

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!



Reuters



Oza/Arizona Republic

Obama's Crackdown on Immigrants

In a May 10 speech in El Paso, Texas, Democratic president Barack Obama boasted that his administration has gone “above and beyond what was requested” by Republicans in jacking up military and police forces at the border and deporting undocumented immigrants. The speech, cast as a call for “comprehensive reform” of a “broken immigration system,” helped kick off Obama’s 2012 presidential re-election campaign against a Republican Party which, in statehouses in Arizona, Alabama and elsewhere, is pushing a gamut of racist measures targeting immigrants for vicious repression.

Under Obama’s watch, the government is deporting on average more than 1,000 immigrants per day, a historical record. “We now have more boots on the ground on the southwest border than at any time in our history,” Obama boasted in El Paso. Those federal “boots” are supplemented by neo-Nazis and other armed racist vigilantes who have stationed themselves on the border. In just the first five months of 2010, federal agents killed or wounded 17 immigrants on the Mexican border compared to five killed or wounded in the final year of the Bush administration. Hundreds have perished in the past two years trying to enter the country while avoiding U.S. border guards.

In executing the crackdown on immigration, Obama is simply doing his job as the CEO of American capitalism. In times of economic expansion, undocumented immigrant laborers, deprived of their rights and paid rock-bottom wages, are viewed by the capitalists as useful material to be exploited to the limit of physical endurance. But when capitalism’s inevitable economic downturns hit, those workers become an unnecessary overhead to be disposed of through mass deportations. This is certainly the case with the current protracted economic crisis, which has

Left: Barack Obama and Homeland Security chief Janet Napolitano at El Paso border facility, May 10. Right: I.C.E. agents round up suspected undocumented immigrants in Phoenix, May 25.

destroyed almost seven million jobs in the U.S. In Europe, the economic crisis has also been accompanied by a stepped-up anti-immigrant offensive. At the moment, the French and Italian governments have been engaged in a racist contest over who can best keep Tunisian and other immigrants from North Africa out of their country.

The domination and intense exploitation of backward countries by the advanced capitalist economies propel ever more of the impoverished and dispossessed to migrate to Europe and North America, even at a time of wholesale destruction of jobs in the imperialist centers. One week after Obama’s El Paso speech, Mexican authorities in Chiapas detained two tractor-trailers headed for

the U.S. that contained 513 migrants packed like cattle and half dead from suffocation and lack of water. The scene was evocative of the Middle Passage, only it was not slave-traders but hunger that packed them into these potential coffins.

A report issued this month by Oxfam, “The Struggle for a Pro-Poor Food Policy in Guatemala,” described the desperate conditions driving that migration. While a tiny domestic elite, working hand in hand with U.S. agribusiness giants, rakes in lavish profits, poor peasants driven from their land are forced to work the plantations for wages far below what is necessary to feed their families, starving themselves to keep their children alive. Even before skyrocketing food prices caused a global hunger crisis three years

ago, half of all Guatemalan children under five were malnourished—a figure that rises to 70 percent among

Maya and other indigenous peoples. This is a direct result of the workings of the capitalist world market. The most productive land in Guatemala has been taken over by plantations growing cash crops such as sugar cane, coffee and—increasingly—biofuels for export, while this deeply impoverished country increasingly relies on imported staples from the U.S.

The U.S. capitalists view Mexico and other countries as vast reservoirs of cheap immigrant labor to be tapped. Defense of immigrant rights is crucial to reversing the decades-long decline of the trade unions. Enlisting immigrant workers, many of whom have a history of militant struggle in their own countries, in the front ranks of the labor movement is an urgent task both to fight the exploitation of the most vulnerable layers of the population and to combat the anti-union onslaught sweeping this country. In undertaking the crucial fight to organize the unorganized, the labor movement must demand that *all* immigrants have immediate and full citizenship rights and must fight against every instance of discrimination, calling for no deportations.

We would support reforms that even partially ameliorate the effects of the bourgeoisie’s racist, chauvinist immigration policies. But no such reform is currently on offer. As Marxists, we do not seek to advise the bourgeoisie on its immigration or other policies. Our aim is to win the working class to the understanding that it must oppose the whole capitalist system. It is only through the victory of world socialist revolution that scarcity can be abolished for good, laying the basis for the withering away of the state and therefore of borders and immigration laws.

Democrats’ Bogus “Reform” Plan

We’ve heard Obama’s talk of “comprehensive reform” before. George W. Bush served up the same menu: more

continued on page 4



AP

May 17: More than 500 migrants from Latin America and Asia were crammed into two tractor-trailers that were stopped in southern Mexico on way to U.S.



Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt)

Geronimo ji Jaga, a former leader of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in Los Angeles, died at his home in Tanzania on June 3 at the age of 63. The cause of death is not known at this time. From 1970 to 1997, Geronimo was America's foremost class-war prisoner, trapped in prison hell after being framed up by the LAPD and FBI for a murder they knew he did not commit. Eight of his 27 years in prison were spent in solitary confinement. Throughout his imprisonment, Geronimo remained unbroken and committed to the cause of freedom for the oppressed.

Born Elmer Gerard Pratt, Geronimo grew up in KKK-infested southern Louisiana. He told WV: "The Klan killed a friend of mine. I think we were about nine or ten, swimming in the Atchafalaya River" ("Geronimo Pratt Speaks from San Quentin," WV No. 382, 28 June 1985). His first jailing came at age 11 or 12, "for speaking to a white woman," which "I didn't even do because I grew up down there. I knew the rules." With few job opportunities, at age 17 Geronimo joined the Army, serving two tours of duty in Vietnam, where he became a highly decorated paratrooper. After his first tour, Geronimo was sent to Detroit

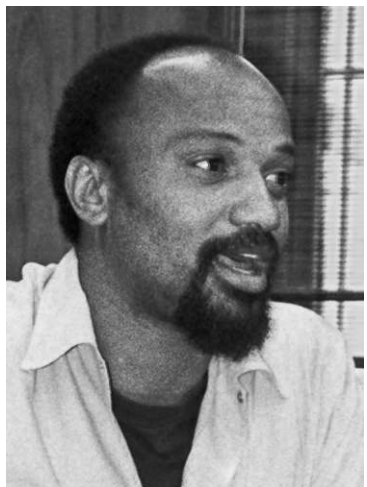
to help put down the 1967 ghetto rebellion. He recalled that his unit, 60-70 percent black, was supportive of the besieged ghetto, so "immediately they pulled us out of there." He was then sent back to Vietnam.

Like many veterans, Geronimo was radicalized by the Vietnam War. After returning to racist America, he sought in the Panthers the vehicle to place his military experience at the service of the black freedom struggle. Along with Robert F. Williams and the Deacons for Defense, the Panthers rejected the turn-the-other-cheek pacifism of Martin Luther King Jr. and advocated armed self-defense. Geronimo immediately became a prime target of the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), in which 38 Panthers were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on trumped-up charges. One FBI memo spelled out, "Operation Number One is designed to challenge the legitimacy of the authority exercised by ELMER GERARD PRATT, BPP Deputy Minister of Defense." On 8 December 1969, over 140 LAPD cops attacked the Panther headquarters where Geronimo lived. He survived the five-hour barrage but was later convicted on a minor weapons charge.

Geronimo was subsequently charged with the 1968 murder of Caroline Olsen in Santa Monica. He was convicted in 1972 on the perjured testimony of Julius Butler, an informant for the LAPD, FBI and District Attorney's office, and sentenced to life in prison. Geronimo was nowhere near the scene of the killing. As early as 1985, former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen revealed the existence of wiretaps showing that when Olsen was killed, Geronimo was 400 miles away in Oakland, attending a heavily surveilled and wiretapped BPP leadership meeting. But because of bloody factional division fueled by COINTELPRO, no Panther leader except for Kathleen Cleaver testified on his behalf.

For refusing to confess guilt to a crime he did not commit, Geronimo was denied parole *16 times*. To justify one such rejection, L.A. prosecutor Diane Vezzani declared that Geronimo was "still a revolutionary." In the late 1980s, Geronimo played a pivotal role in enlisting the support of other former Panthers in the fight for freedom for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, which helped publicize Mumia's case more broadly. In 1999, Geronimo endorsed the Partisan Defense Committee-initiated anti-KKK mobilization in New York City. In 2002, he endorsed an Oakland united-front protest against the USA Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act that was initiated by the PDC and Labor Black League for Social Defense.

The Spartacist League and Partisan De-



WV Photo

1947-2011

fense Committee long fought for Geronimo's freedom. Geronimo epitomized our characterization of the Black Panther Party as the best of a generation of black militants who sought a revolutionary road to black equality. But the Panthers' black nationalist perspective and program doomed them to isolation in the ghetto, cut off from the only road out of the nightmare of racist American capitalism: integrated working-class struggle led to victory by a revolutionary vanguard party.

Geronimo was able to find some years of contentment after settling in Tanzania. But we are bitter that over half his adult life was stolen from him, spent in prison under conditions that undoubtedly exacerbated his health problems and likely contributed to his untimely death. He will be missed! ■

Editorial Note

Memorial Day: Ghosts of Confederacy in Brooklyn

On Memorial Day, Green-Wood Cemetery officials in Brooklyn hosted a day of remembrance for *both* sides in the Civil War. This event was part of a weeks-long propaganda campaign to glorify the pro-slavery forces by enshrining their supposed noble "sacrifice." This gross, racist provocation should repulse any decent anti-racist fighter, anyone who takes up the cause of the working class.

During the Civil War—which the *Daily News* (29 May) referred to as "divisive"—New York City was a hotbed of pro-secessionist sentiment. This was mainly driven by the material interests of merchants who were an indispensable link in the chain of circulation of the goods and services wrenched from the blood, sweat and tears of black slaves. In the Civil War, the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Northern bourgeoisie as a whole, in following its own class interests, abolished chattel slavery and destroyed the old Southern plantation agricultural system. After the war, the Northern capitalists betrayed the promise of black freedom and formed an alliance with the remnants of the slavocracy in order to exploit Southern resources and the freedmen.

We will not forgive, nor will we forget. While Memorial Day today celebrates bloody U.S. imperialism, we point to the first Memorial Day (then known as Decoration Day), initiated by emancipated blacks in honor of the Union dead. On 1 May 1865, in liberated Charleston, South Carolina, nearly 10,000 former slaves marched on the grounds of the old Washington Race Course and Jockey Club, prewar bastion of the planter elite. During the war, the racecourse was turned into a hellish prison camp, where hundreds of Union soldiers died of disease and were buried in a mass grave behind the grandstand. After black workmen buried the dead properly on the grounds, 3,000 black

schoolchildren marched past the graves, softly singing "John Brown's Body" and laying flowers. Several Union regiments joined the march, including the 104th and 35th Colored regiments, as well as the famous 54th Massachusetts, commemorated in the movie *Glory*.

The Civil War will be finished when there is a socialist America, the only way to achieve black liberation. To hell with the "national reconciliation" pushed by the capitalist press, right-wing and "liberal" alike. We stand for implacable class struggle to smash the racist capitalist system and the rule of the bloody imperialist oppressors, who from Baghdad to Kabul to Brooklyn are daily, and increasingly, tightening the chains on the oppressed and exploited. ■

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No. 21

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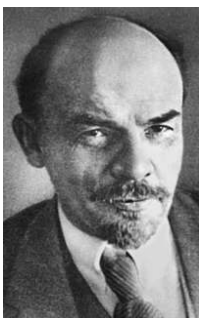
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Only Workers Revolution Will Put an End to Capitalist Crises

In the depths of the Great Depression in 1934, and following Hitler's taking power in Germany, fascists in France attempted a coup, which spurred the working class into political and strike action. Polemicizing against the false concept that capitalism would generate its own final crisis, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky emphasized the need for the overthrow of the capitalist system by a class-conscious proletariat led by a revolutionary party.



LENIN

TROTSKY

Under the domination of industrial capital, in the era of free competition, the cyclical booms exceeded by far the crises: the first were the "rule," the second the "exception." Capitalism in its entirety was advancing. Since the war, with the domination of monopoly finance capital, the cyclical crises far exceed the upswings. We may say that the crises have become the "rule" and the booms the "exception"; economic development in its entirety has been going down and not up....

The revolutionary worker must, before all else, understand that Marxism, the only scientific theory of the proletarian revolution, has nothing in common with the fatalistic hope for the "final" crisis. Marxism is, in its very essence, a set of directives for revolutionary action. Marxism does not overlook will and courage, but rather helps them to find the right road.

There is no crisis that can be, by itself, fatal to capitalism. The oscillations of the business cycle only create a situation in which it will be easier, or more difficult, for the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. The transition from a bourgeois society to a socialist society presupposes the activity of living people who are the makers of their own history. They do not make history by accident, or according to their caprice, but under the influence of objectively determined causes. However, their own actions—their initiative, audacity, devotion, and likewise their stupidity and cowardice—are necessary links in the chain of historical development.

The crises of capitalism are not numbered, nor is it indicated in advance which one of these will be the "last." But our entire epoch and, above all, the present crisis imperiously command the proletariat: "Seize power!" If, however, the party of the working class, in spite of favorable conditions, reveals itself incapable of leading the proletariat to the seizure of power, the life of society will continue necessarily upon capitalist foundations—until a new crisis, a new war, perhaps until the complete disintegration of European civilization.

—Leon Trotsky, "Once Again, Whither France?" March 1935, printed in *Leon Trotsky on France* (1979)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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NYC: Anti-Smoking Totalitarianism

A pack of Marlboro Lights costs a cool \$12 in Manhattan. Smokers have been driven from every office, worksite and public building, from bars and restaurants, left to shiver on the street in the winter and swelter in the sun of a New York summer. But this is not enough for New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council, which have now banned smoking on beaches and in parks and plazas, imposing a \$50 fine on anyone caught doing so. What's next: home invasions of suspected smokers or Prohibition-style raids on private parties allowing smoking? This is already a reality elsewhere in the country, as in Belmont, California, where it is now illegal to smoke in your own home. As CBS News (28 January 2009) put it: "If apartment building neighbors complain about a smoker next door, officers can come knocking."

Bloomberg's latest assault on smokers has an extra twist: it's meant to "be enforced by public pressure," as well as by some Parks Department personnel (*Daily News*, 12 February). In this scenario, if some anti-smoking fanatic catches you "in the act" and lectures you to cease and desist, and if you respond by telling them to mind their own business, they can run to the nearest person in uniform. Imagine the possibilities: grouchy old people finking on teenagers having a good time (or vice versa), racist yahoos targeting minority families on a picnic, anti-sex bigots turning in gay people taking in some sun. It's going to be open season on anyone who has the temerity to light up, with all the class, race and sex prejudices imbedded in this capitalist society. In a hot, humid summer in New York, this totalitarian mobilization of anti-smoking citizen brigades to act on behalf of the state is a recipe for violent attacks by bigots.

Already, discrimination against smokers in housing is open and rampant. A look at "no smoking" listings on Craigslist shows what smokers looking to rent apartments face. Official acts of repression and the vigilantism of the self-appointed morals police reinforce each other.

Even the *New York Times* (4 February), an enthusiastic supporter of the various bans imposed on smokers in the city, has, for its own reasons (like wanting to maintain healthy tourism income), recoiled from the latest ban, editorializing that the mayor and City Council had "overreached." It noted that: "Instead of smoking on Brighton Beach, what does a smoker do—take a boat out 12 nautical miles into international waters?... They need to take a deep breath and remember that we tried prohibition 90 years ago. They called it a noble experiment. It turned into a civic disaster." As we've noted before, during Prohibition nine states banned tobacco as well as booze. Is Gotham, once mythologized as the center of cosmopolitan culture where the lucky few led the high life with scandalous abandon, now to be remade in the image of Puritan Salem?

This latest intrusion by the state was well-prepared and in the making for some time. "Cleaning up" the city one civil right at a time, former mayor Ed Koch passed the "Clean Indoor Air Act," opening the crusade to outlaw smoking in practically every indoor area imaginable. At the time we remarked: "How grotesque—New York City currently leads the U.S. in carbon monoxide pollution and barely escaped a multimillion-dollar cutoff of federal monies last year by the notoriously lax Environmental Protection Agency...

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.
Our next issue will be dated July 8.

Bloomberg Butt Out!

and they want to blame the smoker for the rotten air quality in the Big Apple!" ("Warning: Anti-Smoking Crusade Dangerous to Your Rights," WV No. 453, 20 May 1988). Then, Rudolph Giuliani and the Democratic Party-controlled City Council pushed through the smoking bans in restaurants, convention centers and work locations. Even outdoor cafés had to cordon off smokers, doubtless to keep the health-conscious from having their bracing intake of noxious traffic fumes contaminated by a whiff of their neighbors' smoke. Other laws under Giuliani unleashed citywide dragnets against such "crimes" as drinking a beer on a stoop.

Overwhelmingly, it's working people and the poor who are targeted when the state gets into people's business. Take, for example, "sin taxes" on tobacco, which boost the cost of cigarettes by a factor of four or five. But the smoking bans, like the imposition of random drug and alcohol tests on workers, are also part and parcel of a broad-gauged campaign of regimenting the population, cracking down on workers' rights, increasing productivity (those three-minute breaks add up!) and just simple random cruelty. Leading the charge to demonize smokers were the "me first" yuppies who infest most parts of Manhattan, jacking up rents and spreading the misery of whatever latest health fad they've adopted. The Hitler Youth used to be for clean living, too, as the Nazis raised the rallying call for "social purification" in the face of capitalist collapse and economic desperation.

Capitalist collapse and economic desperation will ring a bell for many in New York City, and throughout the country. As the jobless and homeless numbers swell, Wall Street swells have not given up their cigars and brandy, to be sure. And while the fat cats who brought the world economy to the present disaster flourish, billionaire Bloomberg's extension of the smoking bans to outdoor summer gathering spots is especially vindictive toward the working class and black and Latino population of the city.

This is the same guy who tried to blame his snow removal fiasco on unionized workers during last winter's blizzards (see "Beat Back Attack on Public Workers Unions!" WV No. 972, 21 January). Now he's attacking firefighters as well, setting out a plan to shut down 20 engine companies. Taking a moment from his onslaught on the people who actually do an honest day's work to keep this city running, Bloomberg evidently decided that his forerunners' attacks on the rights of residents fell short on the smoking front. So now transit workers who are exposed to steel dust and bus and truck fumes day in and day out can't have a smoke while spending their well-deserved day off at the beach; firemen who risk their lives in burning buildings can't light up in a nearby plaza; the doctors, nurses and other hospital workers who fight to care for patients despite the health care giants' cost-cutting aren't allowed to take a smoke break in the park.

Enough! As we wrote in "Bourgeois Hypocrisy and 'Health Fascism': Anti-Smoking Tyranny" (WV No. 612, 9 December 1994):

"This creeping 'health fascism' has nothing to do with the public's welfare. Medical evidence on the effects of 'sec-

ondary smoke' is inconclusive, and the obvious solution is to provide adequate ventilation for everybody. But that isn't profitable, so of course it's not even seriously proposed.... In the meantime, millions of people have been killed off through malnutrition, inadequate medical care and other effects of poverty, while billions of dollars are poured into building more prisons. In a rational, socialist society that money will be spent to find cures for cancer and other diseases, clean up the cities and provide decent housing, education and medical care for all. "As far as we're concerned, people ought to be able to read, eat, drink, smoke, and enjoy whatever consensual activities they want without cops, courts, employers and yuppie totalitarians sticking their noses in."

While unemployment and hunger devastate working people's lives and health, while killer cutbacks close hospitals and schools, while tenement housing makes poor kids sick with everything from



Cover of *New Yorker* (6 June) got it right.

asthma to lead poisoning, now Bloomberg proposes families won't be able to use their food stamps for sugar-sweetened beverages. We militantly defend people's right to imbibe still-legal substances, like steak, alcohol and cigarettes. We oppose all laws against so-called "crimes without victims"—drugs, gambling, prostitution. These laws threaten the privacy and rights of everyone and should be *abolished*. As Billie Holiday sang: "Ain't nobody's business if I do."

Even when the smoking bans applied mostly to indoor areas, there was no evidence that secondary smoke endangered

nonsmokers. In the great (polluted) outdoors of New York City, this notion is simply ludicrous. Despite earlier absurd denials by the tobacco industry, it's not a big secret that cigarettes aren't healthy for those who use them. As for those who don't, but are merely "exposed" to those who do, *nothing* has been scientifically proved to show that they suffer from secondhand smoke.

Much of the ballyhoo dates back to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report (*Respiratory Effects of Passive Smoking*, December 1992) that claimed to deduce a correlation—based on 31 extant studies—between exposure to smoke and a "19 percent" higher risk of lung cancer, particularly in the case of nonsmoking wives of smokers. Yet almost none of the results can be considered statistically significant. In fact, nine out of the 31 studies showed a negative correlation between secondary smoke and lung cancer. As for the 19 percent figure, a number this low in such a study could be explained by anything from pure chance to previous family history. For smokers, by comparison, where a connection is clear, the increased incidence of lung cancer was on the order of **2,000 percent**. This concocted report, by the way, came from the same government agency that nine years later would tell residents of lower Manhattan that the air around Ground Zero was fit to breathe one week after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, even as the site was burning and releasing highly toxic particles.

Subsequent major studies that tried to find a health risk from secondhand smoke had to reach the same conclusion: there is no statistically meaningful correlation. Several sources have exposed the unscientific ways in which such studies are conducted in the first place, from not controlling for the effects of urban pollution to basing their conclusions on people's estimates of how much secondhand smoke they have been exposed to over the course of their lives (see, for example, "The Bogus 'Science' of Secondhand Smoke," *Washington Post*, 30 January 2007).

Karl Marx, who scientifically laid bare the workings of this vicious capitalist system, wrote concerning English liquor laws: "The classical saints of Christianity mortified *their* body for the salvation of the souls of the masses; the modern, educated saints mortify *the bodies of the masses* for the salvation of their own souls" ("Anti-Church Movement," June 1855). Like Marx, we draw the conclusion that only the victory of proletarian revolution and establishment of workers rule will put an end to the hideous exploitation and oppression of the working masses. In the course of such a fight, it is necessary to struggle against the ever-growing regimentation of the population for greater profits and productivity, for cannon fodder in imperialist wars and occupations. Workers (including those who smoke): you have nothing to lose but your chains!■

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militarization of the border, a “guest worker” program amounting to indentured servitude, a torturous “legalization” process for a few, with the rest considered criminals. In El Paso, Obama refused activists’ pleas to turn a blind eye to the law and stop deporting high school students and other immigrants with no criminal records, intoning “that’s not how a democracy works.” This is how capitalist democracy works: the government, whoever heads it, acts as the executive committee for managing the affairs of the capitalist ruling class as a whole.

The Obama administration has drastically expanded the “Secure Communities” program, now operating in all but eight states, which was initiated under Bush. Under Secure Communities, any person jailed, no matter how minor the alleged crime, has his or her fingerprints checked against federal immigration records for possible deportation or indefinite detention. Tens of thousands have been deported as a result of this dragnet. Most either have no criminal record or were busted for traffic infractions, misdemeanors or drug possession, which should not be a crime to begin with. But innocence is not the point! Every undocumented immigrant is a criminal in the eyes of the state.

In California alone, from the beginning of its participation in Secure Communities in May 2009 through the end of March 2011, fingerprinting resulted in nearly 30,000 deportations, almost 40 percent of the national total. Massachu-



November 2010 protest at California's Fresno State University. Dream Act bolsters U.S. imperialist military in name of "path to citizenship" for immigrant youth.

setts and New York, as well as many local police departments, are trying to opt out of the program, complaining that it detracts from catching “real criminals” and undercuts cops’ attempts to get information from Latinos and others. At bottom, this dispute is over how best to enforce racist capitalist rule.

The E-Verify employment database and audits of employers' I-9 forms, which are meant to confirm workers' legal status, are also expanding. In less than three years, the Obama administration has carried out more workplace audits than were made during the entire two-term Bush administration. Where the Bush regime reveled in unleashing I.C.E. agents on workplaces, the Obama regime puts a premium on the "efficiency" of "desktop raids." Immigrant families have been ravaged, as the breadwinners are thrown out of their jobs with few prospects of employment anywhere.

Even as it attacks immigrant rights and union gains, the Democratic Party makes a pretense of standing for working people, blacks and immigrants. The openly anti-labor Republicans promote undisguised racist bigotry as they try to one-up Obama in bashing immigrants. Last year all eyes were on Arizona, where the Republican-controlled state legislature passed the infamous SB1070 law mandating that cops arrest anyone who fails to show them their immigration papers or proof of citizenship. This made it open season on any Latino, and anyone else who might look “foreign.” The law also prohibits anyone from transporting or giving shelter to undocumented immigrants.

In just the first three months of 2011, state legislatures enacted scores of laws targeting non-citizens. Most recently, the Republican-dominated Alabama state legislature pushed through a bill that goes even further than Arizona's apartheid measure, banning all undocumented students from public colleges and ordering parents to report their kids' immigration status to their schools. The Republicans' "drive 'em all out" rhetoric and vicious state laws allow Obama's Democrats to posture as friends of immigrants, much like the proverbial "good cop" postures as a "friend" to the bloodied prisoner in the interrogation cell: Work with me now, because if I leave the next guy will be much worse.

The Republicans and the Democrats differ only over how to most effectively administer the system of capitalist exploitation. Democratic Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez—a darling of liberals and reformist “socialists”—is trying to get the White House to throw a bone to immigrants instead of just kicking them in the teeth all the time. This is simply part of the deception practiced by the Democrats. A key component to an “immigration reform” bill he put forward in 2009 was a plan to beef up “border security” even further, a call for greater repression that could only lead to more deaths of immigrants. As a representative of the liberal wing of the capitalist class enemy, Gutierrez is merely the sugar coating on the same poison pill of bourgeois party politics.

Undermining the ability of the unions to defend immigrant workers, the bureaucracies of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win federations fully support the Democratic Party, of which the labor bureaucrats are themselves a part. The leadership of the SEIU service workers, a union with a large, dynamic immigrant component, was an early proponent of the “guest worker” scheme. In a May 10 press release, the SEIU brass applauded Obama’s El Paso speech and “the enormous security improvements that have been made along the border in recent years.” Accepting the capitalist profit system, the labor traitors seek only to tinker with its regulation of labor and its methods of repression.

To revitalize the labor movement will require hard class struggle, on its own behalf and on behalf of all those ground down by capitalism. This means fighting against the racial and ethnic divisions long sown by the capitalist rulers to divide and weaken labor. Native-born workers, black and white, must be won to the defense of immigrant rights, while immigrant workers must understand the crucial importance of fighting against black oppression, a cornerstone of American capitalism. The importance of working-class unity in struggle was shown by the union organizing victory at the Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, in 2008, when the overwhelmingly immigrant and black workforce fought against attempts by the bosses, backed up by *la migrá*, to drive a wedge between them.

In the course of renewed labor struggle, the need to break the unions' ties to the Democratic Party and to forge a new labor leadership committed to the political independence of the working class will be posed pointblank. The Spartacist League is committed to building



May 1: Spartacist sign at L.A. immigrant rights demonstration reads: “Down With the Democrats and the Republicans! For a Workers Party That Fights for Socialist Revolution!”

a revolutionary workers party that will champion all the exploited and the oppressed—black and white, native-born and immigrant—in the fight for a workers government.

Dream Act: Trap for Immigrant Youth

Many immigrant rights activists and students have focused their efforts on the campaign to pass the Dream Act, which Democratic Congressmen reintroduced on May 12 after it was rejected last December. Obama made clear in El Paso that this was on the agenda again, after which AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka dutifully chimed in with his own appeal to pass the law. If passed, the Dream Act would allow a certain number of undocumented youth to apply for conditional residency papers. After completing two years of either college or military service, these youth could petition for permanent residency. While the Dream Act is promoted and commonly viewed as a means to let immigrants attend college without fear of deportation, this is a smokescreen for its major purpose, which is to provide a recruiting tool for the imperialist military.

Out of an estimated 65,000 immigrant youth subject to deportation who graduate from high school each year, at most one-fifth go on to college. And as tuition costs keep rising, the Act would still bar these students' access to Pell Grants. It is clear that military service would be the most likely route taken by the vast majority of those eligible. Currently estimated at 280,000 youth, those eligible for the Dream Act would provide a huge pool of potential military recruits. The Pentagon thus had every reason to enthusiastically endorse the Dream Act. And as proletarian opponents of imperialist militarism, we Marxists have every reason to oppose it. Down with the Dream Act! Not one man or woman, not one penny for the imperialist military! The universities should be open to everyone: For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid stipend for students!

The same reformist left groups that built an “antiwar movement” to fight against “Bush’s war” in Iraq have jumped on the Democrats’ bandwagon in support of this pro-military measure. Workers World Party leader Teresa Gutierrez mused in a 16 December 2010 *Workers World* editorial that the Dream Act would be “a step forward for the movement defending immigrant rights.” This is despite her worry that “it would be the height of cruel imperialist irony if those same youth are forced to go to Arizona or California to turn their guns on the migrant workers attempting to cross the U.S./Mexican border, many of whom could be members of their very own families.” No doubt! After the Dream Act failed to pass last December, the Party for Socialism and Liberation wrote in its newspaper *Liberation* (26 December 2010) that “the Dream Act would have addressed a grave injus-

tice." Complaining only that the bill "did not go far enough," the article did not raise a hint of criticism of the bill's military component.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) noted in a 17 September 2010 editorial posted on socialistworker.org that it had opposed the Dream Act in 2005-2006, as did the “left wing of the immigrant rights movement,” which saw it as a “diversion” at the time. This was when immigrant rights protests had begun to erupt, presenting the ISO with an opportunity to help build a (pro-Democrat) “mass movement.” While those protests brought out large numbers of immigrants and a good number of trade unionists as well, they were politically in the grip of the Democratic Party. And indeed, as the Democrats won control of Congress in 2006 and the White House two years later, the protests greatly diminished. In its September 2010 statement, the crassly opportunist ISO explains that it underwent a change of heart. As the campaign for the Dream Act was the only game in town and a lot of immigrant students wanted it, the ISO declared its support, with a few muted criticisms.

That these reformists have latched on to a Pentagon program might give their more critical followers some pause. In fact, their embrace of the Dream Act is an expression of the “politics of the possible,” in this case helping to bolster the armed might of U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of all the world’s exploited and oppressed. Whatever their social weight, the reformists act as obstacles in the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party, the indispensable instrument to organize the social power of the proletariat to smash the system of capitalist imperialism and establish workers rule. ■

The image shows the front cover of a publication. At the top, a black rectangular box contains the title 'Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, on the left, is a small graphic of a hammer and sickle. To the right of the graphic, the text 'For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the main title 'For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!' is written in a very large, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath the main title, the text 'SEE PAGE 2' is printed in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. Further down, the text 'Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S.' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, 'SEE PAGE 30' is printed. A horizontal line separates this section from the next. Below the line, the text 'Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, 'SEE PAGE 37' is printed. At the bottom left, the text '52 November 2000' is printed, followed by a small logo and the text 'Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116'. The entire cover is framed by a thick black border.

Economic Crisis and the Tunisia Uprising

The following is based on a report given by a comrade of the Ligue Trotskyste de France to a recent gathering of International Communist League members in Europe.

The reason the various uprisings that have been shaking the Arab world have taken place now and not five, ten or 20 years ago has, in my opinion, economic origins. The devastation of the world depression has added to a situation that had caused steady deterioration in the living conditions for the working masses of North Africa in the last 15 years or so, as seen especially in the huge rise in food prices and the slashing back of government food subsidies. The worsening of their conditions was caused by the adoption of IMF-dictated structural measures beginning in the 1980s and then various agreements, mainly between the European Union (EU) and North African countries, in the second part of the 1990s. This development needs to be traced in part to the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union.

The bottom line of the agreements was based on the imperialists' promise that the European capitalists would outsource part of their industry to the countries of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia). In reality, the domestic markets of these Arab countries are too small to draw massive foreign investment. Furthermore, industrial production outsourced from the European Union for export back to Europe was moved in large part to the capitalist sector in the Chinese deformed workers state. There is some spare parts production for the auto and aerospace industry in Tunisia, but the bulk of the export-oriented industry is cheap textile production with little value added.

The aim of the agreements was to dismantle tariff barriers between both sides of the Mediterranean and to do away with whatever minimal labor legislation had been in place. In fact, this process started first in Tunisia, and this is the country where it went furthest. So it is not a coincidence that the uprisings started in Tunisia.

This "neoliberalism" has left a devastated economy in North Africa. Of course, there are variations depending in particular on the presence or not of an important oil industry. Algeria is a major producer of oil and gas with significant production potential. However, heavy industry in Algeria, which had been built in the 1970s, has been largely dismantled. Steel production was downsized and then sold to Mittal Steel, among others. In general, from Morocco to Syria between 12 and 15 percent of the population is employed in industry, including light industry. The one exception is Tunisia, where the figure is above 20 percent.

The question of the impact of outsourcing on the strength of the working class and the trade unions is very relevant to North Africa. Labor regulations have been largely dismantled. There is a growing number of workers employed informally, through labor contractors, etc., including in the so-called "formal sector." The head of the Tunisian high school teachers union told *Informations Ouvrières* (21 April), newspaper of the Lambertist Parti Ouvrier Indépendant:

"The great majority of the mobilizations demand a solution to the fundamental problem, which is employment and was a central demand of the revolution. There are very few strikes which raise the question of wage increases, even though this problem is far from negligible in many companies which do not respect any regulations and laws and underpay their workers. Most mobilizations want to end two plagues: outsourcing and temporary work."

Representative of the growth of the infor-

mal sector proper was Mohamed Bouazizi, the street vendor who set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid in December, sparking the revolt.

There are also demographic reasons, which have come to a head in this period. After independence in the 1950s and 1960s, there was an explosive population growth due to the improvement of health systems. From around 1974 on, mass emigration to Europe was cut off as the European countries tightened their borders. While



27 December 2010 Tunis demonstration, part of wave of protests against unemployment and wretched living conditions that led to ouster of dictator Ben Ali.

the life expectancy of the working class increased, the mass influx of youth provoked an explosion of the population able to work and consequently an explosion in structural mass unemployment rates.

This has been aggravated for college-educated youth. The governments in the Maghreb, particularly Tunisia, made a major effort to educate their youth. In the years after independence, when the development of national capitalism was based on a strong state sector and a significant teaching and health apparatus, the natural employment perspectives for college-educated youth were centered on the civil service. This has been increasingly reversed in the last 15 years or so, particularly as a result of IMF- and EU-dictated measures to reduce the public sector. As a result, the unemployment rate *increases* with the level of education. Even before the recent uprisings, it was due to reach catastrophic proportions in the next two or three years. Some 70,000 additional college graduates are scheduled to enter the labor market this fall, a large part of whom will be unemployed.

Since January, the situation in Tunisia has been made worse by the return of 20,000 Tunisians who had jobs in Libya and by foreign refugees from Libya, and has been aggravated as well by the catastrophic situation of the tourist industry, which is a major employer. People have tried to cross the sea and get to France, with hundreds of youth drowned (see "Refugees Drown as Imperialists Step Up War on Libya," WV No. 981, 27 May). Now there are concentrations of Tunisian youth in the streets of Paris and Marseille desperately looking for housing and jobs and trying to avoid police round-ups. The IMF and World Bank have started to draw circles around Tunisia, with promises of loans to supposedly bridge the currently dire situation. As always in such circumstances, and as cruelly experienced right now by Greek, Irish and Portuguese workers, these schemes amount to channeling more fresh money

into bank coffers and imposing more drastic austerity measures on workers.

In the last 15 years, the social security and unemployment compensation systems, which were basic at best, have been partially dismantled, so that insecurity at all levels has increased. In this context, it is quite remarkable that the working class has managed to appear as a factor at all in Tunisia, although of course not as a class for itself—i.e., conscious of its role as the gravedigger of capitalism. The work-

Arranged marriages are frequent, at least in the bourgeoisie. They still have magic rituals called the *tasfi*h to supposedly protect the virginity of pubescent girls, particularly in the more backward interior of the country but also in Tunis. Hymenoplasty (surgical restoration of the hymen to give the appearance of virginity) and the like seem to be common among the more petty-bourgeois layers. Sexual harassment at work is frequent.

However, it appears that the ICL has been the only organization that has been prominently raising the woman question. In Egypt, the left capitulates to the Muslim Brotherhood. In Tunisia, left groups are also into class-collaborationist alliances with the Islamists. They portray them as "good guy" Islamists like Turkey's ruling bourgeois Justice and Development Party. But I believe that a more important part of the reason why the Tunisian left has been silent on the woman question is because they are at bottom left-Bourguibists, and it was Bourguiba who established the family code immediately after independence. They believe that Tunisia is truly a progressive country regarding the woman question. They believe, as Obama would say, that 90 percent of the road has been traveled already toward the final emancipation of women. Skillfully, the government has announced compulsory sexual parity in the lists for elections to the constituent assembly. Slates not complying with this rule would be automatically eliminated.

This brings me to the pervasiveness of bourgeois nationalism. From the meetings of the Tunisian left in Paris that we have attended to the mass rallies in downtown Tunis, the national anthem has been sung and the national flag waved. The opportunist left has built illusions in the army, even without the Egyptian mythology of defense of the fatherland against Zionist Israel. As we have said, the ideology of the reformist left used to be the class-collaborationist line of "two stages" toward socialism, which has always ended in bloody defeat for the working class. Now it is one stage, toward a "democratic republic," i.e., bourgeois democracy full stop. As we wrote regarding North Africa and the Near East in the February WV article on Tunisia:

"What is essential is the forging of revolutionary workers parties like the Bolshevik Party that led the working class of Russia to power in the 1917 October Revolution—parties committed to the program of permanent revolution, addressing the burning needs of the masses and unalterably leading them to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat. This is the program of the International Communist League. *For a socialist federation of North Africa!*" ■

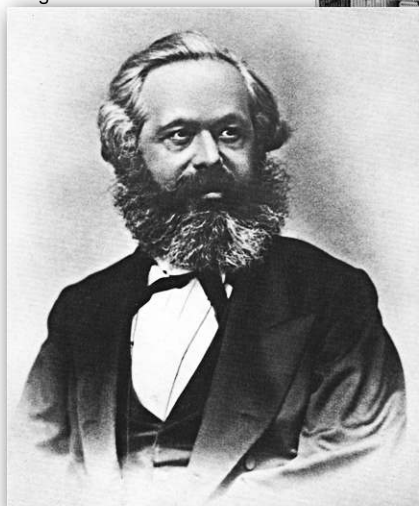


May 5: Tunisian migrants detained by French police in southern France.

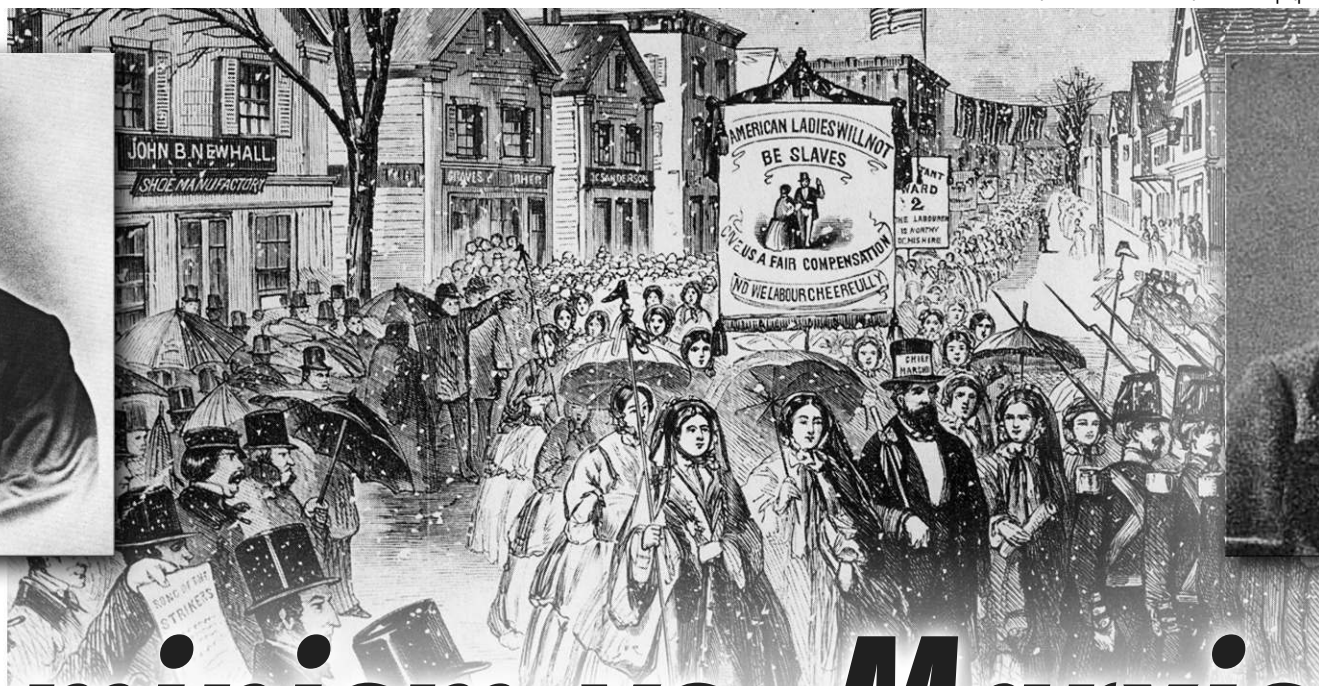
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Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

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Feminism vs. Marxism: Origins of the Conflict

We reprint below an article with minor corrections from the Spring 1974 issue of *Women and Revolution* (No. 5), which was the journal of the Spartacist League Central Committee Commission for Work Among Women from 1973 until 1996.

Contrary to an opinion still subscribed to in certain circles, modern feminism did not emerge full-grown from the fertile womb of the New Left, but is in fact an ideological offspring of the utopian egalitarianism of the early nineteenth century, which was in turn a product of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It is noteworthy that the most original theorist of utopian socialism, Charles Fourier, was also the first advocate of women's liberation through the replacement of the nuclear family by collective child rearing. Since utopian socialism (including its solution to the problem of the oppression of women) represented the ideals of the bourgeois-democratic revolution breaking through the barriers of private property, it was historically progressive. However, with the genesis of Marxism and the recognition that an egalitarian society can emerge only out of the rule of the working class, feminism (like other forms of utopian egalitarianism) lost its progressive aspect and became an ideology of the left wing of liberal individualism, a position which it continues to occupy to this day.

Women in the Bourgeois-Democratic Vision

Without question, the most important bourgeois-democratic work on women's liberation was Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* written in 1792. Wollstonecraft was part of a circle of English radical democrats which included William Blake, Tom Paine and William Godwin, whose political lives came to be dominated by the French Revolution. A year before she wrote her classic on sexual equality, Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*, a polemic against Edmund Burke's counterrevolutionary writings. A few years after, she was to attempt a history of the French Revolution.

While informed and imbued with moral outrage as a result of her own experiences as an unmarried, middle-class woman (she worked as a school teacher and governess), *Vindication* is essentially an extension of the principles of the Enlightenment and French Revolution to women. The first chapter, entitled "Rights and

From *Women and Revolution*, 1974

Eight hundred striking women shoemakers followed by 4,000 workmen march in Lynn, Massachusetts, March 1860. Left inset: Karl Marx. Right: Victoria Woodhull.

Duties of Mankind," sets the theoretical framework. *Vindication* rests heavily on analogies between the basis for the equality of women and general social equality.

For a contemporary reader, *Vindication* seems a highly unbalanced work. While the description of the role of women continues to be relevant, Wollstonecraft's solutions appear pallid. Her main programmatic demand, to which she devotes the concluding chapter, is uniform education for girls and boys. Even when she wrote *Vindication* this was only a moderately radical proposal. In fact in the very year that *Vindication* was written, a similar educational program was proposed in the French Assembly. Yet generations after the establishment of coeducation and the even more radical reform of women's suffrage, Wollstonecraft's depiction of women's role in society continues to ring true.

Although Wollstonecraft was one of the most radical political activists of her day (shortly after writing her classic on women's rights, she crossed the Channel to take part in the revolutionary French government), *Vindication* has an unexpectedly moralizing and personalist character. Like many feminists of our day, she appeals to men to recognize the full humanity of women and to women to stop being sex objects and develop themselves. And there is the same conviction that if only men and women would really believe in these ideals and behave accordingly, then women would achieve equality.

The emphasis on individual relationships is not peculiar to Wollstonecraft, but arises from the inherent contradiction within the bourgeois-democratic approach to women's oppression. Wollstonecraft accepted the nuclear family as the central institution of society and argued for sexual equality within that framework.

By accepting the basic role of women as mothers, Wollstonecraft accepted a division of labor in which women were necessarily economically dependent on their husbands. Therefore, women's equal-

ity was essentially dependent on how the marriage partners treated one another. In good part, *Vindication* is an argument that parents and particularly fathers should raise their daughters more like their sons in order to bring out their true potential. But if fathers reject education for their daughters, there is no other recourse. Here we have the limits both of bourgeois democracy and of Wollstonecraft's vision.

Charles Fourier and the Abolition of the Family

The status of women in the nineteenth century represented the most acute and manifest expression of the contradiction between capitalist society and its own ideals. It was this contradiction that gave birth to utopian socialism. Early in the nineteenth century it became apparent to those still committed to the ideals of the French Revolution that liberty, equality and fraternity were not compatible with private property in a competitive market economy. As the most incisive of the pioneer socialists, Charles Fourier, put it:

"Philosophy was right to vaunt *liberty*; it is the foremost desire of all creatures. But philosophy forgot that in civilized society liberty is illusory if the common people lack wealth. When the wage-earning classes are poor, their independence is as fragile as a house without foundations. The free man who lacks wealth immediately sinks back under the yoke of the rich."

—Beecher and Bienvenu (Eds.),
The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier

And when Fourier applied the same critical concepts to the status of women, he reached equally radical, anti-bourgeois conclusions. The importance that Fourier attributed to the condition of women is well known:

"Social progress and changes of period are brought about by virtue of the progress of women toward liberty, and social retrogression occurs as a result of a diminution in the liberty of women.... In summary, the extension of the privileges of women is the fundamental cause of all social progress."

—*Ibid.*

What is of decisive importance about Fourier's concern for women's oppression is that he put forth a program for the total reconstruction of society that would end the historic division of labor between men and women. In Fourier's projected socialist community, children were raised collectively with no particular relation to their biological parents, men and women performed the same work and total sexual liberty was encouraged. (He regarded heterosexual monogamy as the extension of bourgeois property concepts to the sexual sphere.)

Fourier's intense hostility to the patriarchal family in good part derived from his realization that it was inherently sexually repressive. In this he anticipated much of radical Freudianism. For example, he observed, "There are still many parents who allow their unmarried daughters to suffer and die for want of sexual satisfaction" (*Ibid.*).

Despite the fantastic nature of his projected socialist communities or "phalanxes," Fourier's program contained the rational core for the reorganization of society needed to liberate women. He was uniquely responsible for making the demand for the liberation of women through the abolition of the nuclear family an integral part of the socialist program which the young Marx and Engels inherited. Engels was more than willing (for example, in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*)

continued on page 8

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How I Broke with Feminism and Became a Revolutionary Marxist

By Simone Hayes

When I first came around the Spartacist League, I was shocked when members declared that they were definitely *not* feminists. I was a feminist and everyone I knew was a feminist. I subscribed to the pick-your-own version of feminism. Whatever you wanted feminism to mean, that was fine with me.

I recall being asked a very simple question by a Spartacist League member. She asked me where women's oppression came from and I responded, matter of factly, that "patriarchy" oppressed women. I believed the divisions in society were based on gender, as all feminists do. In other words, women were oppressed because for centuries people believed them to be inferior and society and its laws merely reflected that belief.

When I was a sophomore in college, I became a feminist. A lot of the activities I participated in as a feminist centered on campus agitation. I joined a group in community college called the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, which was basically a campus section of the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF). The FMF was a nonprofit organization that had split with the National Organization for Women in the 1980s. Its main objective was to "raise consciousness" among students about women's rights, within the framework of capitalism. We had petition drives, panel discussions and demonstrations on issues surrounding reproductive rights and issues affecting women internationally.

When I transferred to UCLA my junior year, antiwar "social justice" organizations, i.e., class-collaborationist coalition groups, abounded and I threw myself into this cozy little "family of the left" with great enthusiasm. It did not bother me that we emphasized (maybe 15 to 20 times a day) during the 2006 midterm elections that women desperately needed Democrats in office to get rid of harmful legislation. Or that I had to write press releases for the FMF calling on the U.S. and UN to intervene in Afghanistan and Iran to "protect" Middle Eastern women.

My basic outlook as a feminist was that most worldly ills could be solved if everyone just realized that women were equal to men. Feminists have a fundamental misunderstanding of the breakdown of society and its antagonisms as they believe the fundamental division in the world is between women and men. Feminist theorists have cooked up all sorts of theories on how to rectify and overcome these divisions. The principle most commonly promulgated by feminists is the need for women's representation among the bourgeoisie and in bourgeois politics. I myself believed that if women were represented in government and Fortune 500 companies in a more egalitarian manner, this would plant the seed of women's equality and the world would gradually become a more equal place. These were thoroughly idealist views that were eventually stamped out after I studied a historical analysis of women's oppression.

"Feminism vs. Marxism: Origins of the Conflict" came with my first subscription to *Workers Vanguard* and was the first Spartacist article I believe I ever read. This article made clear the origins of feminism from "utopian egalitarianism" in the early 19th century and its eventual degeneration into the liberal individualist milieu.

As I was studying Marxism, I read a lot of articles on the deficiency of feminism,

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

on its very bourgeois roots and its very flawed program for women's emancipation. But what truly broke me from a feminist, and therefore, idealist viewpoint, was studying historical materialism and looking at the world from a class perspective. With this perspective, the roots of women's oppression became clear. One particular work that was essential to my understanding of women's oppression was Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family,*

would be provided, such as socialized kitchens, laundries, day care, not to mention free health care and free abortion on demand. Studying the Russian Revolution made this clear to me. The Bolsheviks fought, as soon as the Soviet government was formed, to replace the family with the socialization of household labor. Communal dining halls, laundries and childcare facilities were established and laws giving women the right to vote and



Hillary Clinton flanked by NOW president Kim Gandy (right) and FMF founder Eleanor Smeal (left) at "Hillary for president" rally in 2007.

ly, Private Property, and the State. Engels presents and explains the core institution of women's oppression, the monogamous family unit, and how this institution arose with the inception of private property.

The institution of the family under capitalism is essential to the maintenance of capitalism and it is also the main source of women's oppression. Women bear the burden of raising the next generation of laborers, instilling bourgeois morality and obedience and caring for the people capitalism will not care for: the young, the sick and the old. Black women workers are triply oppressed, as they are not only wage slaves but are also subject to sexual and racial oppression.

The material conditions necessary to liberate women became clear. It was imperative to overthrow capitalism and therefore private property and establish a socialized planned economy. With a planned economy everything that is materially necessary to truly emancipate women

to abortions were passed. When I first studied the Russian Revolution, I continually, and perhaps skeptically, questioned why the emancipation of women was an essential task of the Bolsheviks after the revolution. I say skeptically, because as a feminist, I thought that women played more of a background role in the revolution and the question of their liberation was never a crucial one. Reading letters from Lenin and other Bolsheviks at this time (from *The Emancipation of Women*) quashed my skepticism. Because to the Bolsheviks, women's emancipation was integral to the emancipation of labor itself, not subordinate to it.

Many feminists who have studied the Russian Revolution claim that the Bolsheviks subordinated the question of women's emancipation to the question of proletarian liberation and the struggle for power. This shows a clear misunderstanding of what is necessary for women to be liberated. In other situations where the ques-

tion of women's emancipation was essential, feminists have been on the wrong side. Example: Afghanistan 1979. When the Soviet Union entered Afghanistan in 1979, most feminists took the side of the woman-hating CIA-backed *mujahedin* against the Soviet Union, while the *mujahedin* threw acid in the faces of women who were attempting to educate themselves.

After a lot of reading (and many arguments) I came to the realization that feminism can take you to some pretty nasty places politically. From many feminists' hysterical call, like Take Back the Night, for more cops on college campuses, thereby targeting minority youth, to feminists cozying up to the religious right in anti-sex witchhunts against pornography. Internationally, feminist ideology hurts women by continuously calling for U.S. imperialism and the UN to "intervene" in places like Afghanistan and Iran. Here in the U.S., it is no secret that feminists make it their duty to get Democrats elected. If you go to the Feminist Majority Foundation's Feminists for Obama Web site, you will see in big bold letters, "We won! We won!" and below it, a huge picture of Obama with the caption: "This is what a feminist looks like." This clearly demonstrates the political bankruptcy of feminism. Feminists claim that "we have won." Who is this "we"? It is certainly not the workers, black people or the oppressed of this country. And it's not just Obama they champion; feminists ask women workers to solidarize with Hillary Clinton, Deputy Top Cop of U.S. imperialism, rather than the man next to them on the factory line! Feminists do not want to get rid of the capitalist state; in fact, they seek to work inside it. Therefore, they have no genuine perspective toward women's emancipation.

As a Marxist, I now champion the fight for all the workers and oppressed in the world to throw off the yoke of this racist capitalist system. As a Spartacus Youth Club member, I join the fight to win students over to the understanding that the workers must take power in their own name and dismantle this racist capitalist system. As I studied the SL's history and the history of working-class struggle, I came to the understanding that one cannot fight just for the liberation of *women*. One must take up the fight for the liberation of all workers and oppressed. How is this possible? By building a Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in the struggle to smash capitalism through world socialist revolution! ■

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Women and Revolution

A New Translation
Communist International
Theses on Work Among Women

Second International Conference of Communist Women, Moscow, 1921. Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai seated at center.

Spartacist is proud to publish a new English translation from the Russian-language text of the "Theses on Work Among Women," passed by the Second International Conference of Communist Women and adopted by the Third World Congress of the Third (Communist) International (1921) in 1921. The Theses are a key document of the early, revolutionary years of the CI under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, inspired by the world October Revolution of 1917. Drawn from hard-fought lessons, carry out work among women, based on decades of experience in the international revolutionary movement. This new translation by the International Communist League, based on archival research into the political origins of the document, underlines our commitment to the fight for the emancipation of women as a crucial part of our struggle for international proletarian revolution.

In 1971 and 1972 Women and Revolution printed the Communist's official 1921 English translation of the Theses emerged out of the New Left in the United States (W&R Nos. 2 and 3, September-October 1971 and May 1972, excerpts from the Theses appear in W&R No. 22, Spring 1981). As the line that must be drawn is not one of sex but of class. As revolutionary Trotskyists, we sought to win over subjectively necessary of destroying the capitalist system as a prerequisite to the emancipation of women. In 1972, W&R became League's Central Committee. After 25 years as a Marxist journal of women's liberation, in 1997 Women and Revolution was incorporated into quadlingual Spartacist and in the ICL section press.

We stand on the shoulders of our forebears of the Communist International during the period of its first four congresses, continued on page 50

Feminism vs. Marxism...

(continued from page 6)

to pay homage to the primary author of the socialist program for women's liberation.

Utopian Egalitarianism and Women's Liberation

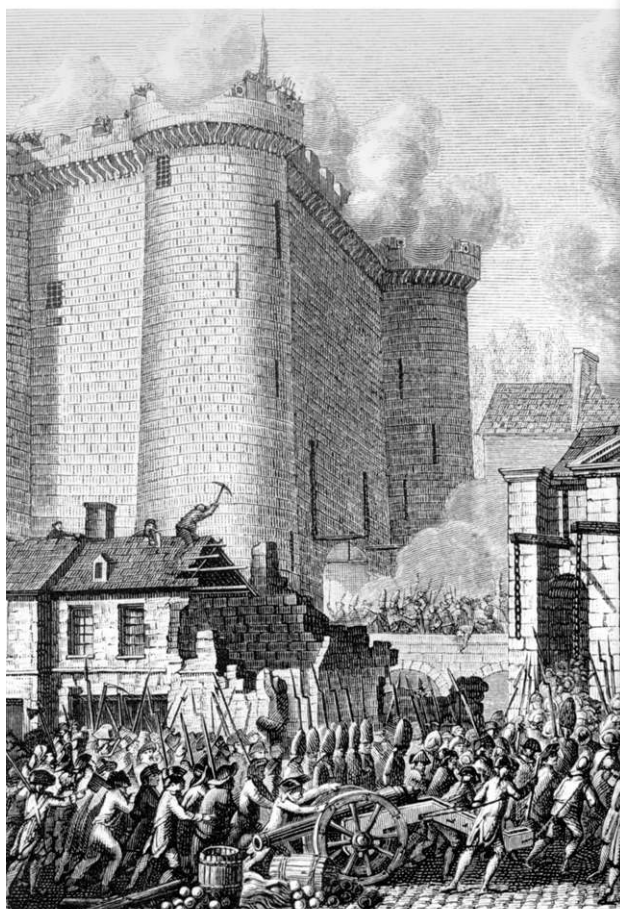
While not giving the woman question the centrality it had in Fourierism, the two other major currents of early nineteenth-century socialism, Owenism and Saint-Simonism, were also unambiguously committed to sexual equality and opposed to legally enforced monogamy. The political life of the early nineteenth century was characterized by the *complete interpenetration* of the struggle for women's liberation and the general struggle for an egalitarian society. Those women advocating women's rights (no less than the men who did so) did not view this question as distinct from, much less counterposed to, the general movement for a rational social order. Those women who championed sexual equality were either socialists or radical democrats whose activity on behalf of women's rights occupied only a fraction of their political lives. The most radical women advocates of sexual equality—the Americans Frances Wright and Margaret Fuller and the French-woman Flora Tristan—all conform to this political profile.

Frances Wright began her political career as a liberal reformer with a tract in favor of the abolition of slavery. She was won to socialism by Robert Dale Owen, Robert Owen's son, who immigrated to the U.S. to become its most important radical socialist in the 1820-30's. Wright established an Owenite commune in Tennessee modeled on the famous one at New Harmony, Indiana. In 1828-29, she and Robert Dale Owen edited the *Free Enquirer*, a newspaper associated with the New York Workingman's Party which championed universal suffrage, free public education, "free love" and birth control.

Margaret Fuller, whose *Women in the Nineteenth Century* was the most influential women's rights work of her generation, was a product of New England Transcendentalism and had edited a journal with Ralph Waldo Emerson. Like Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller approached the woman question from the standpoint of religious radicalism (the equality of souls).

Fuller was associated with the Transcendentalist commune, Brook Farm, about the time it was transformed into a Fourierist community or "phalanx," the year before she wrote her classic on women's equality. Shortly after that she went to Europe and became involved in the democratic nationalist movements that were a mainspring in the revolutions of 1848. In that momentous year, she went to Italy to run a hospital for Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy movement.

The most important woman socialist of the pre-1848 era was Flora Tristan. She began her revolutionary career with a tract in favor of legalized divorce, which had been outlawed in France following the reaction of 1815. (As a young woman Tristan had left her husband, an act which resulted in social ostracism and continual hardship throughout her life.) Her work on divorce led to a correspondence with the aging Fourier and a commitment to



Mansell Collection; John Opie (top right)

Top right: English radical democrat Mary Wollstonecraft. Her 1792 classic work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, was extension of the principles of the Enlightenment and 1789 French Revolution. Left: Storming of the Bastille in Paris, July 1789, inspired fighters against tyranny around the world.

socialism. Among the most cosmopolitan of socialists, Tristan had crisscrossed the Channel playing an active role in both the Owenite and Chartist movements. Summing up her political situation in a letter to Victor Considerant, leader of the Fourierist movement after the master's death, she wrote: "Almost the entire world is against me, men because I am demanding the emancipation of women, the propertied classes because I am demanding the emancipation of the wage earners" (Goldsmith, *Seven Women Against the World*).

In the 1840's the ancient French craft unions, the *compagnons*, were transforming themselves into modern trade unions. This process produced an embryonic revolutionary socialist labor movement whose main leaders were Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Auguste Blanqui and Etienne Cabet. Flora Tristan was part of this nascent proletarian socialist movement. Her *The Workers Union*, written in 1843, was the most advanced statement of proletarian socialism up to its day. Its central theme was the need for an *international* workers' organization. (Marx met Tristan while he was in Paris and was undoubtedly influenced by her work.) The concluding passage of *The Workers Union* affirms: "Union is power if we unite on the social and political field, on the ground of equal rights for both sexes, if we organize labor, we shall win welfare for all."

The Workers Union devotes a section to the problems of women and its concluding passage indicates the integral role that sexual equality had in Tristan's concept of socialism: "We have resolved to include in our Charter woman's sacred and inalienable rights. We desire that men should give to their wives and mothers the liberty and absolute equality which they enjoy themselves."

Flora Tristan died of typhoid in 1844 at the age of 41. Had she survived the catastrophe of 1848 and remained politically active, the history of European socialism might well have been different, for she was free of the residual Jacobinism of Blanqui and the artisan philistinism of Proudhon.

Contemporary feminists and bourgeois historians tend to label all early nineteenth-century female advocates of sexual equality feminists. This is a wholly illegitimate analysis—a projection of current categories back into a time when they are meaningless. As a delimited movement and distinctive ideology feminism did not exist in the early nineteenth century. Virtually *all* the advocates of full sexual

equality considered this an integral part of the movement for a generally free and egalitarian society rooted in Enlightenment principles and carrying forward the American and particularly the French Revolutions. The American Owenite Frances Wright was no more a feminist than the English Owenite William Thompson, who wrote *An appeal of one half the Human Race, Women, against the pretensions of the other Half, Men, to keep them in Civil and Domestic Slavery*. Flora Tristan was no more a feminist than was Fourier.



Roger-Viollet

Flora Tristan

In the 1840's, a Transcendentalist radical like Margaret Fuller, a nationalist democrat like Giuseppe Mazzini and a socialist working-class organizer like Etienne Cabet could consider themselves part of a common political movement whose program was encapsulated in the slogan, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." In its most radical expression, this movement looked forward to a single, total revolution which would simultaneously establish democracy, eliminate classes, achieve equality for women and end national oppression.

This vision was defeated on the barricades in 1848. And with that defeat, the component elements of early nineteenth-century radicalism (liberal democracy and socialism, trade unionism, women's equality and national liberation) separated and began to compete and conflict with one another. After 1848, it seemed that bourgeois society would continue for some time and that the interests of the oppressed, be they workers, women or nations, would have to be realized within its framework. Feminism (like trade unionism and national liberation) emerged as a

delimited movement with its own constituency, ideology and organization only after the great catastrophe of 1848 had temporarily dispelled the vision of a fundamentally new social order.

Marx Against Utopian Egalitarianism

It is sometimes written that Fourier regarded socialism more as a means of overcoming women's oppression than class oppression. This is a post-Marx way of looking at politics and not how Fourier would have viewed it. He would have said that he projected a society which would satisfy human needs and that the most striking thing about it was the radical change in the role of women. As opposed to the materialist view that different political movements represent the interests of different classes, utopian socialism shared the rational idealistic conception of political motivation characteristic of the Enlightenment—i.e., that different political movements reflect different conceptions of the best possible social organization. The idealism of early socialism was probably inevitable since it was produced by those revolutionary bourgeois democrats who maintained their principles after the actual bourgeoisie had abandoned revolutionary democracy. The social base of early socialism was those petty-bourgeois radicals who had gone beyond the interests and real historic possibilities of their class. This was most true of German "True Socialism" which, in a nation with virtually no industrial workers and a conservative, traditionalist petty bourgeoisie, was purely a literary movement. It was least true of English Owenism, which had intersected the embryonic labor movement while retaining a large element of liberal philanthropism.

By the 1840's a working-class movement had arisen in France, Belgium and England which was attracted to socialist ideas and organization. However, the relationship of the new-fledged socialist workers' organizations to the older socialist currents, as well as to liberal democracy and the political expressions of women's rights and national liberation, remained confused in all existing socialist theories. It was Marx who cut the Gordian knot and provided a coherent, realistic analysis of the social basis for the socialist movement within bourgeois society.

Marx asserted that the working class was the social group which would play the primary and distinctive role in establishing socialism. This was so because the working class was that social group whose interests and condition were most in harmony with a collectivist economy or, conversely, which had the least stake in the capitalist mode of production.

Marx's appreciation of the role of the proletariat was not deduced from German philosophy, but was the result of his experience in France in the 1840's. Socialism had manifestly polarized French society along class lines, the main base for socialism being the industrial working class, the propertied classes being implacably hostile and the petty bourgeoisie vacillating, often seeking a utopian third road.

For Marx the predominance of intellectuals in the early socialist movement was not proof that the socialist movement could be based on universal reason. Rather it was necessarily a phenomenon partly reflecting the contradictions of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and partly anticipating the new alignment of class forces: "A portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat and in particular, a portion of bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" (Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*).

The propertied, educated classes could not be won to socialism on the basis of rational and democratic ideals even though objectively those ideals could only be realized under socialism. Along the same lines, women of the privileged class and the ruling stratum of oppressed nation-

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alities cannot in general be won to socialism even though objectively sexual equality and national liberation can only be realized under socialism.

Closely related to the question of the class basis of the socialist movement is the question of the material conditions under which socialism can be established. Reflecting on pre-Marxist socialism in his later years, Engels quipped that the utopians believed that the reason socialism hadn't been established before was that nobody had ever thought of it. That Engels' witticism was only a slight exaggeration is shown by the importance of communal experiments in the early socialist movement, indicating a belief that socialism could be established under any and all conditions if a group really wanted it. The primacy of voluntarism for the early socialists again reflected the fact that their thinking was rooted in eighteenth-century, individualistic idealism which, in turn, derived from Protestantism, an earlier bourgeois ideology.

In sharp and deliberate contrast to the utopians, Marx asserted that inequality and oppression were necessary consequences of economic scarcity and attempts to eliminate them through communal escapism or political coercion were bound to fail:

"...this development of productive forces (which itself implies the actual empirical existence of men in their *world-historic*, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it *want* is merely made general, and with *destitution* the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced...." [emphasis in original]

—Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

Marx's assertion that inequality and oppression are historically necessary and can be overcome only through the *total* development of society, centering on the raising of the productive forces, represents his most fundamental break with *progressive* bourgeois ideology. Therefore, to this day, these concepts are the most unpalatable aspects of Marxism for those attracted to socialism from a liberal humanist outlook:

"...although at first the development of the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes, in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual; the higher level of individuality is thus only achieved by a historical process in which individuals are sacrificed...."

—Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*

"...it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means,...slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and...in general people cannot

Revolutions erupted across Europe in 1848. Workers defend barricades in Frankfurt, Germany.

Dietz Verlag Berlin



be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. 'Liberation' is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse...."

—Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

It is evident that "women" can replace "individuals" and "classes" in these passages without doing damage to their meaning, since Marx regarded women's oppression as a *necessary* aspect of that stage in human development associated with class society.

Marx's programmatic differences with the utopians were encapsulated in the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" which he regarded as one of his few original, important contributions to socialist theory. The dictatorship of the proletariat is that period after the overthrow of the capitalist state when the working class administers society in order to create the economic and cultural conditions for socialism.

During the dictatorship of the proletariat, the restoration of capitalism remains a possibility. This is not primarily due to the machinations of die-hard reactionaries but arises rather out of the conflicts and tensions generated by the continuation of global economic scarcity.

This economic scarcity is caused not only by inadequate physical means of production. Even more importantly it derives from the inadequate and extremely uneven cultural level inherited from capitalism. Socialist superabundance presupposes an enormous raising of the cultural level of mankind. The "average" person under socialism would have the knowledge and capacity of several learned professions in contemporary society.

However, in the period immediately following the revolution, the administration

of production will necessarily be largely limited to that elite trained in bourgeois society, since training their replacements will take time. Therefore, skilled specialists such as the director of an airport, chief of surgery in a hospital or head of a nuclear power station will have to be drawn from the educated, privileged classes of the old capitalist society. Although in a qualitatively diminished way, the dictatorship of the proletariat will continue to exhibit economic inequality, a hierarchic

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"New England Factory Life" by Winslow Homer, 1868.

division of labor and those aspects of social oppression rooted in the cultural level inherited from bourgeois society (e.g., racist *attitudes* will not disappear the day after the revolution).

These general principles concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat likewise apply to the woman question. To the extent that it rests on the cultural level inherited from capitalism, certain aspects of sexual inequality and oppression will continue well into the dictatorship of the proletariat. The population cannot be totally re-educated nor can a psychological pattern instilled in men and women from infancy be fully eliminated or reversed.

The rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary transition period to socialism is the central justification for utopian egalitarianism (including radical or "socialist" feminism) in the era of Marxism.

The Battle over Protective Labor Legislation

Feminism was one of the three major extensions of utopian egalitarianism into the post-1848 era, the other two being anarchism and artisan cooperativism (Proudhonism). In fact, during the later nineteenth century radical feminism and anarchism heavily interpenetrated one another both as regards their position on the woman question and in personnel. The decisive element in common among feminism, anarchism and cooperativism was a commitment to a level of social equality and individual freedom impossible to attain not only under capitalism, but in the period following its overthrow. At a general ideological level, feminism was bourgeois individualism in conflict with the realities and limits of bourgeois society.

During their lifetimes, Marx and Engels had two notable conflicts with organized feminism—continual clashes in the con-

text of the struggle for protective labor legislation and a short faction fight in the American section of the First International. While the question of protective labor legislation covered a great deal of ground at many levels of concreteness, the central difference between the Marxists and feminists over this issue was also the central difference between Marxism and utopian egalitarianism—i.e., the question of the primacy of the material well-being of the masses and the historical interests of the socialist movement vis-à-vis formal equality within bourgeois society.

The feminist opposition to protective labor legislation argued and continues to argue that it would mean legal inequality in the status of women and that it was partly motivated by paternalistic, male-chauvinist prejudices. Marx and Engels recognized these facts but maintained that the physical well-being of working women and the interests of the entire class in reducing the intensity of exploitation more than offset this formal and ideological inequality. Writing to Gertrud Guillaume-Schack, a German feminist who later became an anarchist, Engels stated his case:

"That the working woman needs special protection against capitalist exploitation because of her special physiological functions seems obvious to me. The English women who championed the formal right

of members of their sex to permit themselves to be as thoroughly exploited by the capitalists as the men are mostly, directly or indirectly, interested in the capitalist exploitation of both sexes. I admit I am more interested in the health of the future generation than in the absolute formal equality of the sexes in the last years of the capitalist mode of production. It is my conviction that real equality of women and men can come true only when exploitation of either by capital has been abolished and private housework has been transformed into a public industry."

—Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Letter to Guillaume-Schack of 5 July 1885

Thus Engels recognized in feminism the false consciousness of the privileged classes of women who believe that since they themselves are oppressed only as women, sexual inequality is the only significant form of oppression.

Guillaume-Schack's conversion to anarchism was not accidental, for the anarchists also opposed protective labor legislation for women as an inconsistent, inequalitarian reform. Writing a polemic against the Italian anarchists in the early 1870's, Marx ridiculed the "logic" that one "must not take the trouble to obtain legal prohibition of the employment of girls under 10 in factories because a stop is not thereby put to the exploitation of boys under 10"—that this was a "compromise which damages the purity of eternal principles" (quoted in Hal Draper, *International Socialism*, July-August 1970).

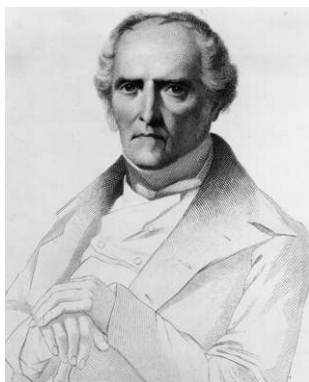
Woodhull versus Sorge in the First International

Because of the catch-all nature of the First International, the Marxist tendency had to wage major internal factional struggles against the most characteristic left currents in the various countries (e.g., trade-union reformism in Britain, Proudhon's cooperativism in France, Lasalle's

continued on page 10



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Early 19th-century utopian socialists Robert Owen (left) and Charles Fourier (right). New Harmony socialist commune in Indiana as envisioned by Owen.

F. Bate



Construction...

(continued from page 12)

Engineers (IUOE), died in two separate crane accidents on the Upper East Side in 2008, when corners were cut on safety. Of all the workplace deaths that year, 21 percent were in construction. These grueling jobs often involve long hours under the sun or in dangerously cold, windy conditions, during which attention to detail is especially vital for safety.

In no small part because IUOE members can quickly bring any large project to a halt, the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is taking special aim at the union, angling to take away its control over crane operator licensing and to get rid of senior master mechanics, relief crane operators and oilers. REBNY president Steven Spinola snarled: "If it's nonproductive work, why are we paying for it?" In April, the corporation-supported Regional Plan Association presented a widely publicized study to City Hall proposing anti-labor "reforms" like beginning the eight-hour day once a worker reaches his station, which in NYC can be many floors up, rather than upon arrival at the job site. The study also attacked the union hiring hall for fostering "a worker's loyalty to his union... rather than to any actual employer."

Building-trades workers don't have to eat it. Union hands shaped the city skyline, and the construction unions—one of the few remaining bastions of organized labor in private industry and a labor linchpin here—can still wield considerable power.



Jimenez/NY Times

Construction worker removed by emergency personnel after collapse of trench in Brooklyn, June 2006.

As the *New York Times* (18 March) put it, employers "are wary of pressing too hard, because a strike by just one union could be enough to shut down many of the city's major construction projects." These unions showed their potential power in 1998, when a rally against the hiring of non-union construction outfits by the Metropolitan Transit Authority and others effectively became a one-day citywide construction strike. In Chicago last year, a 19-day strike by thousands of laborers and operating engineers brought road repairs and other construction to a standstill, winning a 9.75 percent wage increase over three years.

The NYC bosses' offensive against the construction trades can only be turned back through hard class struggle, as is true for

unions that are under attack across the country. This must include an aggressive drive to organize non-union workers, crucially including the growing immigrant layer in construction as well as black workers who historically have been all but excluded from many of the skilled trades. But standing in the way of such struggle are the hidebound bureaucrats atop the construction craft unions, who barely lift a finger to organize and go into contract negotiations with track records short on strikes and job-site shutdowns and long on accommodating the bosses and the capitalist Democratic Party.

Stop the Givebacks!

With their narrow, job-trusting policies, the building-trades officials have long tied

construction workers' interests to those of the developers and contractors who make their profits by exploiting labor. This certainly is the case with Gary LaBarbera, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York (BCTC), which represents 100,000 workers in 15 unions. In a *Daily News* (29 May) op-ed piece, LaBarbera trumpeted, "Rather than inflating costs, unions have been among the only players in the construction industry working hard to bring them down."

Shortly after assuming his current post in 2009, LaBarbera collaborated closely with Building Trades Employers' Association president Louis J. Coletti to negotiate new Project Labor Agreements (PLAs). These sweetheart deals with contractors and builders like Larry Silverstein, covering large private and public construction projects in the city, shredded work rules and outrageously included no-strike clauses to cut labor costs and supposedly save jobs. Sold in the name of "shared sacrifice," these pacts only whetted the appetites of the city's real estate magnates for more concessions from labor.

In late April, the leadership of District Council 9 (DC 9) painters union, whose contract was set to expire on April 30, gave even more ground. Among their massive concessions were abolishing the union's hiring hall and setting up a new cheap-labor tier of wages and benefits for workers building housing in NYC's outer boroughs. Painters and tapers on those jobs will get paid *one-third* of the rate for commercial jobs downtown. Rather than

Young Spartacus

Feminism vs. Marxism...

(continued from page 9)

state socialism in Germany and anarchism in Eastern and Southern Europe). It is therefore highly symptomatic that the major factional struggle within the American section centered around feminism, a variant of petty-bourgeois radicalism. In the most general sense, the importance of the Woodhull tendency reflected the greater political weight of the American liberal middle class relative to the proletariat than in European class alignments. Historically petty-bourgeois moralism has been more influential in American socialism than in virtually any other country. This was particularly pronounced in the period after the Civil War when abolitionism served as the model for native American radicalism.

The relative political backwardness of the American working class is rooted primarily in the process of its development through successive waves of immigration from different countries. This created such intense ethnic divisions that it impeded even elementary trade-union organization. In addition, many of the immigrant workers who came from peasant backgrounds were imbued with strong religious, racial and sexual prejudices and a generally low cultural level which impeded class—much less socialist—consciousness. In general the discontent of American workers was channeled by the petty bourgeoisie of the various ethnic groups into the struggle for their own place in the parliamentary-state apparatus.

The American working class's lack of strong organization, its ethnic electoral politics and relatively backward social attitudes created a political climate in which "enlightened middle-class socialism" was bound to flourish. Not least important in this respect was the fact that the liberal middle classes were Protestant while the industrial working class was heavily Roman Catholic. Indeed, an important aspect of the Woodhull/Sorge fight was over an orientation toward Irish Catholic workers.

Victoria Woodhull was the best-known (more accurately notorious) "free love"



Marxists Internet Archive

Friedrich Sorge

advocate of her day, ambitious and with a gift for political showmanship. Seeing that the First International was becoming fashionable, she organized her own section of it (Section 12) along with remnants of the New Democracy, a middle-class, electoral-reformist organization, led by Samuel Foot Andrews, a former abolitionist. The Woodhullites thus entered the First International as a radical liberal faction, with an emphasis on women's rights and an electoralist strategy.

Section 12 rapidly retranslated the principles of the First International into the language of American liberal democracy. Needless to say, it came out for total organizational federalism with each section free to pursue its own activities and line within the general principles of the International. Section 12's political line and organizational activities (its official paper, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, preached spiritualism among other things) quickly brought it into conflict within the Marxist tendency, led by the German veteran of the 1848 Revolution, Friedrich Sorge. Section 12 was able to cause much factional trouble, not only in the U.S. but abroad, because its radical liberalism fed into the growing anarchist, electoral-reformist and federalist currents in the International. The Woodhullites were part of a rotten bloc which coalesced against the Marxist leadership of the First International in 1871-72. Woodhull enjoyed a short stay in the anarchist International in 1873 on her way to becoming a wealthy eccentric.

The immediate issue of the faction fight

was the priority of women's rights, notably suffrage, over labor issues particularly the eight-hour day. That for the Woodhullites what was involved was not a matter of programmatic emphasis, but a counterposition to proletarian socialism was made explicit after the split with Sorge: "The extension of equal citizenship to women, the world over, must *precede* any general change in the subsisting relation of capital and labor" [emphasis in original] (*Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 18 November 1871).

After splitting with the Sorge wing, while still claiming loyalty to the First International, Section 12 organized the Equal Rights Party in order to run Woodhull for president in 1872. The program was straight left-liberalism without any proletarian thrust. It called for "...a truly republican government which shall not only recognize but guarantee equal political and social rights to men and women, and which shall secure equal opportunities of education for all children" (*Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 20 April 1872).

The general political principles of the Woodhullites were clearly expressed in their appeal to the General Council of the First International against the Sorge wing:

"It [the object of the International] involves, first, the Political Equality and Social Freedom of men and women alike.... Social Freedom means absolute *immunity* from the impertinent intrusion in all affairs of exclusively personal concernment, such as religious belief, *sexual relations, habits of dress*, etc." [emphasis in original]

—*Documents of the First International*, The General Council; Minutes 1871-72

This appeal was answered by a resolution written by Marx, which suspended Section 12. After cataloguing the organizational abuses and rotten politics, Marx concluded by reasserting the central difference between democratic egalitarianism and proletarian socialism—namely, that the end to all forms of oppression must run through the victory of the working class over capitalism. Marx called attention to past International documents:

"...relating to 'sectarian sections' or 'separatist bodies pretending to accomplish special missions' distinct from the common aim of the Association [First International], viz. to emancipate the mass of labour from its 'economical subjection to the monopolizer of the means of labour' which lies at the bottom of servitude in

all its forms, of social misery, mental degradation and political dependence."

—*Ibid.*

While the Marxist case against the Woodhullites centered on their electoralism, middle-class orientation and quackery, the role of "free love" in the socialist movement had a definite significance in the fight. While including personal sexual freedom in their program, the Marxists insisted on a cautious approach to this question when dealing with more backward sections of the working class. By flaunting a sexually "liberated" life-style, the Woodhullites would have created a nearly impenetrable barrier to winning over conventional and religious workers. One of the main charges that Sorge brought against Section 12 at the Hague Conference in 1872 was that its activities had made it much more difficult for the International to reach the strategically placed Irish Catholic workers.

The historic relevance of the Woodhull/Sorge faction fight is that it demonstrated, in a rather pure way, the basis of feminism in classic bourgeois-democratic principles, particularly individualism. It further demonstrated that feminist currents tend to be absorbed into liberal reformism or anarchistic petty-bourgeois radicalism, both of which invariably unite against revolutionary proletarian socialism. ■

Women and Revolution



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fight to organize the non-union contractors, the DC 9 officials have enlisted in a race to the bottom, in what the BTEA hopes is a precedent for other unions.

In his service to big business, LaBarbera has gone the extra mile to undermine union rights, wages and benefits, and not just in his own bailiwick. Backing Democrat Andrew Cuomo in last year’s gubernatorial race, LaBarbera joined business and real estate tycoons in the “Committee to Save New York,” a capitalist cabal that has bankrolled Cuomo’s war against the public workers unions. He intoned that “without a fiscally sound environment, we will not be able to attract new business” to New York City, adding that “at times there will be competing interests between public- and private-sector unions” (*New York Times*, 9 December 2010). LaBarbera was not only going after AFSCME and other public employees unions but also the municipal divisions of the IBEW electrical workers, Carpenters and other skilled trades unions that are under his own leadership! The wages and benefits of these unions are effectively set by those prevailing in the private sector.

As we wrote in “All Labor Must Fight Assault on Public Workers Unions!” (WV No. 975, 4 March): “In the face of a growing army of unemployed, the gutting of pensions, the lack of health care and the elimination of other social programs and benefits, the answer of the trade-union bureaucrats is to pit worker against worker in the struggle to survive.” Now it is LaBarbera’s own unions that are on the chopping block. If the construction unions cede their stronghold in New York City, it would expose the flanks of the remaining bastions of union power—city workers, transit workers, teachers, hospital workers, building service workers—many of whom are themselves moving into contract negotiations.

This underscores the need to break with the class-collaborationist program of the labor officialdom, which has time and again shown its capacity to “sacrifice” labor’s interests for the bosses’ bottom line. What is necessary is joint struggle by the many unions making up the construction trades, whose power lies in their ability to stop building projects through strike action. This points to the need for one industrial union of all construction workers, with an industry-wide hiring hall system and union control of training.

Job Safety and Union Organization

For construction workers, and for the working class as a whole, defense of their unions is a matter of life and death. Speedup and callous disregard for workers’ safety are intrinsic to capitalist production. Where there is no union, there is no organized force to resist the relentless drive of the bosses to increase profits at

the expense of workers’ safety. A recent study on coal mining by a Stanford Law School professor established what miners already know: that non-union mines are deathtraps compared to unionized mines (“Study Finds Fewer Fatalities, Injuries at Union Mines,” *Charleston Daily Mail*, 26 May). Job-site safety must be actively overseen and enforced by the unions, which should immediately shut down unsafe sites. But as the recent uptick in



Members of public employees unions at NYC May Day demonstration.

NYC union construction site fatalities shows, where the union leadership sees its relationship to the bosses as a “partnership,” safety is eroded and more workers get hurt or die.

With the union tops substituting inflatable rats for picket lines and giving away the store at the bargaining table, the construction trades have lost a lot of ground to non-union operations, leaving unorganized workers at the bosses’ mercy. Many of these workers are immigrant day laborers who are brutally exploited, cheated out of wages and subjected to murderously unsafe working conditions. New York’s *El Diario* is full of reports on workplace accidents at job sites lacking safety equipment.

Unless there is an energetic campaign to organize the unorganized, the construction trade unions will continue to wither, and their members will continue to see their conditions deteriorate. The unions in this and other industries must recruit immigrant workers with full rights and benefits. This requires defending undocumented workers against immigration raids and roundups, undercutting the anti-union maneuvers of the capitalists and their government. *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

Any such struggle means fighting

against the “America first” chauvinism of the bureaucratic misleaders of the construction trades and of the labor movement as a whole. Following the 2001 attack that destroyed the World Trade Center, the construction union tops latched on to the government’s “war on terror” with special zeal. In 2003, they organized a thousands-strong rally in support of the imperialist war against Iraq, and last year they joined in the reactionary demonstrations against

grams to recruit blacks, women and others previously shut out of the trades. As Marxists, we fight for the independence of the labor movement from all capitalist political parties and state agencies. We oppose government meddling in the internal affairs of the unions on principle, including the many “corruption” investigations into unions like the NYC Carpenters, which is now run by government-imposed trustees. Likewise, we oppose the motion recently filed in federal court by oppositional “reformers” in the Carpenters union to freeze contract negotiations between the union and several employer associations until after union elections. Labor must clean its own house!

Today black workers in construction are concentrated in less-skilled jobs. This is palpable at labor rallies, where Laborers contingents are heavily black and immigrant while craft contingents are largely white. Black workers remain a militant backbone of organized labor and are critical to linking the power of the working class to the anger of the ghettos, where young men and women have only the barest hope of finding any kind of jobs and are subject to a daily regimen of racist police abuse and terror.

With the ongoing capitalist economic crisis threatening ever more workers with losing their jobs, benefits and homes, there must be a fight for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread around the available work. The unions should demand a massive program of public works to rebuild the decaying infrastructure of New York and the rest of the country—the streets, the sewers, the bridges, the subway, schools and hospitals. This could help unite private- and public-sector unions together with the unemployed in a common struggle for jobs and quality public services.

It will not be easy to defeat the arrogant rulers’ drive against the unions. Tens of thousands of trade unionists and others turned out repeatedly in Madison, Wisconsin, earlier this year in defense of the state’s public employees unions which faced all-out assault by a Republican state government. But their desire to fight was diverted by the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy into a pathetic campaign to oust the Republican governor and legislators in favor of Democrats, who, from the White House to statehouses from New York to California, have led the drive to cripple the unions.

It will require the strength and solidarity of the working class to prevail against the capitalists’ attacks. For that, a new, class-struggle leadership of labor must be forged. This is an essential part of the fight to build a multiracial workers party whose purpose is not only to defend the working class against the menace of its own devastation but to seize the forces of production from the profit-bloated capitalist class through socialist revolution. Under a workers government, the productive capacity squandered by the capitalists will be massively developed as part of a planned economy to rebuild society and satisfy the needs of all. ■

Montes...

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terror” over the last decade, the capitalist government has slashed fundamental rights of association and speech. In June 2010, the Supreme Court expanded the definition of what legally can be considered “material support to terrorism” to include a wide range of activities deemed as somehow aiding proscribed foreign organizations, from giving money to Muslim charities to publishing interviews with leftist guerrilla fighters. Three months later, the Feds launched their attack against the Midwestern leftists and labor activists.

During the 2008 elections, liberals and reformist leftists, including the FRSO, pushed the dangerous myth that the election of Obama would reverse the worst policies of George W. Bush. But as the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Obama has amply shown that his promises to clean up the “excesses” of the Bush administration were nothing other than a statement to wage the “war on terror” more effectively. With the FBI raids against leftists, the Obama White House has trumped the Bush regime’s

assault on civil liberties.

The purpose of the “anti-terror” witch-hunt is to terrorize the population, which in turn is supposed to accept the expansion of police powers at home while supporting predatory wars abroad. The ultimate target of the capitalist state’s repressive measures is the multiracial working class, which alone has the social power and interest in smashing capitalist rule and replacing it with a workers state.

It is in the vital interests of the labor movement to defend Carlos Montes and all those caught up in the “anti-terror” witchhunts. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL, demand that the charges against Montes and the Midwestern activists be dropped, that the subpoenas be withdrawn, and that all seized materials be returned to them. A protest is being called for Carlos Montes’ first court appearance on June 16. It will take place outside the Alhambra Court House, located at 150 West Commonwealth Avenue, at 7:30 a.m. Down with the imperialists’ “war on terror”! An injury to one is an injury to all! ■

the so-called “Ground Zero Mosque.” Thus they promote the lie of a “national interest” binding the workers to the American capitalist rulers, who had no qualms about throwing workers on the scrap heap when the current economic crisis hit. For nearly a decade, the government refused to shell out money for health care for construction workers who volunteered to clean up the World Trade Center site. A strike by construction workers on the massive rebuilding project on this site would be a good start in fighting against the capitalists’ anti-union barrage.

Against Racist Divide-and-Rule!

There must also be a struggle inside the unions to break with the racist job-trusting that long kept the skilled trades virtually impenetrable for blacks. The union bureaucrats’ hostility to opening up union jobs to minorities made the unions vulnerable to government-backed schemes to gut union gains in the name of fighting discrimination. In 1970, the Nixon administration implemented the “Philadelphia Plan,” which, disguised as an effort to promote racial equality, tore up union control of hiring by setting quotas for minorities in construction.

We opposed the Philadelphia Plan, which, like all intervention by the capitalist government into the unions, was designed to weaken the labor movement. At the same time, we called for the unions to undertake special hiring and training pro-

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

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New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Labor Tops Push “Partnership” with Bosses

Capitalists Gun for NYC Construction Unions

NEW YORK CITY—With contracts for more than two dozen unions representing 60,000 construction workers expiring by June 30, the building owners, developers and contractors smell blood. When the nation’s real estate market tanked and the economy went south three years ago, large-scale construction in the city was hit hard. The total number of construction jobs has dropped to its lowest level in 13 years, even as Donald Trump, Richard LeFrak, Stephen Ross and other major developers keep right on stacking their billions. Over the years, an increasing number of construction projects have gone to non-union labor, which constitutes at least one-quarter of the workforce in a city where just about every hard hat once possessed a union card. Now stalled projects are beginning to reopen, and the Manhattan real estate barons are planning the biggest decade of office construction since the 1980s.

Like General Motors, which is making record profits after the White House helped wrest massive concessions from the United Auto Workers, the players in the NYC real estate industry spot a golden opportunity to go after union construction workers, historically some of the highest paid workers in the country. The capitalists have sought for decades to chip away at their status. In 1951, the Supreme Court banned “common situs” picketing of an entire construction site even when the dispute is with a single contractor, paving the way for incursions by non-union builders. The Building Trades Employers’ Association (BTEA) bosses want changes to work



WV Photo

Left: Carpenters protest non-union contractor in Midtown Manhattan, May 18. Right: Building Trades Employers’ Association president Louis J. Coletti (at left) on “common ground” with Gary LaBarbera, president of Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.



Engineering News-Record

Organize the Unorganized! For Union Control of Safety!

rules that would undercut safety standards. They also want to take back hard-won union controls of job site conditions, slash overtime rates and hollow out health care and other union benefits. In a subway ad and Internet campaign earlier this year,

the BTEA attempted to sell union members on major givebacks in the name of saving union jobs. Last week, the builders upped the ante, threatening to end their participation in the “New York Plan”—a more than century-old pact that commits

them to using only union labor on major projects.

Workers’ lives, not just their livelihoods, are at stake. In 2009, nearly one-third of those fatally injured on the job in New York City were Latino and 8 percent were Asian, two groups heavily represented in non-union residential construction outside Manhattan. Many safety precautions have already been sacrificed by the union tops, endangering workers and the public. Nine people, including at least four members of the International Union of Operating

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FBI Raids Hit LA

Defend Chicano Activist Carlos Montes!

Broadening the government’s witchhunt of leftist activists, a Los Angeles Sheriff’s SWAT team and the FBI invaded the Alhambra home of Carlos Montes, a veteran Chicano activist, in the pre-dawn hours of May 17, breaking down the door and tearing his house apart. Using reactionary gun control laws, the agents arrested Montes on a pretext of violating a firearms code. What is clear is that he was targeted for his 44-year history of leftist political activism. A founder of the Chicano Moratorium Movement Against the Vietnam War and cofounder of the Brown Berets, Montes is a supporter of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) and writes for its newspaper, *Fight Back!* He is also a leader of the Southern California Immigration Coalition.

Montes had recently worked with the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, which was formed to defend 23 Midwestern leftists, antiwar organizers and union activists targeted by the FBI since September 2010 for the “crime” of solidarity



Gloria Angelina Castillo/EGP

Carlos Montes (center) at protest against the FBI’s targeting of leftist activists.

with the oppressed in Latin America and the Near East (see WV No. 966, 8 October 2010). Many of the activists had helped to organize protests against the 2008

Republican National Convention. These included Montes, who was named in the subpoena at the time of the September FBI raid. Others were active in the Twin

Cities Anti-War Committee, the Palestine Solidarity Group, the Colombia Action Network, Students for a Democratic Society and FRSO. Courageously, the 23 activists have refused to testify before the Chicago grand jury.

Released on bail, Montes described the raid to *EGP News* (27 May). He stated that the FBI and SWAT squad “tore down the door and ransacked my house, took my computer, took my computer files, took my cell phone. They looked at my family albums from the movement, from the Chicano Moratorium, the Community Service Organization, May 1st Southern California Immigration Coalition. It’s political persecution.” The FBI tried to question Montes about the FRSO as he was being taken to jail. The *Los Angeles Times* and other bourgeois news sources have blacked out coverage of Montes’ frame-up arrest.

In vastly expanding the state’s repressive powers in the name of the “war on

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