British for an extension of the treaty. The parliament and the major opposition parties had not been notified.

The same day as al-Jamali's statement, the bourgeois-nationalist Independence Party, which agitated against continuing fealty to British imperialism, had a secret meeting planning opposition to an extension of the treaty. On January 4, protests began, initially involving Baghdad university students.

The protesters were violently dispersed and several of the student leaders arrested, prompting a city-wide student strike. While those arrested were released and the strike ended two days later, the movement continued to grow. It received renewed impetus with the announcement on January 16 that the government had in fact signed an agreement with Britain for the continuation of the treaty.

The protests involved broader layers of students. Sections of the urban poor and the Baghdad working class joined. The government intensified its repression, culminating in a violent police attack on a protest on January 27, that included the indiscriminate use of machine-gun fire against the demonstrators. As many as 300-400 were killed.

Jabr had attempted to stem the protests by touting improvements in the treaty, including the return of air bases to nominal Iraqi control and purported equality between British and Iraqi military forces. The bloody assaults on the protesters, however, spelled the end of his prime ministership. He would flee to Britain by the end of January and a new government would be sworn in shortly thereafter.

While the protests were sparked by the issue of the treaty, broader issues of deep social inequality and poverty, together with the hostility of the youth to the monarchy, were also present. The Iraqi Communist Party played a prominent role, underscoring a growing attraction of the Iraqi masses to socialism. Its Stalinist program, however, rejected a genuine socialist perspective and was instead oriented to the nationalist elements of the ruling elite.

100 years ago: Rosewood, Florida burned to the ground in racist pogrom

On January 7, 1923, the final structure in the predominantly black town of Rosewood, Florida, about 50 miles (80.64 km) southwest of Gainesville, was razed by a mob of white racists.

On January 1, Fannie Taylor, a white woman in the nearby town of Sumner, claimed she had been raped by a black man. Her husband, a foreman at a nearby sawmill, assembled a mob of local white men that also may have included participants in the Ku Klux Klan rally in Gainesville days earlier. The mob went to Rosewood looking for an escapee from a chain gang named Jesse Hunter, whom they claimed had committed the crime.

The mob was also searching for two other men, supposed accomplices of Hunter— Aaron Carrier, the nephew of Sarah Carrier, who did the laundry for the Taylors, and Sam Carter, a blacksmith. When the two were located, members of the mob beat Carrier and dragged him from the back of a car until a sheriff intervened and placed him in protective custody. The mob lynched Carter.

Local law enforcement warned blacks to either stay at their workplaces or hide in their homes. On January 3, a mob surrounded Sarah Carrier's house where 25 blacks were sheltering. The mob shot Sarah Carrier in the head when she came to the front porch and killed her son Sylvester after he had killed two of the racists. Children in the house escaped and hid in the woods.

Over the next few days, largely because of local newspaper reports of armed blacks moving around the town, hundreds of whites swarmed into Rosewood and began to burn churches and other structures. Some residents were shot as they fled burning houses. Many escaped into the nearby swamps.

By January 6, two white owners of a train, John and William Bryce, were able to rescue many of the women and children in the swamp along the local railroad line and take them out of town. They refused to take men for fear of becoming targets of the white mob. Others were hidden by John Wright, the white owner of Rosewood's general store, the sole building that was not burned.

At least six blacks and two whites were killed, although some estimates of the number of black dead are much higher. The survivors never returned to Rosewood and the town was literally wiped off the map.

John Singleton directed a 1997 film, *Rosewood*, based on the events.