

## Break with the Democrats! For a Multiracial Workers Party!

# Baltimore: Racist Cop Terror and Capitalist Decay



WV Photo



Reuters

Impoverished black neighborhood in Baltimore (center). May 2 protest against racist police terror outside City Hall (left) surrounded by National Guard troops (right).



WV Photo

The filing of charges on May 1 against six Baltimore cops involved in the killing of Freddie Gray was aimed at putting a lid on the seething discontent of the majority black city, which had erupted in an elemental outpouring of rage four days earlier. The capitalist ruling class and its black Democratic Party frontmen got some blowback against their system of immiseration and racist cop terror; now they hope that things can go back to normal. But for most people in the inner-city slums of Baltimore, normal life means intolerable poverty, urban decay and state violence.

After Gray's funeral on April 27, riot cops had swarmed into West Baltimore's Mondawmin neighborhood. The cops blockaded roads and stopped buses as they corralled youth into the area of the Mondawmin Mall. Pent-up ghetto fury exploded in the face of these cop provocations. A few stores were trashed and a CVS pharmacy was burned. The state was quick to send in the National Guard and a curfew was imposed. We said: "*National Guard out now! Down with the cops' state of siege! Free all those arrested and drop all charges!*" ("Black Baltimore's Justified Rage," WV No. 1067, 1 May).

The Guard has now been withdrawn, a portion of the nearly 500 arrested have been released and the curfew has been lifted for adults. (Baltimore still maintains one of the strictest youth curfews in the country—kids younger than 14 have to be indoors by 9 p.m.) However, charges are still pending against many

and the Baltimore police threaten that those arrested and released could still face charges.

The disparity between the treatment of the perpetrators of cop terror and their victims was seen by the fact that the six cops were all immediately released on bail. In contrast, Allen Bullock, an 18-year-old protester who allegedly smashed a traffic cone through a police car's windshield, was held in jail for nearly two weeks. It took his parents that long to raise the money for his bail, which was set at \$500,000—higher than that for any of the killer cops.

Even though the six cops have been charged, it does not mean that they will end up behind bars. Killer cops are rarely prosecuted and even more rarely convicted; on April 20, the Chicago cop who killed Rekia Boyd in 2012 (the first cop in that city in more than 15 years to face charges in a fatal shooting) was let off. As we noted after the acquittal of four New York City cops who blew away African immigrant Amadou Diallo in a hail of 41 bullets in 1999: "By the standards of bourgeois legality, the cops were not guilty of any crime when they gunned down the 22-year-old unarmed black man. They were doing the job they are paid to do under racist capitalism" (WV No. 731, 10 March 2000).

That job also includes attacking the picket lines of striking workers, detaining immigrants, rounding up Muslims under the "war on terror" and targeting those who protest against the depravities of the capitalist profit system. It does not matter if the cops are black or white, have attended "sensitivity training" or wear body cameras. Indeed, three of the six cops who arrested Freddie Gray, took him

for a "rough ride" in the back of their van and broke his neck were black.

The city filed charges to clean up appearances so that the police can better go about their business of repression. The cops' masters in Washington also stepped in to help quell the flames of protest by announcing a federal investigation of the Baltimore police under the auspices of President Obama's new attorney general, Loretta Lynch. From the White House on down, bourgeois politicians speak of the need to "rebuild trust" in law enforcement, worried that the illusion that the police "serve and protect" the population as a whole has become very threadbare. In fact, the purpose of the police, together with the courts, prisons and military at the core of the capitalist state, is to enforce the rule of the capitalist exploiters through the violent suppression of the working class, black people and all the oppressed.

The reformist left has done its part to spread the lie that the police can be made accountable to the "will of the people." The International Socialist Organization among others repeats the call to "send the killer cops to jail," channeling anger over cop terror right back into the very "justice"

system that upholds state violence in every way. For its part, the Workers World Party ludicrously claims of Loretta Lynch, now top cop of U.S. capitalism: "The ruling class is trying to steer her in a pro-police direction" (workers.org, 27 April). They go on, "Whether Lynch will actually play the role that is expected of her remains to be seen." But make no mistake: her entire career as a prosecutor has been as a legal enforcer of state repression.

The crimes of the killer cops should be met by massive, militant protest centered on the social power of the multiracial working class. But the pretenses of the socialist fakers to the contrary, the capitalist state and its agents cannot be made to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. The truth is that there will be no end to racist police brutality until the capitalist system the cops serve is uprooted through a proletarian socialist revolution.

### From 1968 to 2015: Capitalists Loot Baltimore

Baltimore is a testament to the bankruptcy of police reform and other such schemes. Many were implemented there

*continued on page 10*

## Women and Revolution



### The Marxist Approach to Women's Liberation Communism and the Family

See Page 4



# On 2003 Charleston Cop Killing of Asberry Wylder

24 April 2015

Dear Workers Vanguard,

My family’s deep seeded belief that our brother, Asberry Wylder was wrongfully killed by North Charleston Police Department in November of 2003 has been reignited by the shooting death of Walter Scott.

We never faltered in our conviction that this was a department cover up. The many cases of suspicion surrounding the multiplicity of shootings of black men here, and nationally only served to strengthen our prayer that law enforcement’s wrong doing would one day be exposed to the unbiased public.

Justice was miserably underserved in Asberry’s case. The camera of a key witness containing photos, depicting police brutality was confiscated and not returned. While some photos were released, those corroborating the stories of police brutality as shared by witnesses were never released. Naturally, the local coroner’s report supported that of the police; however, a second autopsy by a family hired expert pathologist refuted the conclusions drawn by the Charleston County Coroner’s Office. Still, NO JUSTICE.

Recently, an Arizona policeman was found justified in running over a suspect as he walked with his back turned. Reasons given for the acceptance of this horrendous act include the safety of the

suspect (who was walking with a loaded gun), and the safety of the community and other policemen. If this was considered justifiable, we continue to question if shooting Asberry was justifiable. He was mentally ill, in a drunken state (.15 percent blood-alcohol level), and visually impaired due to being pepper sprayed. Could four robust officers *really* not subdue him, in a non deadly manner?

It was evident in 2003 as it is evident in 2015, where North Charleston Police Department is concerned, Black Lives Do Not Matter. Had it not been for “the ram in the bush”, Feidin Santana, filming it all, Scott’s death would have resulted in another cover up. Because of Officer Slager’s blatant lack of integrity and perhaps the code of silence by other officers present, it has been revealed to society that corruption exists within the North Charleston Police Department. Sadly, the community at large is not surprised, for it is what we have known all along.

Though denied, Asberry’s case was one to receive national attention in a quest for justice. With all that has transpired locally, we feel this may be our last attempt at justice for our family member. Our family requests that the Asberry Wylder Case be reopened.

Most Sincerely,  
William H. Wylder  
Member ILA Local 1422

## The Bombing of Black Tulsa



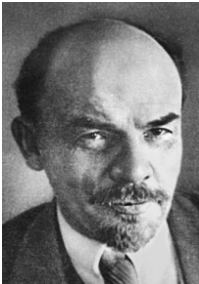
TROTSKY

On 31 May 1921, police obliterated the heart of black Tulsa, Oklahoma, dropping dynamite from airplanes that killed at least 75 people. This racist bombing, followed by the detention of thousands of black people, came after black residents had taken up arms to defend a teenager from a white lynch mob. In the face of anti-black pogroms sweeping American cities from East St. Louis to Washington, D.C., at the end of World War I, black radicals like those in the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) advo-

cated race pride and armed self-defense against racist terror. Leaders of the ABB, which was mainly composed of West Indian immigrants, joined the early Communist Party, drawn by the liberating promise of the October 1917 proletarian revolution in Russia. Accused of inciting a “race riot” in Tulsa, the ABB replied with a defiant editorial excerpted below.

As at Washington, D.C., so at Tulsa, Okla. The entire power of the State, all of the forces of capitalist “law and order,” were turned upon the Negro in the process of “putting down” race riots that were started and most actively prosecuted by white mobs. All the deputies sworn in by the Tulsa authorities during the recent race riot were *white*. All the prisoners taken up and sent into concentration camps by these deputies, the Tulsa city police and the Oklahoma State militia were *colored*. That is the kind of justice the Negro gets in capitalist America! That is the kind of justice the Jew used to get in capitalist-Czarist Russia, until the workers of all races arose in their wrath and overthrew the capitalist-Czarist combination, and set up Soviets. Now the workers of all races get equal justice—in Russia. How long will the Negro in America continue to fall for capitalist bunk? How many more Tulsas will it take to line up the Negro where by all race interest he belongs—with the radical forces of the world that are working for the overthrow of capitalism and the dawn of a new day, a new heaven and a new earth?

—“The Tulsa Outrage,” *Crusader*, July 1921



LENIN

# On Cromwell and the Levellers

6 April 2015

To *Workers Vanguard*,

I read with great interest the admirable series on “The Rise of British Imperialism” [WVs Nos. 1062 and 1063, 20 February and 6 March 2015], and the important correction published in *WV* #1064. I would like to add a further clarification about the Levellers.

The correction refers to the Levellers as one of the radical egalitarian sects. I suggest this understates their importance. Far from being a small religious sect, like the Ranters or Quakers, the Levellers were an organized secular party with, uniquely, mass support in the late 1640s, particularly in London and the New Model Army. As the quote from Trotsky indicates, “The Levellers were the incipient party of the left wing of the petty bourgeoisie...who had become the most important force of the revolution.”

The Levellers’ bourgeois democratic program addressed such issues as voting rights, electoral reform, regular Parliaments, religious tolerance, military impressment, equality before the law, abolition of debtors prison, tithes, the abolition of monarchy, sovereignty of the people, and more. They had groups in many parts of the country, and, for a time, a weekly newspaper. Women were encouraged to be,

and were, active members. Leveller propaganda endorsed the elected representatives of the soldiers (called Agitators or Agents) against disbandment by the Presbyterian-dominated Parliament in the spring of 1647 and sparked petitions from civilians and regiments for justice against Charles I in the autumn of 1648, leading up to his execution. As the correction noted, Levellers inspired soldiers to struggle against the re-conquest of Ireland. The Levellers’ principled moral stance was that the Irish had as much right to be free in their own country as the English did in theirs. At a time when Irish “papists” had long been derided as little more than savages the Levellers’ advocacy of such an advanced view was very much to their credit.

At the same time the party was not nearly as egalitarian as the communist Diggers, who called themselves the True Levellers. But it was the Levellers who changed the argument within the Independent movement from one about religion to one based on politics. That they evoked the considerable response which they did represented the maturing consciousness of the revolutionary forces of the time, and in the process pushed Cromwell further than he wanted to go.

Comradely,  
Mike S.

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# WORKERS VANGUARD



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No. 1068

15 May 2015

# 13 May 1985 MOVE Massacre

May 13 marks 30 years since the Philadelphia police firebombed the MOVE organization's Osage Avenue home. Eleven black people, including five children, were burned alive and an entire city block was incinerated. We reprint below excerpts from our article "Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!" (WV No. 380, 31 May 1985), published soon after this atrocity.

The bombing culminated a 12-hour siege by Philly police on the MOVE commune for being a supposed public nuisance. Police water cannons pumped 1,000 gallons of water per minute at the house. Cops then fired over 10,000 rounds of ammunition before dropping a satchel of explosives (provided by the Feds) on the roof, which ignited the firestorm. As they let the fire burn, the police shot at anyone who attempted to flee. The sole adult survivor, Ramona Africa, spent seven years in prison for managing to escape. (For more, see "*Let the Fire Burn: A Powerful Documentary on the 1985 Bombing of MOVE*," WV No. 1034, 15 November 2013.)

From the day of the bombing, the Spartacist League has solidarized with MOVE. In contrast, our reformist opponents, while denouncing "excessive" force, rushed to the defense of Wilson Goode, Philly's first black mayor, who ordered the assault. For example, Workers World Party insisted that Goode was "merely informed" of the massacre and "not a participant in the plans." For its part, the Socialist Workers Party participated in a liberal coalition that debated whether to censor the "far out" MOVE members at a May 30 demonstration called to protest the bombing. The SL was prepared to commit considerable forces to this event, but when MOVE understandably pulled out, in solidarity we did so as well.

In July 1985, the SL held a public forum in New York City where MOVE supporters spoke and were able to express their outrage and pain. During discussion, a League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) member denounced us for not polemicizing against MOVE, which would have been obscene, to say the least. The LRP later blamed the MOVE victims for their own massacre, writing: "MOVE's isolation opened it up for a police siege" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Summer 1985).

The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the SL—began providing monthly stipends for Ramona Africa and the MOVE 9, who were imprisoned on frame-up charges of killing a Philly cop during a 1978 cop siege of their Powelton Village home. The PDC continues to provide stipends to the seven MOVE 9 members who remain incarcerated today, two having died behind bars. **Free all the MOVE prisoners!**

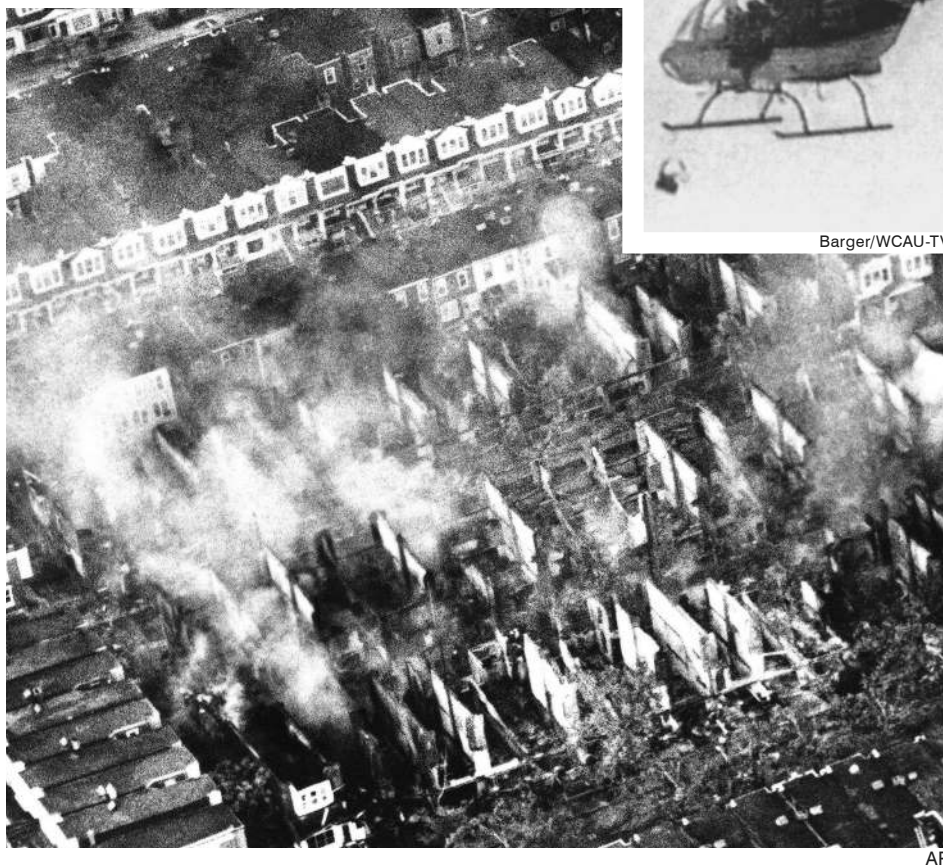
Through the MOVE prisoners, in the late 1980s we learned of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and award-winning journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" who exposed the racist cop vendetta against MOVE and was later framed up for the December 1981 killing of a Philly police officer. Mumia spent three decades on death row, and he remains condemned to life in prison without parole. He is now gravely ill (see box). **Free Mumia Abu-Jamal now!**

We will not forget the May 1985 massacre of MOVE and on this anniversary we continue our fight to sear it into the collective memory of the working class and oppressed.

\* \* \*

"Attention, MOVE. This is America." With this ultimatum, delivered over a cop bullhorn at 5:40 a.m. on May 13, there

**May 1985: Police helicopter drops bomb on MOVE home in black Philly neighborhood, killing eleven people including five children; 61 homes were destroyed in the fire.**



Barger/WCAU-TV

AP

## "Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!"

began the hideous siege and mass murder by firebombing of a black neighborhood in West Philadelphia. At least four black children, seven black men and women burned alive and entire city blocks destroyed in a deliberate firestorm. For the alleged "crime" of being a social nuisance, and without a fig leaf of legality hiding the state's racist terror, MOVE members were incinerated, hundreds were left homeless and without possessions. Watch your ass or *you could be next!*—this was the message to the black people of America, and not just the black people. Black Democrat Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode vowed, "I would do it again." But this wasn't simply the act of Goode, his city manager, retired two-star general Leo Brooks, and the notoriously racist Philadelphia police department. The bloody tracks of Ronald Reagan's "anti-terrorist" war on blacks, labor and the left are all over West Philadelphia. The grisly Philly firebombing is the symbol of Reagan's America.

"Reagan Bombs Black Babies," we headlined last issue, as the cops turned the neat Osage Avenue neighborhood of black homeowners into a raging inferno. Now as the details of the sinister operation emerge, it is utterly clear that this heinous crime was approved right at the top. Philadelphia police met with the FBI and reviewed strategy and tactics two days before the operation against MOVE began. Daryl "Choke Hold" Gates, chief of the notoriously racist Los Angeles Police Department, hailed the Philadelphia firestorm on the national TV show, "Face the Nation," May 19, saying Mayor Goode was on his short "heroes list." And U.S. attorney general Edwin Meese, speaking before the "California Peace Officers' Association" in San Francisco May 16, praised Wilson Goode's actions as "a good example" to emulate! Meese's praise wasn't for "any particulars" in the

case, a Justice Department spokesman later claimed. Oh, no?...

This state demands blood sacrifice, like some Aztec god. It's enough to turn you into a raving anarchist. (In fact, when Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* at the height of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the staid social democrats did accuse him of anarchism.) But the state rules on behalf of one class, the capitalist class, and more than a century after the Civil War it's capitalist wage slavery that must be smashed to free black America.

Black working people must take the lead to break with the Democrats and fight for a freedom-labor party based on a class-struggle program to place the organized power of the unions firmly behind the just demands of the ghetto masses for liberation. And Philadelphia has a combative labor movement with a proven capacity to fight: transit workers and school employee unions have repeatedly gone on strike in recent years. The unions, particularly those with large black memberships, should have shut down Philly over this racist atrocity. After all, they're

high on the government's hit list.

Wilson Goode and the firebombing of West Philadelphia are the ultimate proof that the black Democratic mayors are the front men for Reagan's war on black people. In the 1960s as the ghettos burned with black rage and frustration, black mayors were installed in many of America's big cities to put out the fires. But LBJ's firemen are now Reagan's arsonists. It is left to the communists to give organized expression to the felt outrage of the black people in the face of this bloody cop massacre and to fight for the elementary right of black self-defense against the racist terrorists.

### Murder and Lies

In the aftermath of the West Philly massacre, Goode held thrice-daily press conferences, piling lie upon lie in hopes that the enormity of his crime would be buried under an avalanche of hysteria about MOVE. "We cannot permit any terrorist group or any revolutionary group... to hold a whole neighborhood or a whole city hostage," he said. Some "terrorists"! MOVE grew out of a local commune, whose murky politics, variously described as "back-to-nature" and "anarchist," are nothing but an inchoate cry of despair for the future of black people in racist America. They attacked no one, and just sat in their ramshackle commune waiting for the holocaust to hit. They even offered to surrender days earlier, if the mayor would guarantee no arrests. But a surrender wasn't wanted. The rulers just burned them alive...for using a loud-speaker at 3 a.m. and violating the city sanitary code.

Goode said MOVE was an "urban guerrilla group bent on absolute destruction." The "evidence"? The mayor could only cite housing code violations and unpaid utility bills. If you don't pay your rent, they blow you away like Bronx black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs. If you don't pay the gas bill, they blow your house away—and the rest of the neighborhood for good measure. The only known survivors are Birdie Africa, 13, hospitalized with second-degree burns, and Ramona Johnson Africa, 30, imprisoned in lieu of \$3.2 million bail. The charges? "Conspiracy to riot" (by sitting in her house?) and "disorderly conduct." Drop the charges against Ramona Johnson Africa and all the MOVE prisoners!

In the hours and days after the firebombing, Goode and police commissioner Sambor claimed MOVE had a massive arsenal in the house, including machine guns and semiautomatic weapons. What the press luridly called their "cache" of weapons turned out to be one rifle, two shotguns and three pistols—millions of American homes have as much. Explaining why police held back firefighters as the blaze spread, city manager Brooks said they feared sniper fire

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### MUMIA STILL GRAVELY ILL

The life of class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is in imminent danger. On March 30, verging on a diabetic coma, Mumia was rushed to an intensive care unit. His health has continued to deteriorate and prison officials have cruelly withheld needed medical treatment and adequate nutrition. Weeks ago, a CT scan showed abnormal lymph nodes which could indicate lymphoma.

As the Partisan Defense Committee noted in its 13 April statement (reprinted in WV No. 1066, 17 April), "The grotesque treatment of prisoners is exacerbated many times over for those, like Mumia, locked away for fighting against this racist capitalist order." The PDC has contributed to Mumia's medical care, and urges others to do the same. Readers who want to make contributions can go to: [www.indiegogo.com/projects/mumia-abu-jamal-needs-medical-care-now](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/mumia-abu-jamal-needs-medical-care-now). To correspond with Mumia, write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335, SCI Mahanoy, 301 Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932.





In the *Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program*, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) lays out our task of “building Leninist parties as national sections of a democratic-centralist international whose purpose is to lead the working class to victory through socialist revolutions throughout the world” (*Spartacist*

## PART ONE

[English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998). Only through the seizure of power can the proletariat end capitalism as a system and open the road to a world without exploitation and oppression. Crucial to this perspective is the fight for the emancipation of women, whose oppression goes back to the beginning of private property and cannot be eliminated short of the abolition of class society.

The *Declaration* explains that ultimately our goal is the creation of a new, communist society:

“The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all.”

It used to be that the goal of a communist society was accepted as the purpose of most tendencies calling themselves Marxist, even as they agreed on little else. But since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 this is no longer the case. The ICL alone adheres to the prospect of world communism as first put forward by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

This “death of communism” ideological climate has resulted in the prevalence of false and narrow ideas about Marxism. In popular consciousness, communism has been reduced to economic leveling (equality at a low level of income and consumption) under state ownership of economic resources. On the contrary, the material basis for the realization of the Marxist program is the *overcoming of economic scarcity* through the progressive increase in the productivity of labor. This will take several generations of socialist development based on a worldwide collectivized economy to come into full being. Thus, a society would develop in which the state (a special coercive apparatus defending the ruling-class order through armed bodies of men) has withered away, national affiliation has disappeared, and the institution of the family—the main source of the oppression of women—has been replaced by collective means of caring for and socializing children and by the fullest freedom of sexual relations.

### Marxism and “Human Nature”

In the past, intellectuals who considered such a society undesirable and/or impossible to attain nonetheless recognized that it was what Marxists meant by communism. For example, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), a popular exposition of his worldview, Sigmund Freud presented a brief critique of communism. There is no evidence that he had studied the works of Marx and Engels nor read those of V.I. Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders. His understanding (and misunderstanding) of communism was held by many European and American intellectuals of the time, whatever their political persuasions.

## The Marxist Approach to Women’s Liberation Communism and the Family

Freud based his critique of communism on his view that “the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man.” He concluded that the communist project of a harmonious society was contrary to human nature:

“I have no concern with any economic criticisms of the communist system; I cannot enquire into whether the abolition of private property is expedient or advantageous. But I am able to recognize that the psychological premises on which the system is based are an untenable illusion. In abolishing private property we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments, certainly a strong one, though certainly not the strongest; but we have in no way altered the differences in power and influence which are misused

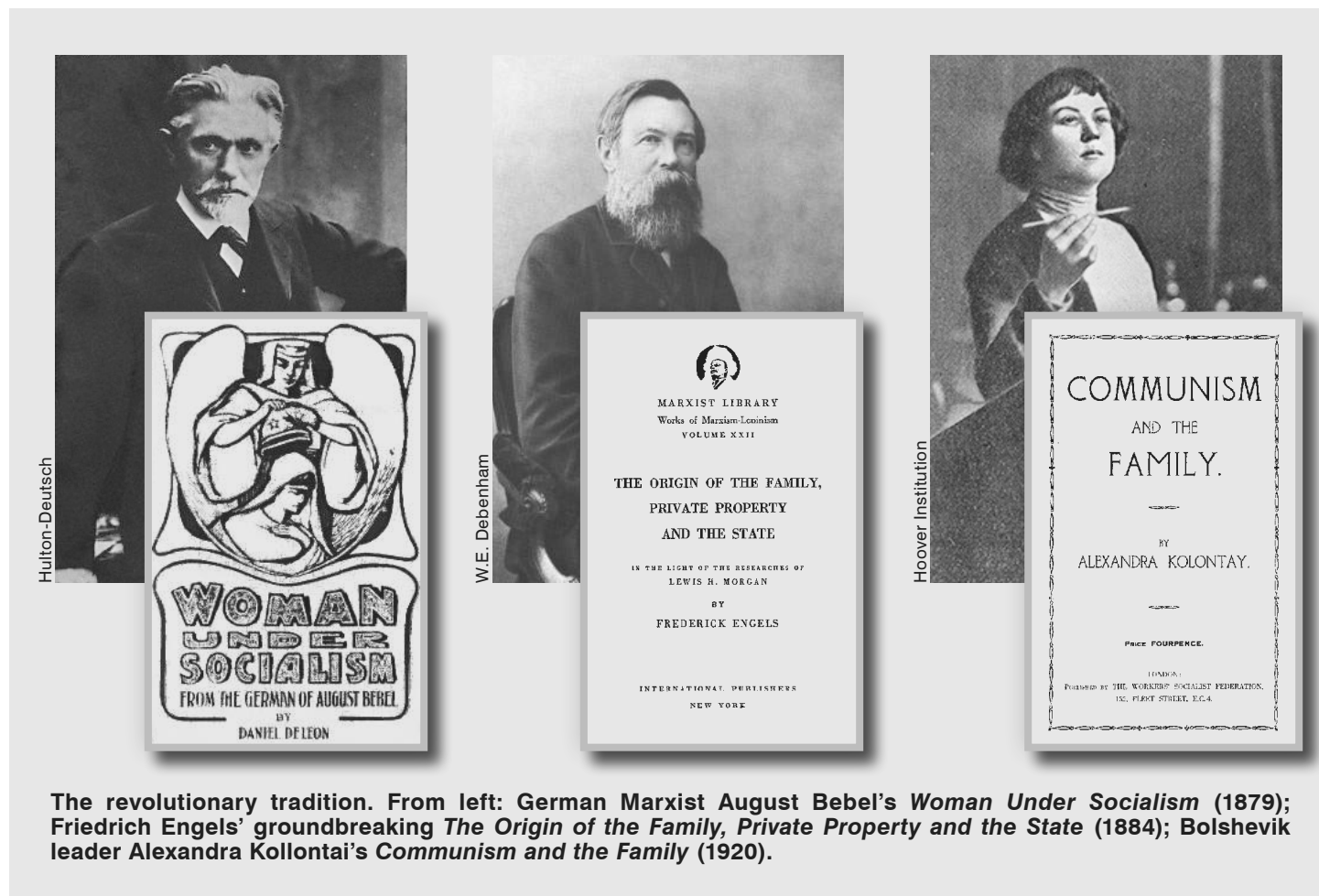
will be “complete freedom in sexual life.” Freud’s view was in error in that Marxists recognize that the family cannot be simply abolished; its necessary functions, especially the rearing of the next generation, must be *replaced* through socialized means of childcare and housework.

While Freud no longer has the ideological authority he once had, the idea that “human nature” makes a communist world impossible remains a common one, although the specific arguments may differ. Marxists, on the other hand, insist that material scarcity is what gives rise to savage scrambles over scanty resources. This is why communism is conceivable only with unprecedented material abundance,

what Freud perceived as sexual rivalry has little reason to exist in a fully free, communal society in which sexual life is independent of access to food, shelter, education and every daily need and comfort. When the family has withered away along with classes and the state, the communal upbringing that replaces it will lead to a new psychology and culture among the people that grow up in those conditions. Patriarchal social values—“my” wife, “my” children—will vanish along with the oppressive system that spawned them. The relationship of children to one another and to the persons who teach and guide them will be many-sided, complex and dynamic. It is the institution of the family that ties sex and love to property, with anything other than the straitjacket of heterosexual monogamy branded as “sin.”

The family under capitalism is the main mechanism for the oppression of women and youth, tied with innumerable, interlocking threads to the basic operations of the “free market” economy. The family, the state and organized religion form a tripod of oppression propping up the capitalist order. In Third World countries, ingrained poverty and backwardness, promoted by imperialist domination, prescribe hideously oppressive practices like the veil, the bride price and female genital mutilation.

In advanced capitalist societies like the United States it may seem as if people’s messy lives bear more resemblance to the



The revolutionary tradition. From left: German Marxist August Bebel’s *Woman Under Socialism* (1879); Friedrich Engels’ groundbreaking *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884); Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai’s *Communism and the Family* (1920).

by aggressiveness, nor have we altered anything in its nature.... If we do away with personal rights over material wealth, there still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relations, which is bound to become the source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility among men who in other respects are on an equal footing. If we were to remove this factor, too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus abolishing the family, the germ-cell of civilization, we cannot, it is true, easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take; but one thing we can expect, and that is that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there.”

Freud rightly understood that in the communist vision of a future society the family will have withered away while there

accompanied by a huge leap in the cultural level of society. It is the existence of *classes*, today in the form of the outmoded capitalist-imperialist order, that infests human society with brutality and violence. As Marxist author Isaac Deutscher wrote in “On Socialist Man” (1967), “*Homo homini lupus* [man is a wolf to man] is the battle cry against progress and socialism” for those “who operate the bogey of the *eternal* human *lupus* in the interest of the real and bloody *lupus* of *contemporary* imperialism.” [emphasis in original]

Freud himself identified “innate aggression” in sexual relations as the problem with human nature. And what of that? The social pathology associated with

TV shows *Modern Family* or *Transparent* than the 1950s sitcom *Father Knows Best*. However, people’s personal choices are constricted by the laws, economics and prejudices of class society; this is especially true of the working class and the poor. Replacing the family with collective institutions is the most radical aspect of the communist program and will bring about the deepest, most sweeping changes in daily life, not least for children.

### Our Left Opponents and the Anti-Sex Witchhunt

Today, that vision of a society without the oppressive institution of the family can no longer be found among the over-

whelming majority of those who claim to stand for Marxism, socialism and the liberation of women. For the Stalinists, the anti-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country” meant the abandonment many decades ago of the understanding that a global socialist society was necessary to achieve full human liberation, including of women; one consequence was the Stalinist rehabilitation of the oppressive family as a “socialist” mainstay. In “The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006), we addressed this subject in depth.

Other putative Marxists today, some claiming to be Trotskyists, simply follow prevailing liberal (bourgeois) feminist doctrine when addressing the question of women’s liberation, implicitly upholding the institutions of the family and the capitalist state. A case in point is their loathing of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the ICL for our defense of the rights of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), which advocates the legalization of consensual sex between men and boys, and others persecuted for such sexual “deviancy.” The ICL has consistently opposed government intervention into private life and demands an end to all laws against consensual “crimes without victims,” e.g., prostitution, drug use and pornography.

The howls of many radicals and feminists against NAMBLA are an expression of the “family values” pushed by bourgeois politicians and pundits. For decades, a government-sponsored anti-sex backlash has taken many forms: anti-gay bigotry, a witchhunt against day-care workers, the banning of the distribution of birth control devices and information to teens as well as the jailing of “deviants.” This reactionary onslaught was accompanied by such extra-legal terror as the bombing of abortion clinics. Much of this persecution aims to strengthen the bourgeois state in its regulation of the population and to spread panic as a diversion from the real brutality of life in this twisted, mean, bigoted, racist society.

In past articles, we have explored some of the ambiguities of sexuality in a society where the deformities of class inequality and racial and sexual oppression can lead to a lot of personal pain and ugliness. We have stated that while the abuse of children is a vicious and horrible crime, many illegal sexual encounters are entirely consensual and devoid of harm per se. The willful conflation of everything from mutual fondling of siblings to the heinous rape of an infant by an adult creates a social climate of anti-sex hysteria in which the perpetrators of real violence against children often go free. We have pointed out that the sexual proclivities of a group-living mammalian species like *homo sapiens* are patently ill-suited to the rigid heterosexual monogamy decreed by bourgeois morality.

As a minimum measure of defense against state persecution of youth who want to have sex (or even just “sext”), we oppose reactionary “age of consent” laws through which the state decrees some arbitrary age when sex is deemed okay, never mind that the age determined by these laws changes through the years and differs from state to state. In addressing such questions, we have our eye firmly on opposition to the capitalist state in all its efforts to reinforce and uphold the exploitative bourgeois order. This is the application to today’s conditions of our goal of full sexual freedom for all, including children and teenagers, in a communist future. This is particularly important for young adults, who today are expected to spend years after reaching puberty in the stranglehold of dependence on their parents. We call for full stipends for all students as part of our program for free, quality education for all, so that youth can be genuinely independent of their families.

In sharp contrast, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) refuses to call for the abolition of the existing age-of-consent laws. In an article titled “Youth, Sexuality and the Left,” ISO honcho

### Hysterical Liberals Join S.F. Anti-Gay Witchhunt

## Defend NAMBLA!

SAN FRANCISCO—A calculated and vicious campaign by a local TV station and the SFPD has whipped up a touch-mob atmosphere against the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) and its members. Defense of NAMBLA against persecution is the elementary duty not just of socialists but of all who defend democratic rights.

**WORKERS VANGUARD**  
7 February 1992

San Francisco's "gay liberation" has been marionetted as child-molesting monsters. Howling at the head of the pack are frenzied liberals and "radical" lesbians and gays, themselves targets of reactionary

there. Defense of NAMBLA against persecution is the elementary duty not just of socialists but of all who defend democratic rights.

launched an "investigative" cation culminating January 1991. The station broadcast the resulting film clip over and over, accompanied by "mug shots" of members and sensational, lying claims smear-ing them as convicted child molesters.

**Spartacists defend NAMBLA against state witchhunting and “family values” demagogues, including those on the left. Placard at 1978 gay rights demonstration in New York City (right).**

Sherry Wolf brandished her pitchfork at NAMBLA supporter David Thorstad for being “the most vocal long-time defender of pederasty on the left” (socialistworker.org, 2 March 2010). She quoted from her book *Sexuality and Socialism: History, Politics and Theory of LGBT Liberation* (Haymarket Books, 2009): “It is incompatible for genuine consent devoid of the inequality of power to be given by a child to a man of 30.” Wolf’s article continues: “Adults and children do not approach each other as emotional, physical, social or economic equals in our society. Children and young teens do not have the maturity, experience or power to make truly free decisions about their relationships with adults. Without those, there can be no genuine consent.”

“Truly free decisions”? Most relationships between adults would not meet this standard for consent. Wolf is effectively handing over youth under 18 and their partners to the power of the bourgeois state. The only guideline for any sexual relationship should be that of *effective* consent—that is, mutual agreement and understanding by the parties involved—regardless of age, gender or sexual preference.

The ISO’s abandonment of youth to the oppressive sexual status quo reflects its accommodation to the prejudices of the capitalist order and backward attitudes in the general population. Ultimately, this comes from the ISO’s long-standing opposition to any perspective of the revolutionary mobilization of the working class to seize state power, create a workers state—the dictatorship of the proletariat—and open the road to a communist society. For the ISO, socialism is more or less the accumulated application of “democracy” to all sectors of the oppressed, the working class being seen as simply one more sector. The ISO seeks to pressure the capitalists to reform their exploitative order. Its perspective on women’s liberation reflects the same touching faith in the forces of reform.

### Why Marxists Are Not Feminists

Interestingly, within the last few years the ISO has been engaged in a discussion in the pages of its newspaper, *Socialist Worker*, about theories of women’s liberation. This appears to be motivated by a desire to desert the organization’s previous position of opposition to feminism as a bourgeois ideology in favor of actively



WV Photo

embracing the feminist or “socialist feminist” label. For example, in a talk at the ISO’s 2013 Socialism conference (printed in “Marxism, Feminism and the Fight for Liberation,” socialistworker.org, 10 July 2013), Abbie Bakan offered, “The theoretical claim that there is grounds for a coherent Marxist approach that is for ‘women’s liberation,’ while against ‘feminism,’ makes no sense.” (Until March of that year, Bakan was a prominent supporter of the Canadian International Socialists, political cousins of the ISO.)

The ISO’s recent, explicit theoretical embrace of “socialist feminism” is simply a different cover for the same liberal content. However, it presents us with an

**Washington, D.C., 25 April: Three days before Supreme Court heard arguments on same-sex marriage, carnival of reaction outside promoted sanctity of the family.**



opportunity to restate the long-standing Marxist position on the family and to emphasize that the emancipation of women is fundamental to and inseparable from socialist revolution. Contrary to feminist ideology, full legal equality cannot overcome women’s oppression, which is deeply rooted in the family and private property.

As we have always emphasized, Marxism and feminism are long-standing political enemies. This requires some explanation. In the U.S. and elsewhere, it has become common to use the term “feminist” to describe the belief that men and women should be equal. But in addressing inequality, feminism accepts the confines of the existing capitalist society. Feminism as an ideology was born in the late

19th century, reflecting the aspirations of a layer of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women who wanted to claim their class prerogatives: property ownership and inheritance, access to education and the professions, and voting rights. Marxists seek far more than this limited idea of “gender equality.”

Marxists recognize that the liberation of women cannot take place without the liberation of the entire human race from exploitation and oppression—and that is our goal. This was spelled out well over a century ago in *Woman Under Socialism* (1879), a Marxist classic by August Bebel, the venerable leader of the German Social Democratic Party. In various editions, this work was read by millions of workers for generations before World War I. Its rich vision of the emancipation of women is not to be found in any of the ISO’s writings on the question:

“She chooses her occupation on such field as corresponds with her wishes, inclinations and natural abilities, and she works under conditions identical with man’s. Even if engaged as a practical working-woman on some field or other, at other times of the day she may be educator, teacher or nurse, at yet others she may exercise herself in art, or cultivate some branch of science, and at yet others may be filling some administrative function.”

—*Woman Under Socialism*, trans. Daniel De Leon (Schocken Books, 1971)

What is especially significant about Bebel’s description of the self-fulfilling nature of work in a socialist society is

that it applies equally to men. That points to the heart of why Marxism and feminism are mutually exclusive and indeed antagonistic. Feminists see the basic division in society as between men and women, while socialists recognize that male and female workers must fight together to end oppression and exploitation by the capitalist class.

### Misrepresenting Marx

In its theoretical switch to “socialist feminism,” the ISO is promoting Lise Vogel’s *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (Haymarket Books, 2013). This book, originally published in 1983, was reissued as part of the Historical Materialism series

*continued on page 6*

## Women and Revolution

*Women and Revolution* is now incorporated into *Spartacist*, the theoretical and documentary repository of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). *Women and Revolution*, which was published independently as the journal of the Women’s Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S. from Fall 1973 to Winter/Spring 1996, reflects our commitment to the fight for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. Fully indexed clothbound volumes.

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5



# Communism...

(continued from page 5)

with a laudatory introduction by two Canadian academics who are supporters of the ultra-reformist New Socialist Group. Even 30 years ago, the “socialist feminist” milieu that Vogel addressed had already dwindled to nothing. But because Vogel purports to represent a Marxist pole in the “social feminist” movement or intellectual current, it suits the ISO to champion her book today.

In the book’s introductory section, Vogel differentiates herself evenhandedly from non-Marxist feminists and non-feminist Marxists. She sets as her main task to analyze the character of women’s oppression within the structure and dynamics of the capitalist economic system. Her discussion of Marx and Engels is confused, contradictory and turgid. She primarily focuses on the relation between domestic or household labor and the generational reproduction of labor power. For Vogel, the oppression of women rests narrowly on women’s (unpaid) household labor. Explicitly stating, “The category of ‘the family’... is found to be wanting as an analytical starting point,” she ignores the broader questions of the role of the family in the oppression of women and children and its importance as a key prop of the capitalist order. The family serves to *atomize* the working class, propagating bourgeois individualism as a barrier to class solidarity.

While presenting a narrow understanding of women’s oppression, Vogel slanders Engels as an “economic determinist.” She simply dismisses the cultural and social sides of Engels’ rich arguments in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). To take one example, she complains that Engels “does not clearly link the development of a special sphere associated with the reproduction of labour power to the emergence of class-, or, perhaps, capitalist society.” This seems to mean that Engels does not show how the emergence of class society came to bear on women’s child rearing role. This is simply untrue.

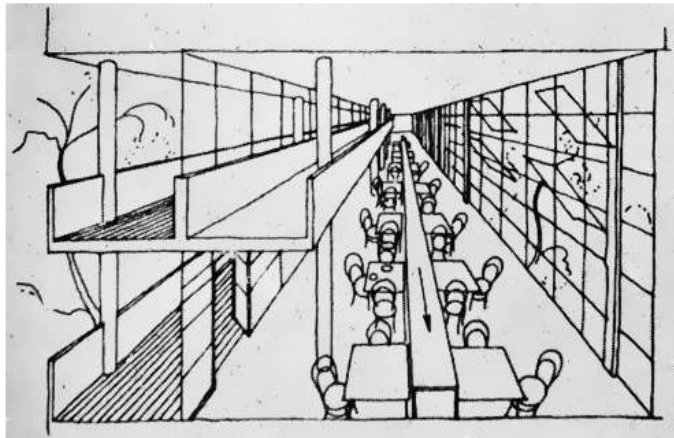
In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels describes how the family originated in the Neolithic Age as society first split into classes. Relying on the information available at the time, Engels drew heavily from the pioneering work of Lewis Henry Morgan among the Iroquois in upstate New York for an understanding of early, pre-class society. Engels described how the invention of agriculture created a social surplus that allowed, for the first time, the development of a leisured ruling class that lived off the labor of others. The family, specifically the monogamy of women, was needed to ensure the orderly transmission of property and power to the patriarch’s heirs, the next generation of the ruling class. While much more has become known of early stages of human society since Engels lived, his fundamental understanding has stood the test of time.

Vogel does not analyze the *social* role of the family for the working class under capitalism, where it is the means to raise the next generation of wage slaves. In *Capital*, Marx explained that the cost of labor power is determined by the cost of the maintenance and reproduction of the worker—his daily living expenses, his training and the maintenance of his wife and children. To boost profits, the capitalist seeks to drive down the cost of labor—not just the wages paid into the pockets of the workers but also services like public education and health care, which are necessary to the maintenance of the proletariat.

Feminists sometimes criticize aspects of the family, but usually only to complain about “gender roles,” as if the problem were a lifestyle argument over who should do the dishes or feed the baby its bottle. It is the institution of the family that socializes people from infancy to behave according to certain norms,



Arkady Shaikhnet



George Braziller

**Left: Soviet childcare facility in the 1920s. Inset: Sketch of projected collective dining facilities in the Soviet Union, late 1920s.**

respect authority and develop the habits of obedience and deference so useful for capitalist profit-making. The family is invaluable to the bourgeoisie as a reservoir of small private property and in some cases petty production, serving as an ideological brake on social consciousness. Vogel ignores these questions and focuses strictly on women’s unpaid “domestic labor.”

## The Ultimate Goal

Vogel’s position is even weaker with respect to the ultimate goal of women’s liberation. This is seen especially in what she *doesn’t* say. Vogel divorces the emancipation of women from overcoming economic scarcity and from the replacement of alienated labor—in the factory as well as the household—by creative, self-satisfying work. Both the ultimate goal of

appreciation for Lenin’s understanding of and commitment to overcoming the oppression of women, she quotes with approval his 1919 speech, “The Tasks of the Working Women’s Movement in the Soviet Republic”:

“You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain factually downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.

“In pursuance of the socialist ideal we want to struggle for the full implementation of socialism, and here an extensive field of labour opens up before women. We are now making serious preparations to clear the ground for the building of socialism, but the building of socialism will begin only when we have achieved



Central Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

**Communist leader of Zhenotdel, Bolsheviks’ commission for work among women, in Soviet Central Asia, 1924.**

a communist society and the basic means of achieving that goal lie outside the intellectual confines of Vogel’s “socialist feminism.”

When Marx and Engels explained that they subscribed to a materialist understanding of society and social change, they were not only referring to capitalism and earlier class-divided societies (e.g., feudalism). They also provided a materialist understanding of a future classless society. Indeed, that was their fundamental difference with the main socialist currents in the early 19th century—the Owenites, Fourierists and Saint-Simonians—as summarized in Engels’ *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (originally part of his 1878 polemic, *Anti-Dühring*). Marx and Engels recognized that a socialist society—understood as the initial stage of communism—requires a level of *labor productivity* far higher than that in even the most economically advanced capitalist countries today. This is to be achieved through the ongoing expansion of scientific knowledge and its technological application.

Vogel has no such conception. This is especially evident in her discussion of early Soviet Russia. Expressing great

the complete equality of women and when we undertake the new work together with women who have been emancipated from that petty, stultifying, unproductive work.”

—*Collected Works*, Vol. 30

Vogel wrongly contends that Lenin’s was a lone voice crying in the wilderness. She implies that the main obstacle to overcoming the oppression of women in early Soviet Russia was *ideological*: the pervasive patriarchal attitudes among working-class and peasant men, combined with the supposed indifference to women’s liberation among the mainly male cadre of the Bolshevik party. Vogel writes:

“Lenin’s remarks about male chauvinism never acquired programmatic form, and the campaign against male ideological backwardness remained at most a minor theme in Bolshevik practice. Nonetheless, his observations on the problem represented an extremely rare acknowledgment of its seriousness.... Lenin’s theoretical contributions failed to make a lasting impression.”

In fact, enormous efforts were made by the Soviet government to relieve working-class women of the burden of housework and childcare through the establishment of communal kitchens, laundries, nurseries and the like. Both the Bolsheviks and the Communist International established

special departments for work among women. In the early Soviet workers state, the *Zhenotdel* was active in both the European and Central Asian regions.

The limits to the liberating policies of the Communist government under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky were not ideological but the result of *objective conditions*: the poverty of material resources aggravated by years of imperialist war and civil war. Trotsky explained in a 1923 essay, “From the Old Family to the New,” included in the 1924 compilation *Problems of Everyday Life* (a work that Vogel fails to mention):

“The physical preparations for the conditions of the new life and the new family, again, cannot fundamentally be separated from the general work of socialist construction. The workers’ state must become wealthier in order that it may be possible seriously to tackle the public education of children and the releasing of the family from the burden of the kitchen and the laundry. Socialization of family housekeeping and public education of children are unthinkable without a marked improvement in our economics as a whole. We need more socialist economic forms. Only under such conditions can we free the family from the functions and cares that now oppress and disintegrate it. Washing must be done by a public laundry, catering by a public restaurant, sewing by a public workshop. Children must be educated by good public teachers who have a real vocation for the work.”

—*Problems of Everyday Life*  
(Pathfinder Press, 1973)

Material scarcity was the source of yet another important area of inequality between men and women in early Soviet Russia (and by extension in any economically backward workers state). This was the scarcity of highly skilled labor requiring advanced knowledge and technical capacity. Skilled industrial workers and members of the technical intelligentsia (e.g., engineers, architects) had to be given higher wages than unskilled workers, although the difference was much less than in capitalist countries. This better-paid stratum of the labor force, inherited from the tiny modern capitalist sector of tsarist Russia, was predominantly male. Although efforts were made to rectify this, the early workers state lacked the material resources to educate and train women to become machinists and engineers in numbers sufficient to overcome male predominance in skilled labor.

Vogel concludes her book by offering a projection of the transition to communism following the overthrow of capitalism:

“Confronted with the terrible reality of women’s oppression, nineteenth-century utopian socialists called for the abolition of the family. Their drastic demand continues to find advocates among socialists even today. In its place, however, historical materialism poses the difficult question of simultaneously reducing and redistributing domestic labour in the course of transforming it into an integral component of social production in communist society. Just as in the socialist transition ‘the state is not “abolished”, *it withers away*’, so too, domestic labour must wither away. The proper management of domestic labour and women’s work during the transition to communism is therefore a critical problem for socialist

MOVE...

(continued from page 3)

from people hiding in the “labyrinth of tunnels” around the house. No tunnels were found in the rubble....

The cops wanted to burn MOVE alive and they sat and watched for *90 minutes* while Osage Avenue was in flames. Fire-men were ordered to cease the use of water cannon, which were (safely) positioned in the next street. Jerry Africa, a spokesman for MOVE, reported that commune mem-bers tried to surrender after the bombing and ensuing fire, but “panicked and ran back into their burning building when police fired shots over their heads” (*Chi-cago Tribune*, 22 May). As cars melted from the heat blocks away, and the fire spread through 60 homes, Goode waited until every last man, woman and child in the MOVE house was burned alive, most apparently huddled in the basement....

Reagan’s “Anti-Terrorism” Means War on Blacks

The eviction operation was “perfect, except for the fire,” said Goode. The mayor says that approximately 20 min-utes before the cops dropped it, they told him they were going to use a “percussion explosive” to blow a hole in the bunker on the roof. Still, Goode insists he takes

of the Somoza dictatorship mercilessly bombed their own cities. From the crazed anti-Soviet crusaders in the White House bunker, the message is: *West Philly was perfect*. It was their program for black America. And their black flunkys in City Hall do the dirty work.

From Goode’s diatribes against “urban guerrillas” to Meese’s congratulations, what happened on Osage Avenue has all the earmarks of a COINTELPRO-type operation straight out of Washington. Last issue we asked, “Where is the hand of Edwin Meese...in this affair?” Turns out he was pulling the strings. As the *New York Times* (19 May) reported, “Mr. Sambor said he and his aides met on Sat-urday, May 11, with local agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to review the strategy and tactics to be used. ‘The F.B.I. found the plan sound,’ Mr. Sambor said.” And City Council member Lucien Blackwell commented:

“I think the mayor sat down with all the responsible parties, the district coun-cilman, the district senator, the district state representative, the district attorney, FBI agents, the secret service, the man-aging director, the city solicitor, to make out a plan pursuing this very serious city problem.... I believe a lot of planning went into that decision.”  
—*Daily Pennsylvanian*, 17 May

The Osage Avenue massacre was no aberration. From the Los Angeles Police Department’s “Blue Thunder” attack heli-



August 1978 siege of MOVE’s Powelton Village home, where hundreds of Philadelphia cops launched vicious assault against MOVE members.

“full responsibility” for the bombing; that is, he’d rather be seen as a mass murder-er than a chump. What emerges is a picture of a conscious, planned operation designed to make sure that nobody got out of that house alive. Here America’s racist rulers take a page from their ter-rorist murder manuals for the CIA “con-tras” in Nicaragua, who as guard dogs

copters and battering-ram tanks to New York’s stun-gun “torture precincts,” the rulers justify the growing paramilitariza-tion of the cops in the name of “war on ter-rorism.” To regiment the American people for nuclear Armageddon with the Soviet Union, Reagan and Meese have created a “terrorism” scare in order to institute real “state-supported terrorism” at home. This

society, for only on this basis can the eco-nomic, political, and ideological condi-tions for women’s true liberation be estab-lished and maintained. In the process, the family in its particular historical form as a kin-based social unit for the reproduc-tion of exploitable labour-power in class-society will also wither away—and with it both patriarchal family-relations and the oppression of women.” [emphasis in original]

But how is this reduction and redistri-bution of domestic labor to be achieved? In the transition from the dictatorship of the proletariat to full communism, the transformation of the family is a corol-lary to expanded production and greater abundance. Its withering away, or disin-tegration, grows out of economic success. In the process, it will be replaced by new ways of living that will be immeasurably richer, more human and fulfilling. There may well be a need to develop some rules in the course of this transformation as people search for new modes of living. In the transitional period, it will be the job of the workers’ democratic collective, the Soviet, to build alternatives and to guide the process.

Vogel does not pose the crucial ques-tion: If women are to be liberated from household drudgery, what then are they liberated to do? Will a reduction in the time spent on housework be offset by a comparable increase in the time spent at

work—two fewer hours a day washing clothes and mopping floors, two more hours working on a factory assembly line? That’s certainly not the Marxist idea of women’s liberation.

The replacement of housework and child rearing by collective institutions are aspects of a fundamental change in the relation between production and labor time. Under a planned, socialist economy, all kinds of economic activity—from mak-ing steel and computers to cleaning clothes, floors and furniture—will undergo a con-stant, rapid increase in output per unit of labor input. Long before a communist society is attained, most housework may well be automated. More generally, there will be a steady reduction in the *total labor time* necessary for the production and maintenance of the means of consumption as well as the means of production.

In a fully communist society, most time will be what is now called “free time.” Necessary labor will absorb such a small share of time and energy that the individ-ual will freely grant it to the social col-lective. Everyone will have the available time along with the requisite material and cultural resources to engage in creative, self-satisfying work. In the *Grundrisse* (1857), Marx cited composing music as an example of genuinely free labor.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

New York City, July 1985: MOVE supporters LaVerne Sims (at mic) and Louise James at Spartacist forum held in solidarity with MOVE martyrs.



includes sweeping police state measures like the new FBI Security/Terrorism Guidelines which label all opponents of the government outlaws to be shot down in the dead of night; and the “shoot first” National Security Directive 138 which unleashes U.S. military and intelligence forces to carry out unprovoked “strikes” against “terrorist” targets. There are also the police state military “exercises,” such as the martial law atmosphere surround-ing last year’s Democratic National Con-vention in San Francisco and the “free world” Olympics in Los Angeles.

As for Wilson Goode, one high-schooler remarked, “What kind of mayor would do something that would kill children and burn down the houses of people that voted for him?” LaVerne Africa knows what kind: “You know, he is worse than [former police chief and then mayor Frank] Rizzo? Rizzo hated MOVE and never tried to pre-tend he didn’t.... We knew Rizzo wouldn’t dare to bomb MOVE. We didn’t know Wilson Goode.... You know, people defend him—because he’s black.... Had that been a white mayor they would’ve been out-raged.” That’s right, Wilson Goode is in there to do what notorious racist Rizzo never could. (His 1978 assault on MOVE where 600 cops moved in, again without any legal pretext of criminal charges, evoked widespread sympathy for the group—nine MOVE members are still in jail for defending themselves against the cops.) Now with hundreds of people burned out of their homes, the mayor is talking in penny-ante terms about money to rebuild, while Pennsylvania Republican governor Thornburgh refuses to declare the fire-ravaged blocks a disaster area. Homes it took a lifetime to pay for have been wiped out—the government should give each displaced family *a million bucks* just for openers!

Before he allowed his own city to be bombed, Mayor Wilson Goode was touted as one of the premier black Democrats of the 1980s. He even rated a meeting with Walter Mondale last year, as a possible vice presidential candidate. From ex-cop “Uncle” Tom Bradley in Los Angeles, to ex-SNCC leader Marion Barry in Wash-ington, D.C., black Democratic mayors preside over the misery and oppression that is the reality of life in black America. The poverty program pork barrels are long gone—today the black mayors campaign for Reagan’s program of a sub-minimum wage for teenagers. And where there are strikes to be broken, protests over killer cops to be quashed, or the KKK wants its “right” to do some provocative nightrid-ing in the heart of the black inner cities, it’s these black front men for Reagan rac-ism who get the job.

We communists say black Democrat Wilson Goode is as guilty as Republican Ronald Reagan and the racist cops for the murder of eleven blacks, women and children alike. The liberals now apolo-gize for this calculated obliteration of a black neighborhood—to do otherwise requires a break from the whole myth of the “new black power” at the voting booth, organized through the Democratic Party of George Wallace and Jesse Jackson. That is why we are now witnessing the obscene spectacle of the black establish-ment supporting Goode amid the screams of black babies. Harlem’s *Amsterdam*

*News* (25 May) headlined, “MOVE was White Man’s Idea,” talking of MOVE’s “confrontations...with the law” (a hunger strike!); and the *City Sun* (22-28 May) calls Goode “The Man in the Middle.”

It’s not only cynical Democratic Party vote hustlers like Jesse Jackson who have maintained a deafening silence or rallied to the side of Wilson Goode. The grov-el-ing reformists of the Communist Party call for “a federal investigation” into the firebombing—that is, for the criminal Edwin Meese to investigate the crime! Demanding the resignations of police chief Sambor, city manager Brooks, and fire chief Richmond, they let Mayor Wil-son “I’d do it again” Goode off the hook. Progressive Labor was one of the few groups not blinded by loyalty to black Democrats. But while calling a protest against Goode’s massacre May 18, these stupid sectarians kept it a private affair, refusing a united front offer from the Spartacist League. The SL initiated and led the Labor/Black Mobilization which brought out 5,000 people and stopped the KKK from marching in the nation’s cap-ital on 27 November 1982, an anti-racist victory which stands in sharp contrast to the defeats and sellouts which black people have endured in recent years. As in Washington, PL prefers waving flags on the sidelines to leading genuine mass struggle in this country.

The Osage Avenue massacre was sup-posed to be a message to anybody who gets “out of line” in Reagan’s Amer-ica—blacks will get the Philly treatment, labor will get the PATCO treatment, and everyone, not least the Marxists, will get the “terrorist” treatment. But you can fight the terrorists in City Hall and the White House and win. Black people do have social power: they are concentrated in some of the key sections of the Amer-ican proletariat, constituting its most militant layer. But to unlock this power means breaking the capitalist two-party stranglehold, fighting for a workers party to mobilize labor and oppressed blacks in revolutionary struggle against this rac-ist, capitalist system. Avenge the Philly inferno—For black freedom through socialist revolution!■

A Spartacist Pamphlet75¢

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 3

19 May 1985: The bombing of black America—signature of the Reagan years.

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Syriza...

(continued from page 12)

Thus, the battle to overthrow capitalism is not a battle between a revolutionary “people” and the monopolies, but between the two fundamental, antagonistic classes under capitalism: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must seek to win oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie to its side in this battle. But it can only do so by fighting for a revolutionary solution to the capitalist crisis, by showing that only with the working class in power and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie can the oppression of the masses end.

Reformist Left Joins Orgy of “National Unity”

The Troika has so far blocked Syriza’s plan to give some crumbs to working people in order to stabilize the capitalist order in Greece. So Syriza has had to resort more and more to the ideology of nationalism to line up working people behind the Greek bourgeoisie. Nationalism is a bourgeois ideology maintaining the lie that workers have a shared national interest with their own capitalist rulers. Syriza pushes this poison. Not only did it give the anti-immigrant, anti-Jewish and anti-gay Independent Greeks (ANEL) the defense ministry, but from its first days in power the new government made a big point of demonstrating its nationalist hatred against Turkey—with [Minister of Defense Panos] Kammenos’ Imia [disputed islets off the Turkish coast] trip and [Prime Minister Alexis] Tsipras’ visit to Cyprus to denounce Turkish “provocations.”

Syriza’s pledge to remain in the EU was also a pledge to continue policing the borders of racist “Fortress Europe” and to keep out the desperate victims of imperialist starvation and war who risk their lives to come here from Asia, the Near East and Africa. Syriza’s pretensions that it would help relieve the plight of immigrants are completely exposed by its continuation of anti-immigrant police raids and collaboration with imperialist agencies like Frontex [EU border control agency]. The working class must fight against the Greek bourgeoisie’s efforts to divide and rule by scapegoating immigrants. We say: *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!*

Far from opposing the government’s “national unity” campaign to save Greek capitalism, much of the left has flocked to *pro-government* demonstrations, such as the one that took place on February 11 in Syntagma [Square, Athens]. Under slogans that echoed Tsipras’ speeches in parliament, such as “We will not be blackmailed!”, thousands gathered in demonstrations filled with Greek flags to show the imperialists that the Greek “people” supported the government in its negotiations with the Troika. But Greece’s negotiations with the Troika are about *maintaining* the imperialist subordination of Greece, not ending it. Syriza just wants to renegotiate the terms of oppression.

Antarsya made its illusions in Syriza’s government clear in its call for people to



Trotskyist Group of Greece

Banner hanging from the Workers Center of Thessaloniki declares “No to Bulgarian Coca-Cola.” Such chauvinism serves to divide workers of Greece from workers of neighboring countries.

join the protests on February 11: “The government must immediately meet the demands of the mass movement.” Also joining the orgy of “national unity” with Syriza, the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK) saluted the pro-government protests in February as “a proud militant response to the capitalist Troika” (“No to Imperialist Thieves’ Blackmail!” *New Perspective*, 15 February). The EEK falsely claims the heritage of Trotsky’s Fourth International, which from its founding stood in *opposition* to “popular front” alliances between workers parties and bourgeois forces. But a popular front is exactly what the EEK called for when it demanded that the bourgeois Syriza form a government together with the KKE, a reformist workers party (“The Greek People Has Shaken the World,” 3 February).

The KKE did not participate in this orgy of national unity and opposed the coalition government’s “national concord” demonstrations. But when it comes to the defense of capitalist Greece’s borders, even with a far-right Minister of National Defense in power, the KKE puts its rhetoric against national unity back into its Stalinist closet. In its 8 March *Rizospastis*, the KKE complains that the government is weakening Greece’s national interests against Turkey (“The Turkish Notification (NOTAM) and the Government”). This is poison for the consciousness of the working class and does nothing other than deflect the anger and the desperation of the working masses away from the real enemy, the Greek bourgeoisie, and toward the workers of neighboring countries like Turkey.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

The Syriza government has ratcheted up the campaign begging the German bourgeoisie of Auschwitz to pay billions in reparations for the horrors inflicted on the population of Greece under Nazi occupation. The Greek bourgeoisie uses this campaign to whip up nationalist hostility among Greeks against all Germans. We oppose the lie that the German “people” are collectively responsible for the crimes of the German imperialists. Germany is a class-divided society in which the capitalist rulers exploit and oppress their “own” working people, as capitalist rulers do everywhere.

For the Greek bourgeoisie to call for

reparations is pure hypocrisy. A large section of the bourgeoisie collaborated with the Nazi occupiers while the other wing of the bourgeoisie allied with the “democratic” British and U.S. imperialists who butchered the revolutionary worker and peasant masses of Greece, including by using the fascist security battalions. Syriza’s campaign is a nationalist maneuver to divert attention from the bankruptcy of their “anti-austerity” politics and has nothing to do with real justice for the victims of imperialist war crimes. Such crimes include not only massacres like those in [the Greek villages of] Distomo and Kalavryta, but also the Holocaust in which most of Greece’s Jewish population was wiped out. The victims of forced labor and the families of those massacred should of course receive any financial compensation they claim.

Workers in Germany have also seen their wages slashed and living conditions undercut in the name of profitability in recent years and a staggering 12.5 million people are classified as poor there. It is toward the working class of imperialist countries like Germany that the Greek

Athens, 31 January: Fascist Golden Dawn forces commemorate Greek military officers who died in 1996 over dispute with Turkey about Imia islets.

Sipa



workers must look for allies in the struggle against the imperialist EU and all the exploiters. As our comrades in Germany wrote: “Class struggle in Germany as well as France in solidarity with Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers would not only broaden their struggles against austerity but also would help workers throughout Europe to free themselves from nationalism and break from their own bourgeoisies” (“Economic Crisis Rips Europe,” WV No. 992, 9 December 2011).

To the degree that organizations on the left here call for Greece to get out of the euro zone and EU, it is from a nationalist and reformist perspective. If Greece were to exit the EU as the result of militant workers struggles, this would be an important step forward, allowing Greece to devalue its currency and helping to shake up the imperialist order in Europe. But this is not a solution in itself. As a small country, with a low level of industry and resources, Greece will always remain dependent on imperialism under capitalism. Furthermore, the economic crisis Greece is suffering is part of a worldwide economic crisis of the imperialist system. The only way out for work-

ers and the oppressed is the struggle for socialist revolution here and internationally, including in the imperialist centers. *For a Socialist United States of Europe!*

The KKE’s call for Greece out of the EU is based *not* on internationalism, but nationalism. In opposition to a revolutionary internationalist perspective, the KKE maintains: “In Greece there exist the material conditions for socialist construction” and that such “can safeguard the satisfaction of the people’s needs” (“Programme of the KKE,” 19th Congress, April 2013). For Marxists, socialism means a society of material abundance premised on the collectivization and qualitative development of the most advanced productive forces, which are today centered in the imperialist countries. As Engels wrote in his “Principles of Communism” (1847):

“*Question 19:* Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?”

“*Answer:* No. Large-scale industry, already by creating the world market, has so linked up all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilised peoples, that each people is dependent on what happens to another.... The communist revolution will therefore be no merely national one.... It is a worldwide revolution and will therefore be worldwide in scope.”

The KKE’s program thus rejects a fundamental premise of Marxism.

For Mass, Proletarian Mobilizations to Stop the Fascists!

By promoting reactionary Greek nationalism, Syriza and the reformists are reinforcing the ideology that nourishes the fascists. Anyone with eyes can see that the [fascist] Golden Dawn and other right-wing forces are preparing for Syriza’s failure in order to step in and be the “saviors” of the nation from the EU and from its destruction by the “left.”

If the ruined petty bourgeoisie and

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Baltimore...

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decades ago, not least the installation of “black faces in high places.” In the wake of the unrest, Baltimore’s black Democratic mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake launched a public-private partnership for urban renewal, which she called a “once-in-a-generation effort to tackle inequality.” Anti-poverty programs were introduced in various cities more than a generation ago in response to the ghetto rebellions that erupted between 1964 and 1968. Once the turmoil was quelled, these programs were cut way back; meanwhile, black people continued to bear the brunt of the normal brutal workings of the capitalist system. By the end of that decade, a racist backlash had already begun.

Baltimore was among the many cities across the country that exploded in 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Some 3,000 U.S. Army soldiers and almost the entire Maryland National Guard were dispatched to suppress the uprising. Over 5,000 people were arrested and hundreds injured. Afterwards, there was an acceleration of “white flight” from the city, which had begun a decade earlier with school desegregation.

The ghetto upheavals of the 1960s, more often than not sparked by incidents of police violence, marked the end of the civil rights movement, which had raised great hopes and engendered enormous activism but had proven incapable of meaningfully altering the fundamental plight of black people. The mass struggles of the civil rights movement put an end to the system of Jim Crow segregation in the South, but the movement broke apart when confronted with the de facto segregation in the Northern ghettos, where black people already had formal legal equality. The liberal pacifism and legalism of the civil rights movement were unable to challenge the systemic oppression of black people that is at the heart of American

capitalism, expressed in racist cop terror, chronic unemployment, decrepit housing, crumbling schools, poverty and hunger.

From the formation of the Spartacist tendency in the early 1960s, we have advanced a program of *revolutionary integrationism*—the fight for the assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist society, which is the only way to achieve real equality. As one of our early documents laid out:

“Any organization which claims a revolutionary perspective for the United States must confront the *special oppression* of black people—the forced segregation of blacks at the bottom of capitalist society and the poisonous racism which divides the working class and cripples its struggles. There will be no social revolution in this country without the united struggle of black and white workers led by their multiracial vanguard party. Moreover, there is no other road to eliminating the special oppression of black people than the victorious conquest of power by the U.S. proletariat.”

—Preface, *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised) (1978)

This perspective is sharply counterposed to liberal integrationism—which is based

upon the deception that black freedom can be achieved within the confines of the racist capitalist system—and also to black nationalism—which rejects and despairs of integrated class struggle.

The 1960s riots came in a period of broader social ferment, from the battles against racial segregation to growing opposition to the Vietnam War. At the time, the government not only unleashed murderous repression but also co-opted a layer of black activists into helping administer “war on poverty” programs to re-establish control over the rebellious ghettos. Some of them were installed as big-city mayors and in other elected offices. As we noted back in 1966:

“Black Democrats sitting in Congress or on some city council cannot change the conditions of the masses of people. These black Democrats enrich only themselves as agents of [then-President Lyndon] Johnson’s party. As long as they can prolong the illusion that the masses can use the Democratic Party to change their conditions, they can deliver the vote from the ghettos. But such Democrats always desert the masses at critical points, as did the Negro councilman in Cleveland who

called for the National Guard to suppress the people of Hough. The role of a political party is to gain and maintain state power for a particular class.”

—“Storms in the Ghetto,” *Spartacist* No. 7, September-October 1966

The Democrats, no less than the Republicans, are a party of the capitalist class. There are plenty of black Democrats in office today, from Baltimore’s mayor, police commissioner and state’s attorney, right up to Attorney General Loretta Lynch, her predecessor Eric Holder and President Barack Obama. And what good has it done black workers and the poor? By almost every measure, things are worse today than they were at the end of the 1960s. There are vastly greater numbers of black people in prison and vastly fewer numbers of decent-paying jobs. What is needed to lead a struggle against the ravages of racist U.S. capitalism is a party of the multiracial working class, one committed to the fight for a workers America.

During the recent unrest in Baltimore, black Democrats joined outright racists and the capitalist media in vilifying black youth for “looting.” This is rich given that it is the capitalists themselves who have looted and destroyed the city. “They want to act like the CVS is the Taj Mahal. They have dilapidated buildings everywhere,” said one resident.

In the 1950s and ’60s, the Mid-Atlantic seaport of Baltimore was a center of steel and auto production as well as shipbuilding. Good union jobs were available that provided something approaching a decent life for some black as well as white workers. Even then, black people were the “last hired, first fired” and often worked the most physically demanding and dangerous jobs, including in the unionized plants. But when the declining competitiveness of American industry became unmistakable in the 1970s, the U.S. capitalists started to shutter factories and move their investments elsewhere in a bid to maintain profits. Black workers in the main became the “first fired, never rehired.”

The Bethlehem Steel mill at Sparrows



WV Photo

Spartacist League banner at Oakland May Day march.

Syriza...

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backed Gorbachev, supporting his economic reforms which opened the road to capitalism. In a lame self-criticism, the KKE admits: “The Conference of 1995 criticised the fact that our party uncritically accepted the policy of perestroika, assessing it as a reform policy which would benefit socialism” (“Resolution on Socialism,” 18th Congress, February 2009). Contrary to the KKE’s claim that it carries the flag of Red October, what it actually carries is the rotten banner

of Stalinism, which dug the grave of the October Revolution.

The Fight for a Revolutionary Leadership

One of the recent issues of the KKE’s theoretical journal contains a polemic against the Workers Struggle (EA) and New Seed (NS) groupings that dishonestly associates the Trotskyist Fourth International’s 1938 founding document, popularly known as the Transitional Program, with its distortion by reformists. The KKE argues: “All the Transitional Programs are based on the direct or indirect acceptance of the position that the workers movement

can—under conditions—to a decisive degree enforce its will on capitalist rule in the framework of capitalism, without the overthrow of the bourgeois state and without the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat” (*Communist Review* No. 1). In fact, the Transitional Program clearly states: “The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism, but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie.” It is a cheap trick to smear Trotsky, who led the October Revolution together with Lenin, by citing the reformist politics of groups like EA, NS and Antarsya. The Transitional Program was formulated during the Great Depression and on the eve of WWII, and laid out “*transitional demands*, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.” This was in opposition to both the social-democratic illusions in a peaceful reform of capitalism and to the Stalinists’ popular-front alliances with bourgeois parties. The KKE rejects transitional demands because its program is reformist and it therefore does not need a “bridge” between its minimal demands like “restoring legally the minimum wage to at least 751 euros for all” and the fight for socialist revolution.

What is urgently needed today is not just to restore wages and conditions to pre-Memorandum levels but transitional demands which by their very nature cannot be met by a bourgeois society in crisis. In response to massive unemployment, especially among the youth, we demand *jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay!* In a society where the minimum wage leaves the working poor to burn firewood for heat and send their children hungry to school we demand a

sliding scale of wages to keep up with the actual cost of living. If these demands are “unrealistic” for the bourgeoisie, then it shows to the masses that the whole system of capitalist slavery should be overthrown.

In the struggle to defend all those ruined by the capitalist crisis, the working class must fight to organize the many unorganized workers into the unions and to defend immigrant workers, who are a vital component of the urban and rural proletariat. In opposition to Syriza’s begging for crumbs from the imperialists, we say: *Repudiate the debt! Expropriate the banks!* These demands provide the basis for the systematic mobilization of the masses for proletarian revolution.

The main obstacle to bringing the working class to revolutionary consciousness is not the “objective” conditions, but the opportunist character of the existing leadership of the workers movement, and in particular the KKE. What is needed is a revolutionary party like Lenin’s and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. Such a party will lead the working class based on an understanding of who the real class enemy is and will act as a Leninist *tribune of the people*, reacting against any manifestation of exploitation and oppression. It will be forged through the struggle against capitalist ruin and fascist reaction. Such a party cannot be a “national” party, but must form part of one international revolutionary party, with sections in each country. As our Trotskyist forebears wrote in 1934: “As yesterday, so today, we shall continue to work with all our strength for all the fundamental theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which have been tested through and through and confirmed a thousand times over and from every angle” (“For the Fourth International!” *New International*). It is the perspective of the TGG to fight for such a party as part of a reformed Fourth International. ■

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10

WORKERS VANGUARD



Point was at one time the hub of manufacturing in Baltimore. In the late 1950s, Sparrows Point was the most productive steel mill in the world and employed 30,000 at its peak. Major layoffs began in 1971, although 17,000 workers remained as late as 1979. Subsequently, full-scale deindustrialization set in. The half dozen shipyards in the early 1970s were down to only one by 1993, which later went bankrupt. The General Motors plant shut down in 2005. By 2012, there were 160,000 fewer manufacturing jobs in the Baltimore area than in 1957. The devastation of Baltimore is a tale familiar in many other cities across the country where low-wage jobs, often temporary or part-time, are increasingly the norm.

The looting of industry in this country was also a cudgel for the capitalists to wrest massive givebacks from the unions in a one-sided, now decades-long class war. All along, union members have been repeatedly stabbed in the back by the pro-capitalist labor misleaders, who have subordinated the interests of labor to company profitability. The end result is that the unions have been severely crippled, while pay and working conditions of American workers have been driven down across the board. To turn the tide will require some sharp class battles, out of which a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions must be forged.

This war on labor has gone along with an earlier and ongoing assault on the gains of the civil rights struggles, from busing for school integration to voting rights. With jobs for black youth all but dried up, the capitalist rulers have written off the ghettos, slashing social services and education to the bone while building up the prisons. As victims of the hard lines of racial segregation in Baltimore and across the country, those black people with jobs were largely fleeced of their personal assets. Locked out of traditional mortgages and forced into predatory sub-prime borrowing, large numbers were thrown onto the streets when the housing bubble burst in 2007.

Freddie Gray's neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester, where 50 percent of people of working age are unemployed and over a quarter of the buildings are vacant, has the highest number of people in jail and prison of any census tract in Maryland. Between 2005 and 2009, fully a quarter of juveniles in that neighborhood had been arrested. At any given point, over half of Baltimore's black youth are in the clutches of the state, whether jail, prison, bail, probation or parole.

Mass incarceration is largely the result of the racist "war on drugs" and stricter sentencing guidelines pushed by Democrats as well as Republicans. Today, some elements within the bourgeoisie are concerned that the country's world-leading levels of incarceration are somewhat too high, particularly because of the financial cost. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has sought of late to build up a black voting base by hypocritically intoning against "the era of mass incarceration." Now that the damage is done, she wants to distance herself from the policies of previous Democratic administrations, such as the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act signed in 1994 by her husband, then-President Bill Clinton. The leading sponsor of that act, which provided for 100,000 more cops and pumped nearly \$10 billion into new prison construction, was then-Senator Joseph Biden, now Obama's vice president. Bill Clinton's administration was also responsible for "ending welfare as we



Oakland, May 1: ILWU Local 10 contingent at march during port shutdown to protest police terror.

know it," condemning already poverty-stricken families to complete destitution.

### The Need for Revolutionary Leadership

On May 2, one day after the killer cops were charged, a demonstration was held in front of City Hall with the celebratory theme "Baltimore United." *Workers Vanguard* salesmen reported that while the 4,000 who attended were relieved that charges were filed, not everyone was buying into the celebration. No surprise, sinister phalanxes of cops in riot gear and National Guardsmen were massed behind the speakers' platform. Our placard calling for the "National Guard Out!" attracted a lot of favorable attention from protesters, including from a black Vietnam vet. When asked what he thought of the rally being pitched as a party, his answer was to point to the police snipers on the roof nearby.

Many of the speakers at the rally pushed voter registration. In a town like Ferguson, Missouri, where the local government and police force were almost all white, calls for voter registration to elect black politicians last year gained some traction. But with numerous black officials running Baltimore, the hollowness of getting out the vote for these Democrats is all too apparent. On this score, liberal Rutgers professor Brittney Cooper admitted in a 29 April article on Salon.com that she was "conflicted" over what it means that three of her fellow black women (Rawlings-Blake, Lynch and Maryland National Guard general Linda Singh) "have an unprecedented amount of municipal, national and military power to put down a rebellion."

The main rally organizer was Malik Shabazz of Black Lawyers for Justice. A former member of the Nation of Islam (NOI), this all-purpose bigot is notorious for his anti-Jewish and anti-gay rants. Reactionary black nationalists like Shabazz and the NOI express the aspirations of black petty entrepreneurs who want to carve out the ghettos as their own fiefdoms. As NOI leader Louis Farrakhan grotesquely put it: "We could effect a change in the lifestyle of our people that would allow us to do more with less wages" (*A Torchlight for America* [1993]).

In promoting "black capitalism," these nationalists seek to divert anger that should be directed at the capitalist class enemy into the scapegoating of immigrants—a program that only reinforces the segregation of the black masses. In the 1990s, the NOI Security Agency had a contract to police government-subsidized housing projects in Baltimore and elsewhere. Today, Rawlings-Blake has thanked the NOI for its efforts to "keep calm and peace in our city."

The capitalist masters have long fomented racial antagonisms to divide the working class and weaken its struggles as a means to ratchet up the exploitation

of all labor. The ongoing attacks on the unions and black people over the last four decades underscore the point made by Karl Marx at the time of the Civil War: "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." The working class as a whole confronts the same prospect of immiseration and hopelessness that is inflicted in a more intensified form on the bulk of the black population.

A program for black emancipation must start from the standpoint that the whole system of racist capitalist oppression has to be brought down. The current generation of youth protesting cop terror has grown up in a period of a dearth of mass social and class struggle, so many have no understanding of the possibility of such a revolutionary social transformation, much less the motor force to bring it about. The working class, concentrated at the point of production, uniquely has the social power and objective interest not only to challenge the capitalist exploiters but to overthrow their entire rotten system. That power is derived from its ability to cut off the flow of profits by withholding its labor; but it will take a leap in consciousness and organization for the proletariat to bring its power to bear in the fight for its own emancipation from capitalist wage slavery and for the liberation of the oppressed.

A small taste of the labor mobilization needed in defense of the black population was shown by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, which shut down the Port of Oakland for one shift on May Day. A contingent of up to 300 longshoremen with a union banner demanding "Stop Police Terror!" headed up a 3,000-strong march to Oakland City Hall that day. ILWU members also carried placards with photos of longshoremen's relatives who had been killed by the cops, including 24-year-old Richard

"Pedie" Perez. The majority black Local 10 represents a living link that could fuse the social power of labor to the anger of the downtrodden ghetto masses. But the potential power of the ILWU and other unions is kept under wraps by the labor bureaucracy, which is wedded to the rule of the U.S. imperialists and preaches reliance on Democratic Party politicians.

Plebeian discontent and the disgruntlement of working people can go in many different directions but will not in and of themselves lead to revolutionary consciousness. The spontaneous displays of anger by the dispossessed in Baltimore, Ferguson and beyond will once again be dissipated into the swamp of liberal reformism absent the intervention of a proletarian vanguard party. It is the purpose of the Spartacist League to build such a party, which would act as a tribune of the people, combating every manifestation of oppression. The vital struggles for labor's immediate interests are also in the immediate interests of the ghetto masses—the fight to organize the unorganized, end "two-tier" wage scales, for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to provide jobs for all.

A revolutionary workers party would not only arm workers with the program to fight for such felt needs but render the advanced sections of the working class conscious of its historic role as the gravedigger of capitalism. The proletariat must rip the productive wealth out of the hands of the greedy and irresponsible capitalists and begin building a collectivized, planned economy based on social need, not profit. When working people run society, there will be massive investment in quality housing, education and health care for all. Black workers, who remain a strategic component of the American working class, will play a central role in the struggle for workers rule. **For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■**

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## Greek Trotskyists Say: Syriza Is Class Enemy of Workers!

We reprint below an article issued by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece on April 22 and distributed at May Day rallies in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Syriza's January 25 election victory raised the hopes of many working people for some relief from the devastation of the economic crisis and the austerity imposed by the EU [European Union] and the IMF [International Monetary Fund]. Less than a month later, Syriza capitulated to a four-month extension of the terms of the [EU-IMF austerity] Memorandum and has reversed numerous pre-election promises. Nonetheless, many working people still hold out hope for some improvement in jobs, wages and pensions and have the perception that at least Syriza is trying to stand up to the Troika [EU, IMF and European Central Bank]. But sooner or later it will become clear that Syriza cannot fulfill its promises. This is because, as we explained in our election statement, Syriza is not only "committed to keeping Greece in the EU, which is a pledge for more hunger and joblessness, but also... does not in any way represent the interests of the working class" ("No Vote to Syriza! Vote Communist Party!" Trotskyist Group of Greece statement, 15 January [reprinted in WV No. 1060, 23 January]).

Syriza has always been committed to preserving the capitalist system and for continuing Greece's membership in the EU and euro zone. This means submitting to the purpose of the EU, which is to maximize capitalist profit by driving down the working and living conditions of workers and the oppressed throughout all of Europe, including in imperialist countries like Germany. It also means making working people pay for the debts racked up by the capitalists and their bloodsucking banks. It is not only the imperialists, but also the Greek capitalist class who have benefited from the EU's destruction of labor rights and imposition of austerity.

Our party, the International Communist League, has always stood in opposition to the imperialist EU and the euro—including our sections in imperialist countries like Germany, France and Britain. We understand that the EU is an unstable consortium of capitalist powers—because it is based on bourgeois nation-states—and is dominated by the imperialists, centrally Germany. The EU is therefore a union of the capitalist exploiters against the workers so that they can gain a competitive advantage over their imperialist rivals like the U.S. and Japan. For this reason, the EU cannot be reformed into a "social" Europe that serves the interests of working people, as Syriza and others claim. **Down with the imperialist EU!**

We gave critical electoral support to the reformist KKE [Communist Party of Greece] in the January 25 election because of our principled, class opposition to the bourgeois Syriza party and to the imperialist EU. But as our propaganda explained, we called for a vote to the KKE while sharply criticizing the KKE's nationalist populist program, which is an obstacle to the fight for socialist revolution. We opposed any vote to Syriza as well as to any of the reformist leftists who tail it, like Antarsya. And we stand in irreconcilable opposition to this so-called "left" capitalist govern-



Reuters

**Berlin, 23 March: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Syriza with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, "negotiating" the EU's starvation policies against Greek workers and oppressed.**

## Down With the Imperialist EU!

ment. **No support to the Syriza government!**

Marxists give no support to *any* capitalist government, whether it is run by a bourgeois party like Syriza or even by a reformist workers party like the KKE. This is true on *both* a national and local level. In opposition to so-called Marxists who promote the idea that the workers

bourgeois government can be pressured to reform Greek capitalism in a socialist direction. The nationalist populist illusions promoted by the left, including the KKE, are also contrary to Marxism and Leninism because they dissolve the social power of the working class into a Greek "people," all of whom supposedly have



Debets/Pacific Press

**Athens, 11 February: Fake socialists in Antarsya join protest in support of capitalist Syriza government.**

can take over the existing state, Marx explained in *The Civil War in France* (1871), "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." And as Lenin explained in *The State and Revolution* (1917), the working class has to "*smash* the bourgeois state machine" through revolution and replace it with its own class dictatorship, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," based on organs of workers rule like soviets. In opposition to this understanding, reformists like Antarsya and others promote the illusion that this

common national interests against the imperialists and the big monopolies.

### The Leninist Struggle for Proletarian Class Independence

The precondition to the victory of the 1917 October Revolution, the world's only successful workers revolution, was the forging of a Leninist vanguard party that fought to guard the complete political and organizational independence of the workers party from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces. As Lenin put it in a polemic against the Menshe-

viks: "The thinking worker knows that the most dangerous of advisers are those liberal friends of the workers who claim to be defending their interests, but are actually trying to destroy the class independence of the proletariat and its organization" ("The Liberals' Corruption of the Workers," 31 January 1914). The question of whose class interests a party or movement actually represents, even if it has some left rhetoric, is thus a vital question for revolutionaries.

Much of the Greek left, including the KKE, falsely refers to Syriza as a reformist or social-democratic workers party. But such parties have a working-class base and a pro-capitalist leadership. Syriza has never been rooted in the working class and openly represents the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Syriza's base was always among the petty bourgeoisie: students, small business owners, farmers and professionals like doctors, lawyers and professors. Why does this matter? Because, unlike the proletariat, this heterogeneous section of society has no independent class interests. The upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie are linked directly to the big bourgeoisie, while its middle layers are squeezed by the big capitalists. While the petty bourgeoisie's lower strata are often oppressed under capitalism, it does not have a direct class interest in the overthrow of capitalism and thus tends to follow the bourgeoisie in political outlook.

In capitalist society, what makes the proletariat different is its relationship to the means of production: its labor in large-scale industry is the source of the enormous profits of the capitalist class, which are derived from the exploitation of the worker who owns nothing but his labor power. This gives the proletariat the power to stop the flow of the bourgeoisie's profits by striking. Moreover, the proletariat can only end its exploitation by destroying private ownership of the means of production—by ripping the factories, mines and banks out of the hands of the capitalists and putting them under the ownership of society as a whole: collectivization. This is why the proletariat alone has both the power and the historic interest to carry out a socialist revolution. Such a revolution would not only end class exploitation, but also lay the basis for eliminating all the different forms of capitalist oppression suffered by the masses, such as women's, racial and national oppression. Socialist revolution would thus serve to liberate the oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie also.

Contrary to the myth promoted by the Greek left that a revolution will be carried out by the "people," Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848):

"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.... The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat... they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat."

*continued on page 8*