

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 3



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

UPI

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# Introduction

Philadelphia, 13 May 1985: signature of the Reagan regime. On that day black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode and his city administration in collaboration with Reagan's federal government burned to death eleven members of the black MOVE commune, including five infants and children. More than 60 homes were burned to the ground in that section of black Philly, leaving 300 people homeless. The MOVE massacre is Reaganite terror, meant to cow and regiment the American population. It is the domestic reflection of Washington's war mobilization to overthrow the anti-capitalist gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

This hideous inferno fueled racist reaction across the country. White mobs chanting "MOVE! MOVE!" rampaged through Jim Crow Southwest Philly where a black and an integrated couple had recently bought homes; then the homes were firebombed. In New York City, where racist Koch's killer cops have been on a bloody rampage, six of the eleven transit cops who beat and strangled Michael Stewart to death were turned loose (the other five were never charged) in a trial that prosecuted the dead black victim, his parents and the dozens of witnesses to this brutal cop murder. And in "liberal" Northern California, a black youth, Timothy Lee, was lynched last November.

The bombing of black Philadelphia was a test, not merely of Marxist and working-class principle, but of elementary human decency. Despite our differences with the outlook of MOVE, the Spartacist League was the only organization to stand with MOVE supporters in sympathy with their human grief and solidarity with their righteous anger. In the immediate aftermath of the MOVE massacre, liberals and fake-leftists alibied Goode who vowed, "I'd do it again." Jesse Jackson's initial reaction was to demand black contractors get in on the blood money to build over the ashes of firebombed black Philly. The left tailists of Jackson and the black Democratic Party politicians went so far as to obscenely blame the MOVE massacre on the victims, parroting the Goode administration.

Meanwhile, in a meeting to plan a May 30 "protest" in Philadelphia a motley crew of liberals and reformists had the gall to debate whether MOVE would be allowed to speak and what they would be allowed to say. Originally MOVE planned to attend this demo and Spartacist pledged to organize 100 supporters to stand with them. But confronted with this outrageous and insulting "debate" which desecrated their martyred kin, MOVE withdrew and, in solidarity with them, so did the SL. To give the MOVE martyrs the respect that was their due, we held a public forum in NYC and were honored to have as speakers

members of their family and supporters, LaVerne Sims and Louise James.

The burning to death of eleven black men, women and children in their own home bares the future for the oppressed in this rotting, racist system. The despair bred by this period of profound social reaction is reflected in the attention given to the views of that sinister black demagogue, Louis Farrakhan, the man who wanted Malcolm X dead. Farrakhan's separatist rejection of black struggle led him to embrace KKK race-terrorist Tom Metzger.

The Spartacist-initiated mobilization, mainly black workers and youth and more than 5,000 strong, drove the Ku Klux Klan out of Washington, D.C. on 27 November 1982. It demonstrated that an integrated revolutionary workers party seeking to unite the entire working class and the oppressed against the racist terrorists can deal a blow to Reagan reaction. Our first "Black History and the Class Struggle" pamphlet took as its theme a popular chant of that anti-fascist victory: "Finish the Civil War, Forward to a Workers State!" Our second, published for Black History Month (February) 1985, was devoted to telling the story and drawing the lessons of the civil rights movement which were integral to the origins and development of the Spartacist League.

This pamphlet, the third in the series, is devoted to the coverage of the MOVE massacre in the pages of *Workers Vanguard*, the Marxist biweekly of the Spartacist League, which has sought to sear the image of this grotesque racist atrocity into the memory of its readership. Like the November 1979 Greensboro, North Carolina KKK/Nazi murder of five leftists and unionists (planned and executed with the direct participation of the FBI, ATF and other police agencies), the bombing of black Philadelphia must never be forgotten.

To avoid repetition, we have left out a number of articles and abridged others. But the speeches and contributions from the floor at the SL's July 11 NYC forum honoring MOVE are presented as they originally appeared in *Workers Vanguard*, for they powerfully reveal the magnitude of this racist crime and the bitter outrage it must evoke.

The pamphlet concludes with excerpts from speeches by Spartacist candidates at a November 2 rally which culminated our 1985 NYC election campaign. A central focus of that campaign was the struggle for black freedom, from Harlem to Soweto, through workers revolution. Socialism is what we want, and communism is how to get it. We pledge that the future American workers government will avenge the MOVE martyrs.

—February 1986

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 379, 17 May 1985

# Reagan Bombs Black Babies

MAY 14—"They've dropped a bomb on babies!" exclaimed a black man standing behind police barricades watching the cops' fiery siege of a West Philadelphia black neighborhood May 13. Thousands lined the block for hours staring in disbelief as the raging fire engulfed 60 of the densely packed row houses and the fire department stood by under orders to do nothing. It was 5:27 p.m. when the police helicopter dropped what appears to be a satchel charge (with plastic explosive) on the roof of a house occupied by members of a black commune. "Drop a bomb on a residential area? It's like Vietnam," one horrified resident said. Other witnesses compared it to the U.S. invasion of the tiny Caribbean black island of Grenada. The bodies of three adults and two children have so far been found in the rubble. The only known survivors of the assault are a nine-year-old boy now hospitalized with second-degree burns over most of his body, and a woman, believed to have been arrested. As the little boy ran out of the blazing house, furious neighbors screamed, "Murderers! Assassins! Arsonists!" at the cops.

"Explaining" why police decided to firebomb a house where at least 12 adults and 15 children were believed to be inside, Philadelphia's black Democratic mayor Goode said ominously, "When you engage with a very radical group, you are not engaging in child's play." The bombing followed a 12-hour siege in which the SWAT squad pumped 7,000 rounds of ammunition into the house. Even though high-pressure water cannon had been trained on the house for five solid hours, the police refused to let fire fighters put out the blaze for over an hour, supposedly for fear of "sniper fire." In other words, they *wanted* the neighborhood to burn. Ronald Reagan, just back from saluting Nazi graves at Bitburg, and his top cop Edwin Meese want to send a message to black America and "radicals" of every stripe. "Anti-terrorism" means massive government terror against anyone who is out of step in Reagan's America.

It was one of the most hideous examples of massive overreaction by the state we've ever seen. Neighbors in the neat working-class black area had complained of filthy conditions at the

## Bitburg Hits Philly



New York Post

**Entire blocks of West Philadelphia black neighborhood obliterated by racist cop firebombing.**

commune of the MOVE group. There were dogs and cats and rats and loudspeakers blasting late into the night. And in response to that minor social problem, the police moved in to "evict" MOVE by setting off a firestorm turning the area of 62nd Street and Osage Avenue into a mini-Dresden. Now 300 people are homeless, left with only the shirts on their backs. Vietnam-style "overkill" has been brought home with a vengeance. And the brutal, conscious racism of the bombing is surpassed only by the cowardice of the cops who burn entire city blocks in order to avoid a little shoot-out with some hard cases better left alone.

This particular technique of capitalist state terror, firebombing, has become the police standard operating procedure. The cops' new slogan is "Burn, baby, burn." Already back in 1974, when Meese was California governor Reagan's special aide for police intelligence, the shadowy "Symbionese Liberation Army" was incinerated by a

mammoth police mobilization of Los Angeles city, county and federal cops. When it was over, only parts of the teeth remained to identify the dead. More recently, these cowardly tactics have been used against ultraright and fascist opponents of the government. In Washington state last December, an FBI helicopter dropped an "illumination flare" on the hideout of Robert Matthews, leader of the neo-Nazi "Order," and cremated him. In 1983 the feds tracked down Gordon Kahl, a fugitive leader of the ultrarightist survivalist "Posse Comitatus" in an Arkansas bunker; he too was burned to a crisp.

Monday's roaring Reaganite atrocity occurred simultaneously with revelations that the CIA was behind a car-bombing this March in Beirut which took the lives of 80 people. It was all in order to get one Shi'ite mullah. Of course the hired hit squad was labeled an "anti-terrorism unit," and naturally unnamed "senior administration offi-



Valerio/Philadelphia Inquirer

**West Philadelphia, 13 May 1985: Free-fire zone for racist SWAT-team killers.**

cials" deny U.S. responsibility on the grounds that the CIA had subcontracted out the job! The same psychopathic murderers who sacrificed 200-plus passengers of KAL 007 in a Cold War provocation against the Soviet Union are gearing up for war and practicing on their "own" population. They can't cream Nicaragua for now, maybe next week. Maybe it's next year for the Russians. But in the meantime they sure can blow a section of black Philly to smithereens.

That the immediate targets of this Nazi-like terror are hardly nature's noblemen is beside the point. Presumably, MOVE was obnoxious to their neighbors and pretty weird altogether. But this is still supposed to be a bourgeois democracy and in theory the state does not have a license to inciner-

ate citizens for being obnoxious. To our knowledge the only person the MOVE sect ever really hurt was the cop killed when notorious racist Philadelphia mayor Rizzo ordered 600 police to storm MOVE headquarters in 1978. For defending themselves against the cops, nine members of this black commune still languish in prison.

Certainly the Philadelphia operation emanated from higher quarters than the mayor's office. Black Democrat Wilson Goode is taking "full responsibility" for the bomb the police dropped on his city. Somewhere down the road Goode's line that he preferred "to have dirt and some smell than to have blood" changed to taking out MOVE "by any means necessary." Where is the hand of Edwin Meese, now head of the Justice Department in Washington and a member of

the National Security Council with special responsibility for "terrorism," in this affair?

As the cops are increasingly paramilitarized, the "war games" have extended to the black ghettos of this racist country, and the deranged killer cops get to practice urban counterinsurgency. The West Philly inferno is a hideously magnified version of the eviction of infirm black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs in the Bronx, who was shot to death by a New York City "emergency service" squad because she was behind on her rent. Reagan has brought Bitburg home to terrorize black America. The sick, calculating Hitler-lovers in Washington have embarked on a program of turning those they consider to be "hard cases" into charred meat.

In bombing black Philadelphia, Reagan's people are taking a page out of the book of their racist allies in apartheid South Africa. They want to provoke black unrest...in order to smash it with massive, intimidating overkill, like Philly, like PATCO. Yet the oppression has become so severe and so pervasive and so mean that in desperation some sectors somewhere are going to try to fight. And that fight will be directed not only against Republicans in the White House but also their Democratic Party flunkies like Goode in city halls across the country. For black people in America today, faced with a flaming counterrevolutionary like Reagan, forging a multiracial revolutionary leadership, linking the besieged ghettos to the social power of labor, is a matter of survival. ■

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## WORKERS VANGUARD

Reagan, Cops, Black Mayor—They're the Terrorists

### Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!



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excerpted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 380, 31 May 1985

## Reagan, Cops, Black Mayor—They're the Terrorists

# Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!

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



Webb/Amsterdam News

**As cops burn down West Philly blocks, horrified residents cry out, "Murderers! Assassins! Arsonists!"**

tion" 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?

From Reagan's top cop this was no surprise. The people who salute SS graves in Germany brought Bitburg back to Philly with a bang. This was no "firefight," it was a *firestorm*: Dresden in America. What ever happened to the old American saying that "a man's home is his castle"? This was a *deliberate* firebombing—mass murder pure and simple. There was fighting in row houses in Arnhem, the Netherlands, in 1944, shown in the movie *A Bridge Too Far*. But the German SS corps commander never ordered his flame-throwers to incinerate entire blocks. In fact, when

he encountered a makeshift hospital in one local villa, he spared it. But not the Philadelphia Police Department—they're too chicken. In the "Free World," U.S.A., they bomb women and children, as long as they're black. Just like in Vietnam, they had to destroy the neighborhood in order to "save" it.

This was a willful racist massacre of people with no name (they called themselves "Africa") who had committed no crime. And the American ruling class gets off on it. "Tragedies will occur," smirked Meese (*New York Times*, 18 May).

Anyone who tells the state to go to hell is liable to be blown away, like the Mormon fundamentalist in Utah a few years back who refused to send his kids to public school and was shot down by the state police. "That'll Teach the

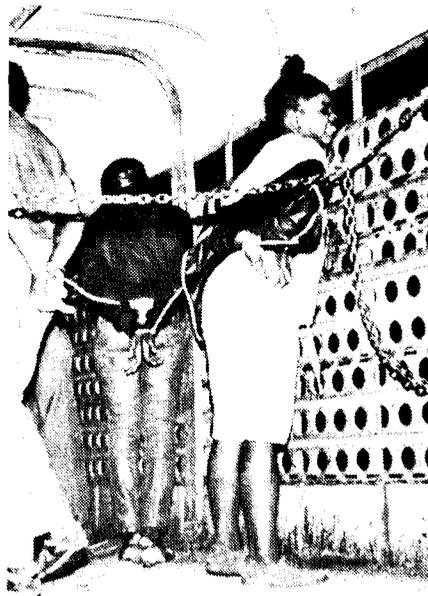
Singer Children," the *New York Times* (21 January 1979) ironically editorialized about that cold-blooded murder. This state demands blood sacrifice, like some Aztec god. It's enough to turn you into a raving anarchist. (In fact, when Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* at the height of the 1917 Russian 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



AP  
**Cops terrorize Miami ghetto, March 1984, binding residents with cables and herding them into police vans. Blacks cannot be free in capitalist America.**

arrests. But a surrender wasn't wanted. The rulers just burned them alive... for using a loudspeaker 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 from people hiding in the "labyrinth of tunnels" around the house. No tunnels were found in the rubble.

*Philadelphia Inquirer* photographer

William Steinmetz, who hid across the street from the MOVE house next to the police command post, reported that explosives were used soon after the cops first opened fire. "The house's windows were blown out when police set off explosives below ground level near the MOVE compound. The charges also blew the skylight out on the home next door," he said (*Inquirer*, 19 May). But the bourgeois press has buried any mention of this use of explosives, and portrays MOVE as initiating the one-way "firefight."

The cops wanted to burn MOVE alive and they sat and watched for 90 minutes while Osage Avenue was in flames. Firemen 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 members 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" (*Chicago 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 minutes 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 "full responsibility" for the bombing; that is, he'd rather be seen as a mass murderer 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 terrorist murder manuals for the CIA "contras" in Nicaragua, who as guard dogs 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 flunkies 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 Saturday, 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 councilman, the district senator, the district state representative, the district attorney, FBI agents, the secret service, the managing 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 helicopters and battering-ram tanks to New York's stun-gun "torture precincts," the rulers justify the growing paramilitarization of the cops in the name of "war on terrorism." 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 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 surrounding last year's Democratic National Convention 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 pretend 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 outraged." 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 Washington, 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 nightriding in the heart of the black inner cities, it's these black front men for Reagan racism 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 apologize 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 establishment 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 groveling 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 Wilson "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 capital 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 supposed to be a message to anybody who gets "out of line" in Reagan's America—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 American 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 racist, capitalist system. Avenge the Philly inferno—For black freedom through socialist revolution! ■



Workers Vanguard

**November 27, 1982: Blacks, labor and reds unite to drive KKK out of Washington, D.C.**

## Black Democrats, Reformists Cover Up Philly Racist Murder

# Remember MOVE Martyrs

The Osage Avenue holocaust was a coordinated state murder plot, an unspeakable crime which should have been met with massive, militant labor-centered protest by all those who defend basic democratic rights, not to mention simple human decency. In this viciously racist country, it is an acid test for all who claim to champion the cause of black liberation. That test has been failed, and spectacularly, by all the assorted reformists who, masquerading as socialists, seek to cuddle up to the black Democrats, like Goode and Jesse Jackson. For Jackson, the Philly inferno presents a chance to push a little "black capitalism": in a press conference he called on the mayor "to ensure that black contractors get a share of the work of rebuilding the 61 homes destroyed

in the fire" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 June).

### Making the Victims into the Criminals

MOVE is, first of all, a black group, and one which has been the target of a vicious barrage of racist propaganda painting them simultaneously as a "radical political" organization and as wild-eyed violent crazies, a sort of all-black analogue of the "Symbionese Liberation Army." In fact the eclectic MOVE group reflects a long American tradition of attempted non-cooperation with the state on moral/religious/political grounds, a tradition expressed in all kinds of examples, from the occasional Quaker pacifist who refuses to fight in a war to the right-wing nut-

case tax resister. MOVE members see themselves as a family, a supportive social unit which seeks to withdraw in despair from the modern evils around them. The Soviet Union's *Pravda* nicely captured the intersection in MOVE of the utopian-commune tradition and the race question:

"That religious sect was sharply critical of the 'boons' of industrial capitalism and preached man's return to nature. The outcasts of American society, most of them blacks, as often is the case in the United States, were looking for an escape from their real problems in an unreal world."

—quoted in *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 May

But most of America's professed defenders of black people want to paint MOVE in very different terms. For the U.S. Communist Party, which is supposed to follow the Moscow line, MOVE is an "anti-social cult group" and "cultists who obviously had become a menace to the community, but whose 'crimes' certainly did not warrant such extreme barbaric measures" (*Daily World*, 24 May). What the CP wants, obviously, are more moderate barbaric measures. Why aren't the American Stalinists toeing the Moscow line? It's simple—the centerpiece of the CP's politics is open support to "black elected officials" and the Democratic Party generally; in other words, they're more responsive to their man in Philly, Mayor Wilson Goode, than to their friends in the Kremlin. So the CP echoes Jesse Jackson's call for a Congressional inquiry (read: whitewash) and has demanded the resignation of everyone responsible for the Osage Avenue holocaust, except the black mayor.

So MOVE—which doesn't believe in killing animals, including roaches and rodents, or washing with soap—was "unpopular with the neighbors." But can anyone really believe that it was the neighbors' complaints that were the cause when 600 Philly cops mounted a massive murderous assault on MOVE in 1978? When MOVE defended their home and a cop got killed, the vindictive state slammed nine MOVE members in

## Philly Inferno: Solidarize with MOVE, Victims of Racist Murder!

### SL Press Release

30 May 1985

The Spartacist League will not attend today's demonstration in Philadelphia, nominally called to protest the 13 May genocide in and firebombing of black West Philadelphia. Our intent and desire to participate in such an action was in order to solidarize with and defend the victims of Reagan/Meese/Sambor/Goode's racist murder: the MOVE organization. MOVE has communicated to us that, for utterly justifiable reasons, it will not attend today's event. And therefore, we will not.

Eleven MOVE members were massacred without even the fig leaf of "legality" by the Philadelphia cops. Even as they mourn their dead,

including four dead babies, MOVE can expect no different treatment on the streets of Philadelphia today. We have independent verification of the malice of this state at the highest levels. The Spartacist League General Counsel yesterday contacted the U.S. Justice Department to inform them of our possible presence at today's demonstration and to warn them that they would be held accountable for any violence against the protest. We made clear that we wanted no trouble. We were answered with a bitter and surly retort.

No indication has been given by the organizers of today's protest—the "Philadelphia Committee for Humanity and Justice"—that MOVE will be defended or given the respect their martyrdom demands. We have no interest in lending our forces and good name to a gathering which has effectively cut off the participation of the MOVE victims.

jail; they are still there. MOVE wasn't cowed; they continued agitating that their jailed comrades should be freed, including broadcasting from loudspeakers at night.

In the present climate of the Reagan gang's drive toward "strong-state" bonapartist terrorism, insults to authority tend to be met with mind-boggling overkill. So right-wing survivalists start getting incinerated in their bunkers; so in the Brinks robbery dragnet hundreds of cops with massive heavy artillery surround a farmhouse in rural Mississippi to arrest Cynthia Boston (who was 1,000 miles away from the "crime"). The Reagan gang has revved up a massive machinery of state terrorism—to fight "terrorists," of course, and if there aren't any they'll invent some. The motors of the "Blue Thunder" attack helicopter are purring and the cops' bosses are itching to try out all their counterinsurgency hardware on real people. So for the "crime" of sanitary violations and unpaid utility bills, a bomb is dropped on MOVE; when they try to surrender, women and children are driven back into the inferno by a hail of bullets. The cops fire 10,000 rounds; deliberately, the raging flames are not fought until eleven people are incinerated, their corpses burned beyond recognition, and 61 houses are destroyed.

As we said, MOVE is a black group and though they aren't centrally political the fact that they are black makes them a target of a highly political state war which is both an ideological crusade and a campaign of physical extermination. The state's war needs to make the government's most annoying perceived opponents into non-people to whom anything can be done. Then something horrifying is done to them, as an unmistakable message of intimidation

to all the oppressed. And racism is integral to the message. Take the 1979 Greensboro, North Carolina massacre when five leftist demonstrators at a rally against the Klan were assassinated in broad daylight in an operation involving the KKK, the Nazis, the cops and feds. Black people all over the country understood the intended message that black lives are cheap, and foremost among those at risk are any "uppity" blacks who resist racist oppression (as well as "reds," the "extremists" who defend black rights). They are intended to understand the same message from the Philly holocaust.

### SWP & Co. Squirm for Mayor Goode

When the shock wears off in Philadelphia, massive anger against the mayor could sweep the black population. Some of the reformists who think they're clever, like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), want to make an apology on behalf of Goode, since he isn't going to make one. So the SWP, the Consumer Party and their similars came together in a liberal/reformist lash-up, the "Citizens' Committee for Justice and Humanity," announcing a demonstration in Philadelphia for May 30. By keeping MOVE out of it they were doing the government's work, trying to head off a *real* protest against this grotesque racist atrocity.

The Citizens' Committee hesitated to openly spit on the MOVE martyrs. At the same time, participation by MOVE in the protest would transform a crocodile-tears event into a display of solidarity with those placed beyond the pale by the racist media barrage—and by MOVE's own forthright condemnations of Mayor Goode. At a planning

meeting of the Citizens' Committee held two days before the demonstration, this cabal debated how to deal with the MOVE "problem."

The reformists want to separate themselves, for the record, from the Osage Avenue massacre. But of course they really do not want to get anywhere near the firing line of the state's vendetta against MOVE. We revolutionists want to serve notice, as massively as we can, that MOVE is not isolated non-persons—"an injury to one is an injury to all!" But the reformists want to straddle the line between MOVE and the murderers of MOVE. So they set their operation up, consciously, as the spokesmen for pro-Goode types shocked by "excessive" force, for the "respectable" blacks whose houses got burned down. They effectively excluded MOVE from being a part of the demonstration by subjecting them to a degrading debate at the planning meeting over whether MOVE was too far out (or too hostile to the mayor?) to speak. MOVE was looking for a way to demonstrate their outrage and grief, so three MOVE members had found time between funerals to attend the planning meeting—where pig "leftists" toyed with the idea of telling the survivors what they could and couldn't talk about at the rally, if they were permitted to talk at all!

A press release from the Citizens' Committee boasts that "Three of our founders were negotiators between MOVE and the City on May 13th." Do you think they don't know that the "negotiations" were a cynical hoax serving to keep MOVE cooled down while the awesome machinery was being assembled for a one-sided war game with real bullets and bombs? In a similar vein is the Citizens' Committee's seven-



Workers Vanguard

**Guilty of Murder:  
Mayor Goode.**

**Philadelphia  
City Hall,  
30 May 1985:  
Reformist hypocrites refuse to  
defend MOVE,  
obscenely parade  
mock coffins of  
their dead.**



Workers Vanguard

## City Bombed Their Home, Murdered Their Babies... Now Bills Victims

In an act comparable to Hitler presenting a gas bill to the families of Jewish concentration camp victims, Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode is charging MOVE supporter Louise James for the demolition of her house, which his cops bombed and deliberately burned to the ground May 13. While simultaneously paying \$2,500 each in hush money to other Osage Avenue residents whose homes were incinerated in this racist atrocity, the city of Philadelphia is on a vendetta to isolate and destroy the handful of MOVE members and supporters not already dead or in jail. After burning alive her brother, her son and nine others, Goode had the letter, reproduced here, sent to James. Later the city announced she wouldn't be allowed to ever return to the site of the house she has owned for 27 years.



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS  
Municipal Services Building, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

JAMES STANLEY WHITE  
Commissioner

HENRY G. HEHLING  
Deputy Commissioner

RAYMOND M. TATE  
Deputy Commissioner

May 23, 1985

Louise James

Philadelphia, Penna. 19104

Re: 6221 Osage Avenue

Dear Ms. James:

The Department of Licenses and Inspections has determined that your property at 6221 Osage Avenue is imminently dangerous within the meaning of Chapter 4-110.1.3 of the Philadelphia Building Code.

You are hereby notified that the Department of Licenses and Inspections will demolish the remaining portions of your property.

A lien will be placed against your property for the costs of demolition.

Sincerely,

  
JAMES STANLEY WHITE  
Commissioner

JSW:j

point program, distributed as their leaflet at the march, which scandalously *does not mention the word "MOVE"!*

We of the Spartacist League meanwhile were actively looking for a way to demonstrate our solidarity with the victims of racist massacre by the state. First, having got word of a demo in Philly May 18 announced by Progressive Labor, we had offered to build and participate in it, but PL characteristically told us to go to hell and had a little demo entirely of their own. (Now PL's *Challenge* is self-critical of how puny and insignificant their sectarian rally was.)

Then we heard that the May 30 demo was being planned. MOVE said they were going, and so we started to go all out. But what we heard about the planning meeting, from a couple of friends who were there and from MOVE, was worrisome in the extreme. The behavior at the planning meeting—"insensitivity" does not begin to describe it—and the stories we were hearing about the cops' behavior around the city in the aftermath of the inferno suggested no reason for confidence in what the gutless reformists would do if the cops came looking for more MOVE blood on Thursday.

We told MOVE we were committed to turning out 100 Spartacists to stand

with them; we tried to bring in other organized forces on short notice (the Malcolm Shabazz mosque in Harlem indicated interest, if MOVE would be there). We served notice on the Justice Department and cops that they would be held responsible for any violence. Witnesses are also a deterrent so we phoned the major bourgeois papers—who heard from us about the demo, not from its purported organizers—and foreign press representatives.

But MOVE decided not to go, and we have every sympathy with their reasons. So we stood down, with a bitter press release: if MOVE's not going, we're not going [see page 8].

The reformists, having evaded the problematic MOVE presence, held their demo, which was about 75 people for most of the time. The bourgeois press did turn up and was pointedly inquisitive about the obvious question: why isn't MOVE here? The SWP et al. were just incoherent with rage when we appeared and gave out our press release. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* (31 May) reported accurately that:

"The rally attracted a number of groups who earlier in the week had quarreled over the format and over whether MOVE itself should be represented. The Spartacist League, for one, put out a news release from New York City announcing that it would not attend

because there was no indication that 'MOVE will be defended or given the respect their martyrdom demands'."

An acutely embarrassed SWPer on the spot, who soon ran away altogether from the argument, tried to take refuge in the claim that the SWP had voted against barring a speaker from MOVE. But you'll wait in vain for an article in the SWP's *Militant* on this; the reformists have a common front, and the line that MOVE should be gagged, though it failed (barely) to be formally adopted, had carried the day: on Thursday, MOVE wasn't there. Somebody who was there, "Shafik Abu-Tahir, who introduced speakers, said organizers 'wanted it to be made very clear to the city administration and the City of Philadelphia that we are not marching today in support of MOVE... not even implied ties to the MOVE organization'" (*Philadelphia Daily News*, 31 May).

The reformist hypocrites even had the unbelievable effrontery, in their sanitized, effectively anti-MOVE demo, to carry eleven cardboard coffins symbolizing the martyrs. And in the reformists' papers (*Militant*, *Workers World*, *Guardian*, etc.) you can find interviews with MOVE members—see, we'll let them speak, except when it counts. These people are pimping off MOVE's

agony in a slimy effort to save Goode's ass.

The various articles appearing in the reformist press since the Philadelphia inferno are careful to stay miles away from the calculated affront they delivered to the MOVE martyrs and bereaved survivors through the Citizens' Committee, but make all the arguments intended to justify this policy obliquely. The May 31 *Militant's* paean of praise to the Citizens' Committee says of a May 21 meeting:

"There was little criticism of Mayor Wilson Goode at the meeting, despite his obvious role in the assault. This reflects a common view among most of the city's Blacks that Goode, as the city's first mayor who is Black, should not be the focus of criticism."

Subsequent *Militant* articles display no shame at the way the SWP has politely refrained from criticizing the mayor within the so-called "mass movements." A *Militant* report (7 June) on a meeting of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists says Goode was "met with polite applause" and it was left to a Democrat to attack the bombing; by its own account, the SWP did nothing. In the next issue (14 June), the SWP is ecstatic about the Third National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights; after the chair called for a moment of silence for the MOVE dead, Goode took the floor to make a snivelling statement which the SWP printed without comment.

Meanwhile, *Workers World/All-*

People's Congress and the *Guardian* make a big deal out of the powerlessness of Goode. *Workers World* guru Sam Marcy assures his readers that "Mayor Goode was merely informed of the planned assault and was not a participant in the plans" (*Workers World*, 30 May); the *Guardian* (29 May) similarly assures us that "Neither Fire Commissioner William Richmond nor the mayor knew the contents of the explosive, nor did they seriously consider the possibility of fire." Yes, Sam, Goode was just a front man; that's his job. As a MOVE spokesman told us: "The man is a lackey. He's got the mentality of a sharecropper's son.... What he's saying is I'm a shovel, and I don't care whether you use me to dig up your front yard or dig up your back yard... a tool." It's a division of labor: in every major city in this country, Democratic mayors keep the lid on the working masses, particularly the minorities, while blaming it all on the "anti-people policies of the White House." Many of these politicians are black: Goode can get away with stuff that finished his predecessor, the notorious racist Rizzo. And the reformists enjoy the role they play in pimping for the black Democrats and keeping the black masses tied to suicidal illusions in them.

### Solidarity with MOVE, Victims of Racist Murder!

As for us, we are still on the lookout for a way to massively express outrage

at the mass murder perpetrated by Reagan and all his front men. This is what is required of us as the small nucleus of the mass working-class vanguard party which must serve as the tribune of all those oppressed by capitalism.

Our duty to combat the state vendetta against MOVE is part of our unremitting campaign against the government's targeting of troublesome opponents as "terrorists." We wage this campaign in every way we can, from the courts to the streets. One way has been our successful legal challenges to the state's targeting of us as "terrorists," most recently in a suit securing from the FBI a change in their formal set-up "definition" of us as conspiratorial criminals. And in 1982 we initiated and led the united-front Labor/Black Mobilization to Stop the Klan in Washington on November 27, when over 5,000 overwhelmingly black demonstrators, backed by the organized power of labor, mainly the black unions of course, rendered the federal government incapable of forcing down the throats of black Washington a racist murder provocation in the form of a KKK parade. The reformists were miles away at a "non-confrontationist" diversion, when Spartacists and black unionists led the militant black youth and stopped the fascists in the streets. State terrorism and its fascist shock troops can be fought—and must be! ■



Workers Vanguard Photos

The Nazis/KKK took Greensboro massacre and Reagan election as green light for racist terror throughout America. Spartacist-initiated labor/black mobilizations in urban centers from coast to coast stopped the fascists, culminating in the 5,000-strong November 1982 Washington, D.C. demonstration (above and left).

# Mayor Goode: "Reagan's House Tom on Philly Plantation"

*Cliff Carter, a black trade unionist, is a guest contributor to WV.*

*By Cliff Carter*

A home in Philadelphia was bombed to kill all the people inside. This date was May 13, 1985, one day after Mother's Day. And too, in Philadelphia, Home of Brotherly Love. In America, Home of the Free and Land of the Brave, or vice versa.

Nothing can be said by Police Commissioner Gregore J. Sambor and Mayor W. Wilson Goode to justify themselves in the bombing; because what other reason would the police bomb a building with people inside except to kill them?

Who made the decision to bomb and burn down the neighborhood? Was it Sambor or Goode, or was it the CIA, FBI or the Reagan Administration with a special meeting held by Congress?

"Willie" Wilson Goode-man was placed in charge of the Philadelphia Plantation by the capitalist rulers. Goode was told to go along with the bombing and make things look as though he gave the orders. City mayors are nothing but fronts for the ruling class, and Goode falls in that category. Is Goode a House Negro playing the part of a House Tom on the Philadelphia Plantation?

The MOVE people were used as guinea pigs. The bombing of their home was a demonstration and lesson to show all left groups and militant labor union locals what will happen if they step out of line. This murder was well planned. The police chief ordered the fire fighters not to shoot one drop of water until the MOVE people were well fried, and the other homes completely beyond saving.

What's next on the agenda, or rather, who is next? Will the plantation owners send their House Toms (city mayors, black and white) after the militant trade union locals next? Is the black church next? This is just the beginning. Mayor Goode would set himself on fire first before he would take part in bombing a white neighborhood. Along with the chores given Goode (such as what to do, how to do it and who to work and where



Meyers/NY Times

**Mayor Goode, Police Chief Sambor carry out Reagan's program for black America: bombing of MOVE, West Philly.**

to work them) he was told who to bomb.

Malcolm X said in one of his speeches (from *Malcolm X Speaks*), "If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, 'What's the matter, boss, we sick?'" Now when Mayor Goode was told by cop Sambor that he (Sambor) had planned to bomb the MOVE home, Goode said, "Boss, make sure I know the time so I can see us bomb the MOVE people together."

The Philadelphia bombing was a product of black people being forced to live in segregated neighborhoods. A segregated neighborhood means a neighborhood that is controlled by city officials who have no real interest in it whatsoever. The same principles that apply to a neighborhood, apply to schools also. If the water, gas, electricity and the allowed money for repairs and operating the neighborhood are controlled by the city officials, then the people are at the mercy of the officials.

The United States government prefers black people to live in segregated neighborhoods and schools. With this, the U.S. could cut off money and miseducate anytime it (U.S.) pleases. And too, *drop a bomb anytime.*

The whole world watched the bombing in Philadelphia, and I am sure the working people from all "walks of life" are still stunned from what happened. In cities around the country, they read in the newspapers the Associated Press saying: "*The radicals might have*

*engineered their own deaths.... They're insane."*

This murder in the black community is no different from any other murder done by the police in the past. Black people are murdered (by the police), put on trial (yes, dead men and women have been tried by the United States courts) and found guilty of attempted murder (against the police), and murder (their own). We must not forget that the police have always had "open season" on the black neighborhoods ever since the ending of the Civil War. But now, the police departments have had an amendment added to their "license to kill." They (police) have been given black mayors to justify each and every murder committed on black people. The "sell-out, sold-out" Goodes are with us and increasing with every election, parading as Democrats and Republicans.

Eleven people were murdered and 61 homes completely destroyed. What have the AFL-CIO heads said concerning this? Are they too busy bread-breaking with the bosses? The AFL-CIO should break away from the Democratic Party and start working for the working people.

Police brutality in the black community will only be stopped by decent and concerned people free of the ties with the Democratic and Republican parties. A change of things (socialist revolution) will be done by the same people. ■

## Spartacist League/ Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

— MARXIST LITERATURE —

### Bay Area

Fri.: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 3:00-6:00 p.m.  
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)  
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Tues.: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
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Chicago, Illinois Phone: (312) 663-0715

### New York City

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41 Warren St. (one block below  
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New York, N.Y. Phone: (212) 267-1025

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# Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!

## SL Forum: Solidarity with MOVE Martyrs

May 13, the day eleven black people were bombed and cremated by the government in Philadelphia. Eleven men, women and children, part of the MOVE group, a back-to-nature commune whose members all took the name Africa, were slaughtered. These were human beings—now their bodies are so destroyed that the forensic ghouls can't be sure the hunters actually got all of their quarry, because they can't tell even how many dead bodies there are.

In unleashing on MOVE the kind of treatment normally associated with wars far from home, e.g. napalming the peasants of Indochina, the government—Reagan, Meese, the FBI, the cops—was sending a message to Americans that massive overkill awaits you if you make trouble. The helicopter bombing of the MOVE babies will be a symbol of the Reagan years. The MOVE group—vulnerable in a racist society, targeted for continuing to cry out against the cops' and courts' decimation of their family in 1978—was blown away as a deliberate demonstration of the murderous prerogatives of the capitalist state. Like the people, from ghetto kids to grandmothers, who have been wantonly murdered by New York cops in recent months, the MOVE people were innocent victims of a state looking for excuses to show its firepower to cow the oppressed.

This atrocity must never be forgotten! Ramona Africa and all the MOVE prisoners must be set free! Solidarity with the martyrs is an elementary reflex of human dignity, not to mention socialist morality. Yet there are those who claim to be socialists who nonetheless seek a middle ground between the martyrs and their executioners, who would solidarize with the accidental victims whose houses were burned but not with the people the state deliberately set out to murder. For our part we pledge that the future American work-



Workers Vanguard

**MOVE supporters LaVerne Sims (at mike) and Louise James, SL's Ed Kartsen at July 11 forum.**

ers government will avenge these dead. And we are embittered that there is so little a small Marxist party can do now beyond joining with the MOVE survivors in their righteous anger.

We publish below an edited transcript of a Spartacist public forum held in New York on July 11. Spartacist comrades, transit workers, community college students came there to bear witness to our outrage. We came to memorialize MOVE, people we never knew until they were martyred by the state, in our own way, by describing as precisely as we could the reasons behind the holocaust, a blood sacrifice by a depraved system driving toward war. We linked the massacre of MOVE to the 1979 Greensboro massacre in North Carolina, to Bitburg, to the cop reign of terror on the streets of New York.

It is our obligation to etch this racist atrocity into the memory of everyone we

can reach, and on behalf of the working class to hold out the promise of proletarian justice. A thousand people should have been there instead of a hundred. Through *WV* we can bring to a few thousands a reflection of this meeting. But there is no way to capture in print the intense political and emotional experience when MOVE supporter LaVerne Sims [see page 19] spoke of MOVE's struggle against injustice, the jailing of their brothers and sisters in 1978, the children these people left behind and the slaughter of those children on Osage Avenue on May 13.

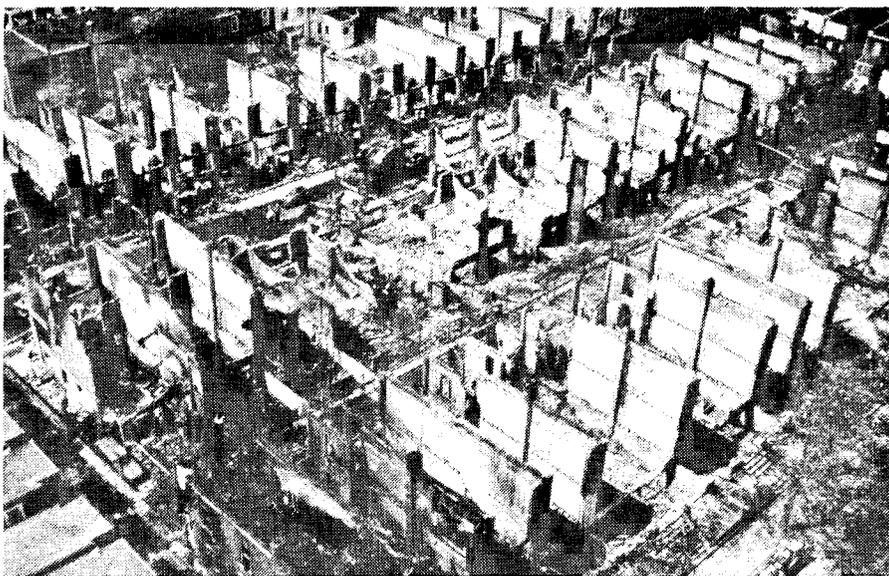
An opponent from a small group, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), rose in the discussion period to denounce the meeting as "a sham" apparently because it was not a debate of the Marxist views of the SL vs. the philosophy of MOVE. Indeed it was not. It was, like our articles, like the so

far nonexistent united-front demonstrations in solidarity with MOVE that we want to be involved in, a protest against racist government massacre. The LRPer then refused to yield the floor after his three minutes and had to be dissuaded from further abuse; he again became unruly prior to the summaries. When the meeting was over he left, then incredibly came back in demanding that we uphold his purported honor as a socialist because LaVerne Sims had dared to question why he'd come anyway. He wanted us to have to escort him out, which we did.

What the LRP and its representative display is not simply insensitivity. They are a tiny tail on a reformist left donkey which aims to minimize the Philadelphia massacre and particularly the complicity of Wilson Goode, black Democrat. The reformists see their only hope for influence as tailing Jesse Jackson (who by the way responded to the Philly inferno by asking that black construction firms get contracts for the new housing). So they have pandered to the pervasive and cruel illusion that the advancement of black politicians leads toward freedom for the masses. In Philadelphia after the holocaust, this policy took the form of a token "protest" which became simply an alibi for Goode and an affront to MOVE when a planning meeting debated whether the survivors should be permitted to speak at a demonstration, and if so if they could be told what they should and shouldn't say.

When we first got word of such a demo being planned we contacted MOVE. When MOVE decided not to come out and be degraded we canceled our participation. The organizers, having dispensed with the problem of a MOVE presence, then had the effrontery to appear with eleven mock coffins symbolizing the dead.

We thank the sisters from the MOVE group who did us the honor of coming



Miller/Woodfin Camp

**After Philadelphia holocaust, black neighborhood resembles Dresden after WWII firestorm.**

up to speak at our meeting on behalf of their slain comrades. We salute their courage and acknowledge our solemn obligation as the revolutionary vanguard to remember the MOVE martyrs and fight to avenge them.

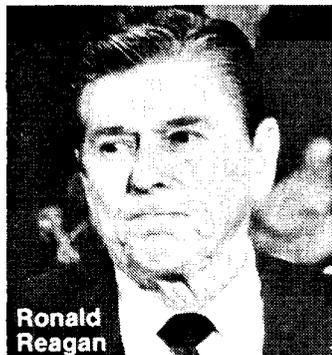
This transcript has been edited for publication in *WV*. All speakers' remarks have been condensed and several contributions to the floor discussion by SL supporters have been eliminated.

**Chairman:** We have three speakers: Brother Ed Kartsen, a comrade from the SL Central Committee, who was chairman of the November 27, 1982 Labor/Black Mobilization in Washington, D.C. that stopped the Klan. He is also Spartacist candidate in the upcoming New York City elections for Manhattan borough president. The second speaker will be LaVerne Sims, on my right, who is a former member of the MOVE organization from Philadelphia. The third and final speaker prior to discus-

sion will be Brother Gene Herson, who is chairman of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus in the National Maritime Union, and participated in the efforts of the Spartacist League to mobilize in defense of and to march with MOVE in the canceled May 30 mobilization.

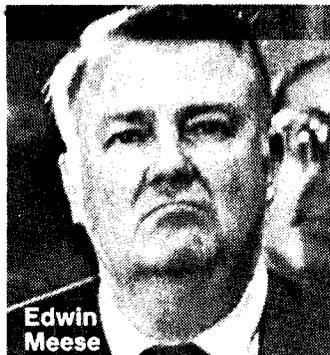
## Ed Kartsen

**Ed Kartsen:** On May 13 an atrocity occurred in Philadelphia. What occurred was in no uncertain terms a legal lynching. It was a bloody racist massacre, and it is now being treated in a very grotesque manner by the ruling class press. I don't know how many people saw the article in the *New York Times* about "forensic science." Grotesque, disgusting, ghoulishly savage: none of these adjectives can possibly describe this article. What the government is doing is going through their hunting bag. They want to find out how many people they actually got in this very well



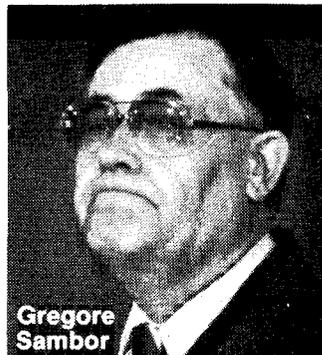
Ronald Reagan

UPI



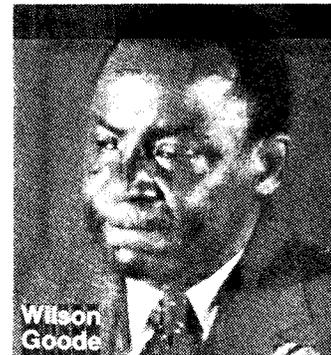
Edwin Meese

AP



Gregore Sambor

DiMarco/Time



Wilson Goode

Katz/Outline

**Architects of state terror, executioners of MOVE.**

planned out, conscious, willful murder. All the ruling class press in the form of the *New York Times* can talk about is how groovy it is to do examinations and studies of the remains.

In all, eleven people, including four black children, were deliberately murdered. This was a legal lynching that indicates planning at the top. The bloody traces of Sambor, the police commissioner, and Goode, the mayor, lead directly to Reagan and Meese. The *New York Times* on the 19th of May reported that "the Philadelphia commissioner, Mr. Sambor, said that he and aides met on Saturday, May 11 with local agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to review the strategy and tactics to be used. Mr. Sambor said, 'The FBI found the plan sound.'" Well, the FBI of course ultimately reports to the attorney general, Edwin Meese. Black Democratic Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode was basically Edwin Meese's Uncle Tom, a black lackey. Mayor Goode sold his black skin to Reagan's racist, labor-hating war when he sold himself to the Democratic Party. Edwin Meese, in speaking before the California "Peace Officers" Association in San Francisco on May 16, praised Wilson Goode as "an example to emulate."

### Racist Inferno Was Planned at the Top

Reagan the Hitler-lover could have been the top cop in all of this. Reagan had just returned from saluting dead members of Hitler's SS death squad in Bitburg, Germany. This was just prior to putting into action the firebombing of Philly. Reagan and Meese have created a terror scare in order to institute what is actually "state-supported terrorism." This includes police-state measures like the FBI's Domestic Security/Terrorism Guidelines labeling all opponents of the government as outlaws to be shot in the dead of night. National Security Directive 138 authorizes the U.S. military and intelligence forces to carry out unprovoked strikes against what they call "terror targets."

MOVE attacked no one. Left alone, they could have lived their lives. They even offered to surrender days before the bombing if Mayor Goode would guarantee no arrests. Mayor Goode's lame excuse for these murders was little different from Koch's and the black police commissioner in this city when they blew away a black elderly grandmother, Eleanor Bumpurs, in the Bronx. If you don't pay your rent, they blow away your house and along with it the rest of the neighborhood.



Workers Vanguard

**Ed Kartsen: Victorious workers revolution will submit the criminals responsible for the Osage Avenue massacre to revolutionary justice.**

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* of May 17 published a detailed report of how this atrocity was planned. For at least 18 months before this conflagration, the chief of the Philadelphia police department's Bomb Disposal Unit was assigned to study photographic blowups of the rooftop of the MOVE house, supplied by aerial reconnaissance. For weeks and possibly months the police department quietly and secretly tested explosive substances, including the one it eventually used on the lumber structures, in preparation for the MOVE siege. In a Philadelphia neighborhood, cops shot 10,000 rounds of ammunition in 90 minutes. They opened up with machine guns shortly after 6 a.m. May 13th. They used M-50s and M-60s: the M-50 is a .45 caliber sub-machine gun, and the M-60 is a .72 caliber that can fire 800 rounds a minute, and it is the general purpose machine gun of the U.S. Army.

Before they dropped the bomb, they knew there'd be a fire. *They didn't care because the children were black.* The cops watched. They wanted MOVE burned alive. And they sat for 90 minutes while the house burned, while Osage Avenue burned, while the neighborhood around it burned. And now the *Times* coldly and clinically talks about the search for the remains of the victims of this racist murder as if it were an archeological expedition. This is no more than a bigoted attempt to dehumanize the victims.

The bloody trail goes from Mayor Goode to the police officials, with the shadowy hand of the federal government, particularly the FBI and the Justice Department. It could have very well been Reagan himself. Remember,

Reagan's friend Thatcher personally committed the war crime of sinking the Argentine ship, the *Belgrano*. When the working class seizes power in this country, these murderers will get an honest and fast trial, and then they will be shot. We promise that.

The only known survivors are Birdie Africa, who is 13 years old, hospitalized with second-degree burns, and Ramona Johnson Africa, who was imprisoned in lieu of initially \$3.2 million in bail. We demand the immediate dropping of charges against Ramona Africa and all MOVE prisoners!

And what was this "big arms stash" they had? Big arms stash: two shotguns and three pistols, like millions of American homes.

The bombing atrocity in West Philly's black community wasn't the first time American blacks were bombed by the government. As *WV* reports, on the 31st of May in 1921—the decade of a racist mob attack on blacks in St. Louis and the Ku Klux Klan march in Washington—the heart of Tulsa, Oklahoma was devastated by bombs dropped from a police airplane. This was in response to organized efforts on the part of black residents to prevent a lynching by a white mob. In that bombing, 75 people were killed, mostly

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## 31 May 1921: The Day They Bombed Blacks in Tulsa

On 31 May 1921 the heart of black Tulsa, Oklahoma was obliterated by police bombs dropped from commandeered private planes. A white mob, out to lynch a 19-year-old black man, Dick Rowland, accused of attacking a white woman, had invaded the segregated black community of Tulsa. According to the *Boston Globe Magazine* (13 March 1983), "Armed blacks, seeking to protect Rowland, also showed up." So police dropped dynamite from the air, killing at least 75, mostly blacks; more than 4,000 black people were thrown into concentration camps, and the black business district, known as "the Negro's Wall Street" was permanently erased.

The racist police bombing of Tulsa came on the heels of massive racist terror against blacks in East St. Louis, Chicago, Washington, Harlem and other cities across the North after World War I, as demobilized white soldiers were set against blacks by the bourgeoisie. John Reed, the radical journalist become Communist, spoke to the Second Congress of the Communist International in Petrograd, July 1920, on the self-defense organized by blacks and the job of the young American Communist Party:

"In all these fights the Negroes showed for the first time in history that they



Beryl Ford

are armed and splendidly organized and are not at all afraid of the whites....

"The Negroes who returned home from the war have set up associations everywhere for self-defense and to fight against the white supporters of lynch law....

"The Communists must not stand aloof from the Negro movement which demands their social and political equality and at the moment, at a time of the rapid growth of racial consciousness, is spreading rapidly among Negroes. The Communists must use this movement to expose the lie of bourgeois equality and emphasize the necessity of the social revolution which will not only liberate all workers from servitude but is also the only way to free the enslaved Negro people."

blacks, and 4,000 blacks were herded into concentration camps. The bombing of Philly's black community was in the same spirit as that 1921 bombing.

The opening shots of the Reagan years were fired in Greensboro, North Carolina in November 1979, when Dixiecrat Carter and anti-communist Democrat Mondale ran things in the White House. The Ku Klux Klan and Nazis murdered five leftist labor and civil rights organizers. The FBI and cops helped plan that massacre just like they helped plan the Birmingham church bombing in 1963 and the assassination of Freedom Riders. These are the same killers that orchestrated the bloody campaign to physically wipe out the Black Panther Party.

Neither the Greensboro massacre nor the Philadelphia bombing will ever be forgotten. A victorious workers revolution will submit the criminals responsi-

ble for the Osage Avenue massacre to *revolutionary justice*. They'll be treated fairly, just like American GIs that liberated Hitler's Dachau death camps treated the prison guards who were there: the GIs executed about 122 of them before they could be stopped, and the liberated prisoners dispatched another 50 with shovels.

This government craves *blood sacrifice*. And it carries out bloody acts on behalf of a single economic group we call the capitalist class. Today, more than a century after the Civil War, capitalist wage slavery must be smashed not only to free black America, but to avenge racist mass murder. Black working people united with *all* union militants must take the lead. Like the members of the Committee for a Fighting TWU, which in New York recently put forward a motion calling for the Transport Workers Union Local

100 to mobilize its members and call on New York City labor to join it in a protest rally at City Hall to demand a halt to the wanton rampage of intimidation, terror and racist murder by Koch's cops.

Philadelphia has a combative labor movement with a proven capacity to fight. Transport workers and school employee unions have gone on strike in recent years. These unions should have *shut Philly down* over this racist atrocity. Every union worker had better remember what Reagan did to PATCO. For Philly unions to have responded to the bombing by closing the city down would have been a basic act of self-defense.

Just as in this city, it would be a basic act of self-defense for the unions to act to halt the rampage of Koch's killer cops. On September 15, 1983 eleven TA cops brutally beat to death Michael Stewart, the 25-year-old son of a retired transit worker. On October 29, 1984 New York-style SWAT unit cop Stephen Sullivan blew away 67-year-old infirm grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs. On February 7, 1985 10,000 armed cops rallied in the Bronx for the right to commit racist murder. On March 15 a berserk, drunken police sergeant and his two partners committed a homicide hit-and-run in their squad car, murdering a 70-year-old doctor and critically injuring a 72-year-old doorman at 72nd Street and Park Avenue. On March 16 an off-duty cop harassed, beat up, refused medical treatment, and jailed overnight a 26-year-old woman seeking an abortion at a Brooklyn clinic. On June 13 a white undercover cop, Lee Van Houten, gunned down 17-year-old black honor student Edmund Perry.

Black workers must lead the struggle in this city to end this cop murder. Black workers must lead labor in demanding the jailing of Van Houten, and the creation of integrated armed workers defense guards to defend the people of Harlem from the marauding racist terrorists in blue.

### Black Democrats: Front Men for Reagan's Terrorism

The bombing of Philly was a Reaganite atrocity. It occurred simultaneously with revelations that the CIA was behind a car bombing this March in Beirut which took the lives of 80 people. This terror squad was labeled an "anti-terrorist unit." Reagan is also the same psychopathic killer who sacrificed over 200 passengers of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 in a Cold War provocation against the Soviet Union. The Philly



IPI/Bettmann Archive

**Philadelphia Teamsters support Greyhound strikers in 1983. Mass integrated labor mobilization could have stopped massacre of Philly MOVE.**

bombing is Reagan's gearing up for war by practicing air strikes against the American population. In the July 9 issue of the *New York Times* it is reported that Reagan wants to go to war with Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Nicaragua. Well, Reagan couldn't go to war with Nicaragua in May so maybe he blew away a section of black Philly instead. To Ronald Reagan, South Africa's white-supremacist police state is a "democracy striving for racial equality." He thinks America's dirty war in Vietnam was a "noble mission." He put a wreath on the graves of Nazi mass murderers in Bitburg.

And the Cold War Democratic Party is more afraid of losing Nicaragua to the Communists than they are of the madman Reagan. Reagan alibis racist massacre in South Africa as part of an anti-communist crusade to mobilize the West for war against the Soviet Union. Reagan is fighting to unite the forces of worldwide anti-communism, from Vietnam's Hitler-loving Marshal Ky to dictator Somoza's leftover murderers and torturers. Reagan's raving about Nicaragua as a "Communist terrorist arsenal that threatens all of us" makes Hitler's tirades against the Soviet Union in the first years of his invasion of the USSR look relatively sane.

Black Democratic Party mayor Wilson Goode is as guilty as Republican Ronald Reagan and the racist cops for the bombing of black Philly. Before Mayor Goode was allowed to bomb his own city, he was touted as one of the premier black Democrats of the 1980s.

He was even one of those interviewed by Mondale to be considered for a vice presidential candidacy. From ex-cop Tom Bradley in Los Angeles to ex-SNCC leader Marion Barry in Washington, black Democrats rule over misery and oppression of black life in America. Today black mayors campaign for Reagan's program of subminimal wages for teenagers. Where there are strikes to be broken, protests over killer cops to be quelched, or KKK provocations in black inner cities, it's the black front men for Reagan's racism who get the job done. An overwhelming percentage of black people vote for the Democratic Party. But at bottom the Democratic Party is necessarily a party of racist capitalism, a party of George Wallace, the Dixiecrats and even some open KKKers like California's Tom Metzger.

After Martin Luther King's 1963 speech, "I Have a Dream," young civil rights members, young members of SNCC started wearing buttons: "I Have a Nightmare." And 20 years later, life for the masses of blacks compacted into devastated ghettos has become worse, as capitalism declines into crisis. The bloody atrocity against black Philadelphia is an expression of the living nightmare of government racist terror in the Reagan years. And the Nazi doctor-style examinations of the remains of the victims of this atrocity appear prominently in the newspaper. The majority of black children live below the poverty line. Black teenagers are thrown wholesale onto the streets, where they are the

marked targets for racist cops. Black people hover on the edge of survival; the capitalists answer with more cops and racist terror.

Not even an honor student from an elite private school, or a five-year-old black child, or a peaceful black back-to-nature organization is safe. A black man can't walk into Cicero, Illinois or Gravesend, Brooklyn without taking his life into his hands. Meanwhile, the courts and the cops make black lives cheaper, and the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis take their cue.

Martin Luther King was assassinated when he was leading marches in support of striking Memphis garbage men. Today city workers can have their strikes broken by ex-civil rights activists, close companions of Martin Luther King. Atlanta mayor Andrew Young, who lay down in front of a sanitation truck in the 1960s to defend an Atlanta sanitation strike, now runs those trucks for strike-breaking. In Washington, ex-SNCC leader Marion Barry is a cutback king who enforced the expulsion of black students from the University of the District of Columbia. In Detroit "progressive" black mayor Coleman Young responds to 70 percent black youth unemployment with cop nightsticks and pistols, reviving the racist cop terror squads to enforce youth curfews. And now black Democratic mayor Goode bombs black Philly for the Reaganite racist terrorists. When [Chicago's] Harold Washington ran for mayor in the most segregated city in America, he didn't call for busing to break up school segregation. Jesse Jackson went to Norfolk, Virginia where thousands of blacks were marching against segregated schools, where he declared he wasn't for busing, he was just for voter registration.

In the 1960s the black movement was faced with two dead ends: the liberal pacifism of King, and the no less defeatist ideology of Stokely Carmichael and the nationalists. Both failed to see the need to mobilize the power of the unions by challenging the racist, pro-capitalist union bureaucracy and their flunkies. King and the black ministers were committed to the Democratic Party. Carmichael and the black nationalists took the road of black separatism, which ignored the "white" working class. These two dead ends represented by King and Carmichael led to a decade of no significant black struggle. This has encouraged the present racist terror spearheaded by Goode and Reagan's terror-bombing of black Philly.

Malcolm X in a speech in December

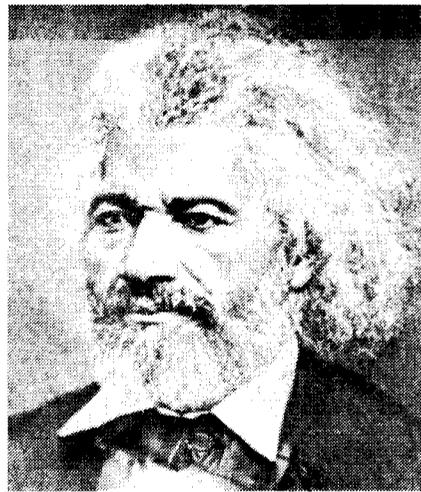
1964 said, "If the leaders of the non-violent movement can go into the white community and teach nonviolence, good. I'd go along with that. But as long as I see them teaching nonviolence only in the black community, we can't go along with that. We believe in equality, and equality means that you have to put the same thing over here that you put over there. And if black people alone are going to be the ones who are nonviolent, then it's not fair. We throw ourselves off guard. In fact, we disarm ourselves and make ourselves defenseless."

### Finish the Civil War!

The Civil War of 1861-1865 was the first and only American war in which black people clearly had a stake. Over



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### John Brown and Frederick Douglass, fighters for black freedom. Finish the Civil War!—Black Liberation through Socialist Revolution!

120 years after, black equality still has to be achieved. It is necessary that a re-emerged black movement demand that the Civil War be finished. In 1861 Union commanders pressed for the arming and training of blacks. Professional soldiers like John C. Fremont, abolitionists like Thomas Wentworth Higginson, fought to accomplish this. Higginson was a friend of the great revolutionary abolitionist John Brown. German American Marxists like Joseph Weydemeyer also fought to put blacks under arms. Lincoln and the War Department wanted to resist the recruitment of blacks. As Foner notes, "blacks themselves initiated much of the action that culminated in abolition and their admission into the armed forces. Thousands of fugitive slaves flooded Union lines."

Ex-slave black revolutionary Frederick Douglass issued a historic appeal in March 1863 when he declared: "Men of Color, To Arms!" Douglass argued for

black enlistment not only because the war must lead to the abolition of slavery but also because black people fighting for their own freedom would transform the black spirit itself. Douglass tried to complete the war by fighting to win basic economic and political freedom. But that great fight is still to come.

We stand in the revolutionary tradition of Frederick Douglass and John Brown. Today there is no longer a "progressive" wing of the capitalist class, as many of our political opponents believe. Only the mobilization of labor can finish the Civil War. Black and white working-class militants must look for and seize the opportunity to mobilize their fighting strength in a movement for black freedom, which is inseparably tied to the fight for the

liberation of labor from capitalist slavery.

The appearance of the Southern civil rights movement with the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott opened a new phase in postwar American history. The movement ended a period of Cold War McCarthyite hysteria. America became polarized along the lines of for or against Jim Crow segregation. This movement must be revived on a labor/black foundation. Black youth, who weren't bound by the anti-communist prejudices of their parents, played a leading role in the civil rights movement. On the Freedom Rides through the South in attempts to implement integration of interstate busing, young activists watched the FBI "observers" stand by while the sheriffs' goons bashed the heads of demonstrators.

As a small political tendency then, we sought to give political leadership to these young black militants. We called

for a Freedom Labor Party in an attempt to link the growing level of black struggle to the power of the labor movement. We called for Southern organizing drives. And we called for workers united-front action to prevent federal intervention.

We advanced the slogan for organized, armed self-defense. In a leaflet titled "Organize Black Power!" we pointed the way forward by calling for the defense of black ghettos. This leaflet declared, "every serious responsible working man should exercise his right to own a gun." We organized to raise funds for the Deacons for Defense and Justice, which was an organization of black veterans who defended civil rights demonstrators from Ku Klux Klan terrorists. We lacked the forces at that time to succeed in making the link between the young black militants and the labor movement. As a result, the black movement's future leaders went down the dead-end road of black separatism.

Today a mass black movement can re-emerge, based on united actions directed against Reagan's and the Democrats' racist, anti-communist terror campaign. United actions like the November 27, 1982 demonstration in Washington that united black community organizations and individuals along with trade unionists into a force that halted a Ku Klux Klan march. United actions like the ones that could have taken place to protest the Philadelphia bombing, had the liberal left in the guise of the Socialist Workers Party, Workers World Party and the Communist Party not insulted MOVE members by threatening to censor their own memorial remarks at what was supposed to be their own funeral march.

United actions involving groups like the Malcolm Shabazz mosque, which has taken an interest in the Philadelphia issue. United actions that could mobilize the power of labor, which is capable of smashing any force that opposes it, so long as labor is united around the principles of *class struggle*, defense of the picket line. These actions must be organized responsibly and led by a mass working-class party.

In addition to united-front actions, we are fighting to build a mass party of this kind. Toward that end, Marjorie Stamberg of the Spartacist Party is running for mayor to expose that racist, murdering strikebreaker in City Hall, and I am running for Manhattan borough president against an assortment of yuppies and black Democratic Party sellouts. Everyone in this room



27 November 1982: Support by black union locals for call to stop the Klan was key to mobilizing thousands in Washington, D.C.

can join in this effort by contributing in any way you can. This campaign must be seen as an opportunity that can lead to the advancement of labor/black struggle. It must be seen as an opportunity to advance the struggle to break the stranglehold the Democratic Party and the trade-union misleaders have on the power of the labor movement.

We stand ready at all times to mobilize our strength in united actions against racist terror. The mass power of organized labor, black militants, once broken from the Democratic Party in mass actions, will constitute the kind of invincible force that will avenge the Philly bombing. Legal lynchings must be met with revolutionary class justice. All MOVE prisoners must be freed at once! United actions mobilizing the power of organized labor and minority organizations must be brought to bear to smash racist terrorism. The MOVE members must be avenged. We have to move forward to a mass labor/minority party that can lead the working class to seize power in order to end racist terrorism once and for all.

## LaVerne Sims

**LaVerne Sims:** May 13 massacre in Philadelphia. "Guilt is the agent of plague to this system, and the section is you all's tools to get around you all's disasters"—John Africa. John Africa, a black man, a wise man, a righteous and godly man, a powerful man who presented such a threat to this system they came at him with everything they had. Everything! "What a family we are, when our aim is unbending, committed to stop this intruder of life from sucking the blood of our mom any longer with power no man can stand up against

long. What a family we are, when we are one force united, committed to move the whole world in a hurry, through loyalty true as the word revolution. A word that is now an experience of MOVE"—John Africa. Indeed MOVE had experienced the word revolution. Because as John Africa says, strategic revolution is fitness. To understand revolution you must be sound. Revolution is not a word but an application. It is not war but peace. It does not weaken, it strengthens. Revolution does not cause separation, it generates togetherness. MOVE brothers and sisters were, and are, the most courageous people I know. And they got that courage from strength, from the strength of John Africa, a small man in size but strong as an oak tree unbending.

Ramona Africa was one of the survivors on May 13th, and is being held on \$4 million bail. Thousands of pounds of precious water was released on Ramona for seven hours straight. Thirty thousand rounds of bullets fired at her and ultimately a bomb was dropped, killing eleven people, five of them children. Yet the murderers are free.

Moe Africa, who was arrested prior to and leading up to May 13th, is still in jail. But district attorney Ed Rendell issued warrants on Moe and MOVE supporter Kareem Howard, who was also in jail and had been in jail for nearly two years. And Rendell knew this. Those warrants were issued to mayor Joseph Battle of Chester, Pennsylvania, and he in turn along with his goon squad converged on Moe's wife and five children, who he knew were alone and defenseless. Throwing tear gas in on Mary and her children. Trying to provoke another massacre like the one that left eleven people dead in Philadelphia the same day. They had warrants

for Moe and Kareem, but arrested Mary and her children instead. They let Mary go, but kept her children. But the next day Mary walked into that shelter and walked away with her children. She had no place to go, though, because they had leveled her home to the ground and destroyed everything she owned.

## MOVE Martyrs' Cries Can't Be Silenced

Eleven MOVE members, including five children, went to their death on May 13th because they took a firm stand against this court system and said, "We want our political brothers and sisters released from prison. They are innocent. We know it and we know you know it as well." And MOVE had every god-given right to defend this position. Because the man don't give you your right in defense, not when it's not in his interests. The position MOVE stood firm on, died for, still stands. We are demanding justice be done, that all MOVE political prisoners be freed. They are in jail for a crime they did not commit. The courts know it, the cops know it, the mayor



Workers Vanguard

**LaVerne Sims: Wilson Goode sold out his ancestors' principles for a promise, a position.**

knows it, Philadelphians know it, and we know it.

In 1977 the district attorney, Ed Rendell, the same district attorney, him along with the late judge Fred DiBona and the late inspector George Fenel of civil affairs, conspired to set MOVE up and they did. They took from a criminal case the term number and applied it to a civil case, issuing phony warrants. The city administration headed by former mayor Frank Rizzo acted on those warrants and in turn another eviction turned into mayhem, utter chaos, as a direct result of what these criminals

done. The action taken by Rizzo culminated August 8, 1978. A cop was killed that day, by his own comrades. But they blamed it on MOVE. And nine MOVE members were sentenced to from 30 to 100 years. Edwin Malmed was the judge. That confrontation led up to the confrontation May 13th, brutally murdering eleven other MOVE members. MOVE sisters and brothers went to their deaths protesting the injustice perpetrated on them by Ed Rendell, judge Fred DiBona and inspector George Fenel, by issuing those phony warrants to begin with. We are asking any and everybody to join us in this protest, to get our family out of jail.

Mother's Day, May 12th, the system's



**Aftermath of unprovoked assault on MOVE by 600 cops, 8 August 1978. Nine MOVE members are still in jail for trying to defend themselves.**

belief. But May 13th and then there were none. Rhonda Africa is gone. Birdie Africa was Rhonda's son. Birdie was with his mother minutes before, but minutes after he was motherless.

The MOVE sisters and brothers in jail left their children behind, and they will never see their children again. Mayor Wilson Goode, police commissioner Gregore Sambor, fire commissioner William Richmond and managing director Leo Brooks saw to that. They elected, endorsed and sanctioned the dropping of that bomb, and lieutenant Frank Powell was the executioner. When lieutenant Powell dropped that bomb from the helicopter, he wiped those babies from the face of this earth. The act of genocide. For there will be no generation forthcoming. Their lives were snuffed out, literally blown apart. Of five children, only one was intact. The other four were completely dismembered. All that is left are their arms, their legs, bones, teeth and patches of flesh. Patches of flesh, that's all that's

left of them.

Brother Conrad Africa was just an arm and his teeth. They have an adult male with nothing left but a torso. No arms, no legs, not even his head. His head was severed from his body. They laid in pieces in the morgue. Bodies so ruined, so badly charred they still cannot make identification. Still there are parts of those bodies in the rubble somewhere on Osage Avenue. And that's sad. That hurts.

What kind of a thing is this, that calls himself Wilson Goode? He's no damn good at all! This beast knew gasoline was on top of the roof. Yet he ordered a bomb to be dropped. And it makes no difference what kind of device they want

to call it. If this scum didn't know enough that even a match dropped on gasoline would have erupted into fire, he's got no business being mayor of no city!

An idiot would have known better. But it wasn't that he didn't know. It was that he *did* know. Because it was premeditated murder. But if it was entry they wanted, they could have got it, because the front door had been kicked open long before the dropping of that bomb. And they knew it.

My sister Louise had only one child, her son Frank Africa. But he's gone now. Shot in the back and cremated in cold blood. Genocide. Murder. On Mother's Day, May 12th, Louise had that one child. But May 13th she was childless. Louise too will never witness a generation to come, because she had no grands.

You know, whenever black folk get any kind of position, they always feel the need to impress on the white man just how *unprejudiced* they are, and they

bend, bow and scrape doing it. But the degradation to follow is selling out their ancestors' principles cheap. Wilson Goode sold out. He sold out his ancestors' principles for a promise, for a position. Sold out for a penny, just to prove to the white man that blacks would be treated no different than the white structure intended. That they would *still* be mistreated. When the mayor took that oath, took office as mayor to serve blacks, Puerto Ricans and whites well, he meant it. He meant he would serve for his master a job well done on blacks, on Puerto Ricans, but for whites. He said, "I'll prove to you, master, just give me my title and I'll play the role. Just 'cause my skin is black means nothing, 'cause my mind is white, I just look black." John Africa says, "An innocent mask will fool only the blind, but the man that can see will cut through all disguises." Wilson Goode can't be trusted. Any time a man will sell out his principles for a dollar, he is to be seen as the traitor he is, regardless of the color he portrays himself to be. He is dangerous, a menace to society. A traitor will stop at nothing, and neither did Wilson Goode. He was bent on bringing MOVE out of that house dead or alive—preferably dead—because of his own personal vendetta, his ego, his pride. He is so ugly with hate, so ugly with arrogance, so vicious and prideful, in murdering MOVE he also murdered his career, the only thing that meant more to him than his own family. I was taught by John Africa years ago, and I quote: "A just person will ignore his pride and hold on to what is right. An unjust person will ignore what is right, and hold fast to his god-damning pride." Long live John Africa!

It is incidental MOVE members lived on Osage Avenue. For no matter where MOVE lived, MOVE would have still protested the injustice of this corrupt system. MOVE has lived in Chester, Pennsylvania; Utica, New York; Rochester, New York; Richmond, Virginia and Philadelphia. But no matter where MOVE moved, they could not escape the terrorism of the cops and this administration. MOVE moved to the roof of their own home, built bunkers, literally lived up there, but they still could not escape the neighbors' bricks and stones that they threw up at them. Still could not escape the helicopter that flew over them constantly.

And even when they stayed indoors, they were imposed on by the hours and hours of chanting, the incense burning that seeped through the cracks of their walls from the neighbors next door. The



Gralish/Philadelphia Inquirer

**Ramona Africa, sole adult MOVE survivor of Osage Avenue inferno. Free Ramona Africa and all MOVE prisoners!**

reefer smoke that seeped through the windows from the neighbors on the outside. But MOVE members were taught by John Africa not to attack the oppressed, not without provocation, but to attack the oppressor. If MOVE harassed the neighbors of Osage Avenue, it was because MOVE was harassed by the neighbors. If MOVE threatened the neighbors in Osage Avenue, it was because MOVE was threatened by the neighbors first. But they would not arbitrarily attack black folk without provocation. If I were to tell you of the many vicious, brutal beatings, the 600 arrests, the harassment, baby-killers, the MOVE organization has suffered since the inception of MOVE, I would be here till tomorrow.

The bullhorn. The neighbors say when MOVE used a bullhorn it was so loud it woke them up, disturbing them day and night. But I haven't slept a night through since May 13th. My peace has been interrupted forever. But MOVE wasn't loud enough—because nobody heard them. And that's obvious, because they're gone. What people have got to understand is that loud don't necessarily mean sound. Sound can be as loud as the roaring of thunder or silent as words written on paper. Silent can be just as deadly as the cracking sound of a lightning bolt. Sound means attraction, focus, attention. Loud means what you relate and respond to. Have you ever seen a person that dressed loud? You were attracted to that person by your eyes. A person can dress

loud, smell loud, or have a loud reputation. But loud don't mean nothing but attraction, what you relate to and respond to. You think a blind person can't see? They can see with their hands. Just like a deaf-mute hear with their eyes. I didn't know anything before I learned the teaching of John Africa, not a thing. But since I encountered that principle, I have learned a hell of a lot. I'm not very smart educationally, man's education, not his education. But what I know about that principle, I know. But if you think a deaf-mute can't hear, write a deaf mother a note, tell her her baby was raped and killed, and sit back and watch her response. If she can read, you will know she heard what you said by the tears that follow. Because she related and responded to what she heard you say on that paper. When judge Edwin Malmed sentenced my brothers and sisters from 30 to 100 years, it rang loud in my ears. When a judge sentences anybody to the electric chair to be electrocuted until dead, it can bust your eardrums. It can stop your heartbeat. Because no matter what tone he say it in, those words are screaming at you. Turn on your gas and lay down: a silent sound communicating death. On May 13th, when Mayor Goode ordered the dropping of that bomb, it *shook the world*. Because it was heard around the world, communicating, attention-drawing. And it went around the world because everybody related to and responded to it. That's why I'm here, because Gene heard it, Frank heard it, and Joel heard it. That's why you're here, because you all heard that bomb, although you're in New York, you heard it all the way from Philadelphia, because sound don't mean nothing but communication.

Eleven MOVE members on May 13th were murdered by Mayor Wilson Goode's hit men, paid assassins, exter-

minators of babies, because the neighbors of Osage Avenue went to Mayor Goode to have MOVE removed from the block. Five of the eleven MOVE members were children. Eleven innocent people gone. But the blood from these eleven victims is on the hands of those neighbors and everybody that was involved, and they won't be able to wash it off. What they tried to accomplish backfired. Not only is MOVE family still on Osage Avenue, but their homes were destroyed in the bargain. And when they move into those new homes, they will find out that MOVE is still there. Because our brothers and sisters will be moving in right along with those neighbors. They will have no peace, no sleep, for even while they attempt to sleep, the cries of the babies will wake them up, the screams that can only come from the excruciating pain they will hear. And it will wake them up and sit them up as the sweat rolls from their brow. They complained to Mr. Goode about MOVE and the bullhorn and had MOVE murdered. But they won't be able to complain to a living soul and have those screams stopped. Not a living soul can make those screams be silent. They pushed for it and they got it. Because the memory of MOVE will ever be present.

Wilson Goode is not exempt. He too will have no peace, he too will hear the cries. Councilman Lucien Blackwell will have no peace. Councilwoman Joan Spector will have no peace. The 14 ministers who condoned the mayor's murder will have no peace, no sleep. They can go on their knees forever, but they won't be able to pray away their acceptance of such a ludicrous, vicious and brutal attack. Gregore Sambor will have no peace. William Richmond will have no peace. Leo Brooks will have no peace. Lieutenant Frank Powell can forget about peace forever. He will

**Kill-crazy L.A. police upstaged by firebombing Philly cops.**



dream of the bomb he released from his hands on those innocent babies, and he will wake up screaming for it to stop.

Every black politician, every black leader, and those blacks who stood around and watched, stood back and did nothing, said nothing, rejoiced, said it met with their approval, will hear the cries of those babies. They will hear every scream. They will be tormented to live in the pits of hell, dark confusion of civilization. There will be no peace in Philadelphia, because they killed the only peace they could have ever hoped to have. But John Africa said, "No matter how clean you are fashioned to be, the dirt in your past is a load none can carry." Long live John Africa!

I'm gonna sum it up here, because my time is out. I want to thank Gene, Frank, Joel and all the Spartacist party members for having me and my sister here, to get a chance to let the people know what is happening in Philadelphia. And if you don't do something about it, you only going to wake up tomorrow and find it happening right here in New York. Because a precedent has been set. And it's got to be stopped right now. Now, you got to stop it! Thank you.

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## Gene Herson

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**Gene Herson:** It's very difficult to say anything after hearing about an atrocity of such gruesome human barbarism as sister LaVerne has just recounted. There's really no way that words can describe such diabolical acts or convey sufficient outrage. But a way must be found to prevent such inhuman acts from ever happening again. A program must be pursued and organized around, to make sure this doesn't happen again. Comrade Kartsen talked about that program, revolutionary integrationism, working-class revolution.

I'd like to describe some of my impressions of when I was in Philadelphia and also combine that with something which deals with that program, namely the power of the working class, the role of the labor movement and the trade unions in the battle against racial oppression and in building a revolutionary party. Because it's only through that kind of organization that we're going to stop this kind of racial atrocities which are organized by the capitalists.

The first time I went down to Philadelphia it was to sell the first article we had, that said "Reagan Bombs Black Babies." Nobody could understand that at the time. It's important to put this in

context. Because everybody saw this as a guy named Goode, right? It's a black guy, black mayor, everybody liked this mayor, right? In Philadelphia nobody dared say anything against it, and yet here were these white communists selling a newspaper that said "Reagan Bombs Black Babies." And the thing that really impressed me, well, there were three things. First of all was the polarization in that city. It is *hard*. It is harder than any city I have been in. Black kids would come up to myself or Joel or Ellen selling that newspaper and say, "You're against Reagan? I've never seen a white against Reagan." To them a white meant a racist. That's how hard the society is in Philadelphia. It also conveys the false trust in somebody that's black, because you see they think blacks automatically will protect them from capitalist racism.

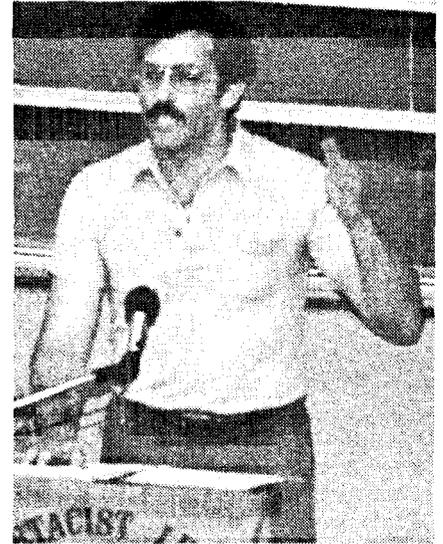
Second thing that I noticed down there, this was a week after the bombing, was the lack of concern for MOVE by anybody, including blacks. And when I say that, I mean even if it's one out of ten blacks, I was astounded. Because after all, they had loudspeakers and bullhorns and garbage on their lawn—which, by the way, was a distortion by the capitalist press. But you've got to know how pervasive it is that it brainwashed even the blacks. Capitalism is powerful, comrades, believe it.

And then there was the site of the bombing, a middle-class neighborhood. You look all around it, manicured lawns, beautiful, painted buildings, the whole area surrounding there. And then you get to Osage. Something worse than—it looks like, in the immediate area, like Dresden after the firebombing. Nothing but piles of bricks. And underneath it are human skulls. Which the Reagan government is putting together like tinker toys, as if this was a little game. These are human beings they're putting back together again, that they took apart. It's a game, in the name of anti-communism. You've got to understand this. If you don't see it, it's hard to believe it.

### Labor Must Repel the Message of Intimidation

So I went down after that, a week later. There was a call for a demonstration. I went down to help in the organization of a Spartacist mobilization on the East Coast in solidarity with the MOVE survivors. That's why we were preparing to mobilize, in solidarity, I underscore that, in solidarity with the MOVE survivors. Not the Osage atrocity in general, but the massacre and

the incineration of human beings. We wanted to sear into American consciousness the historical significance of what had happened there, this holocaust. Just as we saw the same thing necessary regarding Greensboro. And when I went down there that's when I



Workers Vanguard

**Gene Herson: Reagan will blow away a black to scare a white and if that doesn't work he'll blow away a white.**

first met Louise and LaVerne and Gail. And we prepared to mobilize our total efforts on the East Coast, for a march and rally that was called by the Citizens' Committee for Humanity and Justice, for May 30th, to protest this bombing.

And as it turned out, this was organized by some liberals and so-called socialists. However, these people found MOVE distasteful. Now I bring this up because if we are going to fight the racism of capitalism, and this kind of atrocity, any obstacle in our way to destroying that capitalist system has to be exposed and politically destroyed. And the forces there, that found MOVE distasteful, that made MOVE feel unwanted at this demonstration, were the Socialist Workers Party, some liberals called the Consumer Party, and Workers World Party—the Marcyites going under other banners such as the All-Peoples Congress, People's Antiwar Mobilization. The Communist Party didn't even have the nerve to show up there, but they had the same positions. And they made MOVE feel uncomfortable to speak and MOVE did not show up. And we decided not to go, because we were going in solidarity with the victims. We weren't going there to help cover up for Goode.

So there was this continuum, where you have the capitalist system, and you

have the Democratic Party, which is part of the capitalist system, and then you have the black Democrats and the trade-union bureaucrats that keep the oppressed and the working class within the capitalist system, and then you have the [left] liberals, the phrase-mongers, the demagogues like Jesse Jackson and so on. And then you end up with, because by now you've got Jesse Jackson pulling in the blacks, to tail the blacks you've got the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party and so on. So you find this massive cover-up for what happened. This is one of the most despicable acts by the political left. And it made graphically clear that the illusions in capitalism, any aspect of capitalism, the Democratic Party, or anything that props it up, have to be exposed. And until that happens racism, racial oppression, working-class exploitation, despicable racist atrocities and murder and massacres will occur in this country. Believe it. Because Reagan wants to make that clear. *He wants to make it clear that he will blow away a black to scare a white and if that doesn't work he'll blow away a white.* What do you think PATCO was about? He wanted to blow away an entire union. These were white, privileged, skilled workers who backed Reagan. But he wasn't satisfied to parade them around, to say, "You see, I got support of labor." He wanted to make them an *example* because it's an example of capitalist oppression. And he needs that, he needs everybody to knuckle under so he can fight the Russkies. That's what *his program* is. And he will blow away blacks, trade unions, and the blacks will be in the forefront. Believe it. In the name of anti-communism.

This is a situation where Reagan describes terrorists and they're the victims! So he blows away some people. The more he blows them away the more he says that they're terrorists. So who could be more of a victim than these MOVE people? These eleven people, human beings. So once they're incinerated then he calls them terrorists. Meanwhile the ruling class law and order is really the terrorism. Everything is totally reversed. The front page of the *New York Times*, right? You got North Korea's terrorist, meanwhile in South Korea, the allies of the United States, you got a mafioso guy heading up the government, that just blew away the last president. I mean it's ludicrous! They voted—the whole Congress, Democrats, right?—they just voted money, end of the Clark Amendment, give UNITA, the guys who are the escorts of

the South African army into Angola, they just voted to give them money. The contras, so-called freedom fighters, are the terrorists; they're giving them money. Look around the world, look around, this is what is happening. And believe me, it's going to be here at home. It *is* here at home, and it was in Philadelphia. And by the way, this Osage thing was prepared for in March with Operation Cold Turkey. Every black and Hispanic youth was ripped off the streets. Operation Cold Turkey, it

with the hotel workers, the hospital workers, and the city workers, all predominantly black unions, could have shut that city down. Labor could have said, "You're going to commit a holocaust? A racist massacre?—We're going to shut this city down!" But the leadership isn't there. We must replace that leadership with a revolutionary leadership of the trade unions. The unions must be transformed and then the workers can use those organizations to transform this society. And that's the



Emergency demo protests South Africa racist police state hanging of ANC militant Benjamin Moloise during 1985 NYC Spartacist election campaign. Workers Vanguard

was like Operation Zebra in 1974 in San Francisco. Blacks are not safe on the streets and if you're a worker and you want to fight back you're not safe on the streets. Well, we intend to turn that around.

Blacks cannot and will not be free in capitalist America. That's a statement of fact. No way can unions fight for workers until they are totally independent and freed from the ties to the Democratic Party. That is a statement of fact, it is the truth as I live and breathe. Trade unions are the only mass organizations of the working class in the United States. That is why they are key. But within the workers movement, we must remove our own Judases, the leaders of the trade-union movement. And only then can we use those unions, and the blacks can exercise power far beyond their proportions through the trade unions.

As soon as those police were around that house, the transit workers union of Philadelphia could have mobilized and surrounded that house with a black working force that would have made that bombing impossible. But the leadership of the union wouldn't do it. After the bombing, the transit workers,

only way. And it's through those transformed unions and other organizations throughout the working class that we will build a revolutionary working-class party that will fight for revolutionary integrationism, that will abolish the system of exploitation. And I submit to you that until that happens, we must be on guard and mobilize to prevent anything like this ever happening again. Thank you.

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## Discussion

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### We Will Not Forget!

**Reuben (SL):** Some of the speakers spoke to the absence of black outrage in Philadelphia. I think what you're seeing instead is stunned shock, which was the intention on the part of the ruling class in conducting the Philadelphia massacre, just like it was intentional over Greensboro. The message is, if you get out of line in Reagan's America, you're a dead man. Just like the same effect that the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa was supposed to have in that country. And it took the awakening of a massive trade-union movement, and the

massive black proletariat, six million strong in that country, to break through the silence, the stunned shock in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre. So that today, as in the United States, in South Africa every spark of black resistance the regime is trying to drown in blood. But it takes place against the backdrop of this massive class struggle that's going on there. And in that context Mayor Goode may well contemplate the fate of the black collaborators in the townships.

We must not forget Greensboro, we must not forget Philadelphia. In the aftermath of Greensboro the Nazis and Klan tried to march on every major city in this country from San Francisco to Chicago to Detroit to Boston. And it was basically due to the work of the Spartacist League in initiating mass labor/black mobilizations that the fascists were stopped and that they were interdicted in the major urban centers of America, culminating in the very important mobilization in Washington, D.C. on November 27, 1982. In the aftermath of Philadelphia, which was more overt and was directly state-supported, state-instituted mass terror, there will be more Philadelphias, unless the Spartacist League and our supporters and the forces that we can mobilize seize the initiative to interdict and stop this kind of holocaust that is going on to prepare this country for the next war with Russia. It took the victory of the first Civil War to begin to avenge the murder of John Brown. It will take the victory of the second civil war, a proletarian class war, to avenge all the fallen martyrs today of racist terror in this country.

### LRP Disruption: "This Meeting Is a Sham"

**LRP speaker:** Yeah, of all the murders that were listed one was left out and it's very clear why, the Goetz murder of the blacks on the subway. Because basically the Spartacist League supported the execution of those blacks. Members of the Spartacist League at the last meeting I attended said that if they were in the same position they would have shot those blacks. They have defended Goetz and his actions. They point out the racist nature of the United States. That's true. This is a racist country and it's whipping up a war fever. But so was Nazi Germany in World War II, that didn't make Nazi Germany okay. The Soviet Union is racist also. It oppresses the minorities. You call yourselves Trotskyists. The first battle between the Trotskyists, who you say you are, and the Soviet Union was over the racial

question, national oppression. The racism of the Soviet Union took the form of national oppression through forcing people to be integrated in the Soviet Union, denying all national rights, despite the constitution of the Soviet Union which granted rights to national freedom. In the United States the Spartacists have a position against the right of blacks for national liberation, the right to secede from the nation if they choose, to decide whether they want to stay or leave. You are against that. You attack nationalism. And I want to say, it's really disgusting what you've done at this meeting, because it's a sham. You oppose MOVE politically—now, you can defend someone and disagree with them politically. I think it's necessary to defend people you agree and disagree with. MOVE must be defended. But that doesn't mean that you lie by not saying what your disagreements are with them. A few years ago at your meeting you were attacking the question of black consciousness—you attacked the slogan "black is beautiful" as being anti-white. Yes. You referred to the country of Jamaica and it's in your press, you referred to the country of Jamaica as lumpen, the lumpen capital of the world. And when you're talking about the black community in the past, you emphasize the lumpenness in it.

**Chairman:** That's time. [LRPer goes right on talking: "Go back a few years ago..."] That's time! Sit down! You will sit down or be sat down. Sit him down. [LRPer, still arguing, finally sits.]

**Ed Kartsen:** Look, this is a democratic meeting, which means you have a certain time to speak, after which you cooperate and let other people speak. The Spartacist League has a unique position among organizations of allowing political opponents of whatever

organization to speak. This gentleman did not identify himself, but he is a political opponent of our organization, part of the liberal left. Their politics are in deep disagreement with our positions on particularly the Soviet Union. We state this openly. MOVE members we talk to candidly. We tell them our disagreements. We recognize the *reality* of racist America. They recognize the reality of racist America. And we openly and freely discuss both our commonality and our differences. It's something that the liberal left have a great difficulty understanding. Since they primarily conduct themselves by whitewashing the horrors and ugliness of black oppression, at the same time censoring the comments on the part of MOVE members! Of course we have disagreements. We freely discuss them because we want to deal with reality as it is.

### Right of Black Self-Defense

This question of Goetz was used by all the liberals as an excuse to disarm the people of this city, to advance the anti-gun laws which keep the racist cops armed and the people of this city unarmed. That's what Goetz was all about! It would have been a lifesaver had the black community in Philly been armed and organized. This is what we are fighting for. And this is what should be the theme of this talk and the discussion. We are fighting to organize the working class and black people for the right to defend themselves against a fully armed government, which has targeted black people, the working-class movement and leftists for extermination.

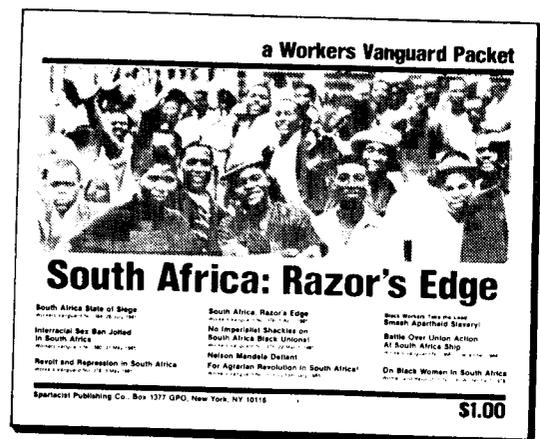
**Alison (SL):** You [the LRP] did not say *one word* in defense of the MOVE organization that's been martyred in Philadelphia! So people talked a lot

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tonight about searing the memory of this racist massacre into the minds of the American population. And then you have supposed socialists, like the LRP, like the Socialist Workers Party and others mentioned tonight, who want to commemorate what happened in Philly as the unfortunate destruction of property. That's what they marched for, that's what they mourned. They think it's too bad that the babies went out with the bath water. And what we were concerned with was the destruction of human life, black babies. Now LaVerne spoke about lost generations, and those babies that don't have a life anymore. And we have the example of Edmund Perry in New York. But it's not simply those who have fallen, and those who have been gunned down, and those who have been murdered by state terrorism. It's a question of a lost generation for all who are made to fear, and live in fear. And understand it—the memory that the government wants to sear into their minds is that they better not step out of line. So this Edmund Perry murder in New York, you know, racist cops have a problem, they can't tell an honor student from a mugger, because if you're black that's enough to be a criminal and be gunned down in the street. And when this happened, I thought, boy, they really got the wrong guy and maybe they're going to blow off some of the heat that's on the Koch administration right now for racist murder after racist murder in the city and hang the cops on this one. No way. Far more important to them to just grind down the black population, you know, that even if you're an honor student, stay home with your goddamn blinds down, don't you *dare* go for a walk in the park. So we've got a problem, which is victories aren't built out of a sense of hopelessness, which is felt, I think, in the population right now. So what we have to do, as a small party, is try and harness that anger that does exist and channel it politically, so that we can fight to avenge the MOVE martyrs, so that all of us can have a future.

**Jim:** My name is Jimmy Smith, I work in New York City transit. First of all, I'd like to thank LaVerne and Louise for coming up here, and for continuing to stand up, very courageous. Second of all, I was the one who had the privilege of raising the resolution in our union, the Transport Workers Union in New York City, just a little under a month ago, calling for a massive labor mobilization in New York City at City Hall. When I read it out, mentioning the police rampage in New York City and

your situation, other members there simply recognized that yes, this had to be done, and they got up and they argued against the black trade-union bureaucrat who was the one who fought to get this motion squashed. It failed very narrowly. But as soon as we get a chance to fight for it again, we will.

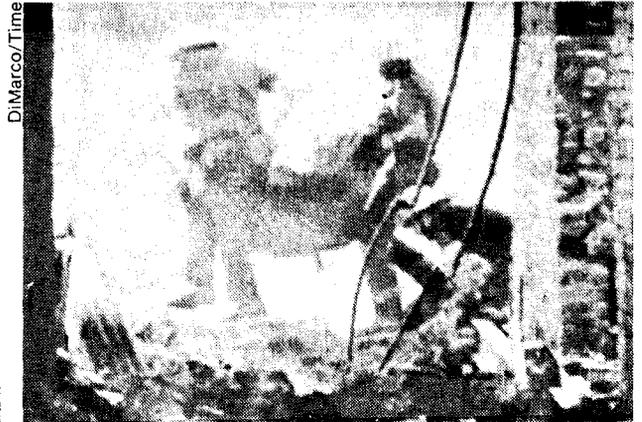
### Solidarity with People That Faced Cop Terror

**Mary Jo:** I'm a supporter of the Committee for a Fighting TWU and I'm working with the Spartacist campaign in the city. You know, in South Africa when the police open fire they don't ask

us here, and everybody and particularly black America, that if you resist us, you die. And when they started to go after MOVE, when they first came after them in '78 was when that cop got shot. They shot their own, but it doesn't matter, they wanted to lock up all the MOVE members for life for it, because they dared to resist and defend themselves against a police attack.

And they're doing it here in New York. I work out of Pitkin Avenue. Just this past week the cops pulled a 5 a.m. Gestapo raid through the housing projects in that area, and who did they go after? People who jumped turnstiles,

Martyrs' bodies carried from rubble (right).



DiMarco/Time



Meyers/NY Times

"Forensic science" ghouls study charred fragments of what used to be human beings (left).

for your party card. You know, they don't ask if you're a supporter of the United Democratic Front or PAC or who you are. They open fire and they open fire against children. And what we're talking about here tonight is a basic act of *solidarity with people that faced cop terror*. And to my knowledge the Spartacist League is the only group that built a meeting in this city, and *they're* the only ones that contacted me about marching in Philadelphia in solidarity with the MOVE members, to protest this outrage.

Now, the thing is that this was a message, not just to MOVE but to all of

people who beat their fare, people who smoked a little dope on the street. They didn't go after the real criminals that are peddling dope out there or anything like that. They wanted to terrorize the population. Because Koch said, "bomb Beirut," and Koch would just as soon bomb black Brooklyn, particularly if anybody has any interest in fighting against the cop terror that's going on in this city. And people are very worked up about it, particularly with the recent death of Edmund Perry. Everybody is very on edge about what's going on here. And the list is *too long*. It's Randy Evans, it's Arthur Miller, it's Eleanor

Bumpurs, it's Edmund Perry. And when people saw the headlines of *Workers Vanguard* out at work, Philadelphia was what they wanted to read about. Because they know that's where it ends. And it's been very important for the Committee [in TWU] to have raised the motions for a mobilization of labor power against the cop terror that's going on.

And if you want to talk about Bernhard Goetz, look, a lot of the furor over that was the fact that they don't want people to defend themselves, they want all power in the hands of the cops. And we say self-defense is important. We had a black brother, a transit worker beaten to death by racists in Gravesend. If the brother would have had a piece, he might be here today. Now we're trying to do something to make sure that that never happens again. So the point is Reagan said his list of outlaw nations: Cuba, the Soviet Union, North Korea. Lookit, he's also got his list of outlaw peoples, and it's all of us. He wants to make us outlaws in our own land if we dare to resist his crazy war drive and his attempt to make working people and blacks pay for the crisis of capitalism. And I think people ought to work on this campaign and build this party in order to fight that for once and all.

**Chairman:** All of the speakers, actually Louise is going to summarize too, all of the speakers would like summary time. [Interjections from LRPer.] I am running this meeting, you shut up! Now I'd like to introduce Louise, who will speak for a few minutes in summary.

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## Louise James

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**Louise James:** I'd like to thank Gene and Frank over here, Joel and the people who had us come down from Philadelphia to speak with you. My sister LaVerne of course spoke for both herself and me. Just to address for a moment the remarks of this man up here. It's not important whether or not anybody, underscore *anybody*, agrees with the MOVE organization or its doctrine. The only thing that is important is that people rally around the *wrong* of what happened, you see. You see, communism is spelled one way. Baptist is spelled another way. Christianity is spelled still another way. MOVE is spelled a different way. Africa is spelled one way, America another, *but wrong ain't spelled but one way!* And *that* is what people have to understand. And so when we call upon people to come and stand beside us, in front of us,



**Louise James: The only important thing is that people rally around the wrong of what happened.**

behind us, we are calling upon the people to stand in back of, in front of, beside the wrong—*push it away!* It would be nice for people to come from New York, I would love to see that happen. But in all honesty, and I consider myself an honest and a fair person, I cannot justifiably blame New York for not coming to Philadelphia when Philadelphians did not rally around what happened. You see, you're not supposed to ever look away from home, because charity begins at home. And when the people in Philadelphia did not find it in their hearts to be charitable enough to come and look at the disaster they themselves had created, then how could I possibly be angry with people from New York? The only thing that we can consider it as, is as a plus, a bonus, you understand that. And we are grateful to people from New York, Chicago, and the people all across this nation who came to the aid of my sister and me. LaVerne and I stood in Philadelphia for the first week and a half after this atrocity and when I tell you that we were completely alone, I kid you not. We were completely alone. However, when we left Filthy-delphia, because that is exactly what it is, when we left that place, then we found that the nation was behind us, you see, the nation is watching our backs. LaVerne and I, I'm sure, are on the hit list of Filthy-delphia people. I'm speaking now about Mayor Goode and his administration. But we don't give a good goddamn! Because what we have to do is what we *had* to do on May 13th. That still has to be done and it's gonna

get done. And it's gonna get done in spite of the fact that these people are breathing down our necks. Because you better hurry up and believe that the breath coming from Louise James and that coming from LaVerne Sims is enough to *back off* Philadelphia!

Police brutality is nothing new. What we need to understand is how to control it. When the first act of police brutality was allowed, that is when it became mass murder. You see, cancer has got to be *cut out* in its initial stages. You can't put a bandaid over it and expect it to disappear. Because it's not gonna happen. It is simply going to spread, if that little lump is allowed to germinate and fester. And it is no different with police brutality. What had to happen when that first act occurred was for people to get up! Not sit down, I mean get up and *demand* that this should never happen again. And we wouldn't be talking about young Edmund Perry, you see, but you understand that! Because there would be nothing to talk about. I am sorry that I don't have more time to address this issue, however, I am grateful that I had the time that I did have to say what I had to say. But you all come on out to Philadelphia, because we got a whole lot more to say. I thank you.

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## Summaries

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### Organize Black Workers' Power

**Gene Herson:** Well, as Louise has said. She's a tough act to follow. And Louise can also testify to our many fights and arguments about politics. [Louise: "friendly, friendly"] And believe me, you will not have to be black to be shot at in this country, in the final analysis. All you have to do is be for the right of defending yourself, for the right to organize, for the right to oppose oppression in this country. And that's what, by the way, this campaign, the Spartacist campaign is about. It's not to vote socialism in, it's to *organize* for the right of self-defense, for the working class to organize, and for blacks to be able to use the potential power of the working class to launch a counter-offensive against capitalism. That's what we're about, that's what the Spartacist League is about. It's no coincidence that while Reagan was in Bit-burg, shortly afterward you found Osage and the bombing and the massacre of the MOVE people. That when the Ku Klux Klan wanted to march on November 27 in Washington, D.C. Reagan was hosting Botha of South Africa.

The point about MOVE and the massacre of MOVE is that they were blacks that would not eat shit from capitalism. They believed in the right of self-defense. Black Panthers believed in the right of self-defense. Anybody hear of Fred Hampton? Bobby Hutton? Dead blacks in America! Because they stood up, they knew that if they capitulated to capitalist America, they were dead, they would *never* be free. Regardless of their program, the errors, these people were dedicated to fighting for freedom. Well, no black will ever be free in capitalist America. I promise you that. And the nation is waiting and watching. And we aim to build a counteroffensive, we aim to organize the working class and to maximize the power of the most oppressed in this country, which are the blacks. And don't forget what happened to the Japanese in the concentration camps, or what happens in any war against non-whites, such as Vietnam: My Lai, Lieutenant Calley.

This is a racist, capitalist system and the Spartacist League is counterposed to that and we believe in mobilizing the working class against it and it's through that power that blacks and the entire working class will have freedom. And we believe in an international movement. We are speaking from many places. We're talking about Sri Lanka and the oppression of Tamils. We are talking about the oppression of people in Germany. We are talking internationally, not just within the United States. And that is our banner, that's what the Spartacist League stands for.

**Edward Kartsen:** MOVE members living and dead are to be honored. We honor the MOVE members who came here and spoke. It's an act of courage. It's an act of courage particularly in the face of the fact that close relatives and friends were the immediate victims of bloody government atrocity. If Mayor Koch wasn't physically in Philly, you can be assured his spirit was in the helicopter when that bomb was dropped. All this talk in the papers about forensic investigation mystifies what went on. It was no virgin birth, it was no mystical Virgin Mary, it was no fantasy that went on. MOVE members were people, made up of flesh and blood. That's what they are to us, the Spartacist League. The Nazis had at least the *shame* to hide the murder that went on in the concentration camps! But not the American bourgeoisie, and not the *New York Times*, the primary American bourgeois press. All the atrocity that's fit to print. Well, we

promise, we promise that our work, our successful work will result in avenging this atrocity. This is what we are dedicated to. The power of the working class must be unleashed to stop the racist atrocities carried out by the Ku Klux Klan in white robes and in blue, in the White House or not. We challenge those liberal weak-kneeds who are begging before the Democratic Party, to finally *stand up* and bring masses to the streets to stop the racist terror! Instead of looking for nit-picking points at meetings in order to justify their own cravings, social-democratic cravings for licking the ass of the Democratic Party.

As MOVE members stated, Goode was primary in all this stuff. He was prominent, he's the black front man, he's the tool of Reaganite terror. He is the prize of what the civil rights movement looked toward as the great hope in America, as black achievement through the Democratic Party. But you know, the liberal left has the same strategy. They tell the same story to black people. While they call the Spartacist League racist for recognizing the reality of horrible racist America, they are preaching the *lie* the Democratic Party has a hope, has a future for black America. Goode was the executioner. But Goode, Powell and *all* of the people who participated in this atrocity must be brought to working-class justice. That is what we are in business about. That is



Workers Vanguard

**Protest against Jim Crow segregation in San Francisco, 1985. Labor Black League organizes integrated struggle uniting labor and the ghetto to fight racist oppression.**

what we are in business to implement. Working-class justice. This country has no future outside of that. It has no future outside of rallying the power of working-class people and black people around the principles of class struggle, to finally achieve justice and the abolition of this decadent system which propagates race-terror in order to prop itself up. We stand for the building of a new civil rights movement. We stand for the building of a new working-class movement. We stand for the culmination of all the forces of the oppressed around the scientific principles of class struggle, to destroy all the decadent crap that capitalist society has propagated. That goes for the Hitler-lovers in the White House. That goes for the Goodes. The building of a working-class party to smash race-terror. Finish the Civil War! This is what the work of the Spartacist League is devoted to. We are for avenging the MOVE members who were murdered, and we honor them.

**LaVerne Sims:** Just very, very short. We've been in MOVE like over 12 years, and during those 12 years we were at a lot of demonstrations. And we were taught by John Africa that when a person gets up in those demonstrations and they're saying something different than what we're saying, that oftentimes they are plants. And they are planted there to cause dissension among the people who are trying to do what is right. To the [LRP] gentleman up there, you know, I can recognize the signs when I see them. And I feel as if, if you didn't want to come here to participate for right, then you should not have come at all. Because your motive is not in line with ours. I don't know your name, and the reason why I don't know your name is because you did not make yourself available to Louise and myself and to MOVE members when we needed help. Okay? Excuse me one minute, excuse me one minute. I know Joel, and I know Frank, and I know Gene and I know Debbie and I know Rachel and I know Rena. And the reason why I know them is because they were concerned enough to come to our aid and offer their assistance. I really would like to know why *you* are here. More to the point, we had a MOVE brother, so-called, who was in the MOVE organization, calling himself our brother, who turned informant against John Africa. So we already know about people and what they will and won't do. But you will not stop our line of thinking when we can recognize what people are truly trying to do, and the help that they're trying to give us. Thank you. ■

# Philly Black Mayor Can't Wash Away Victims' Blood

## MOVE Massacre: Lies and Racist Murder

The police bombing of black Philadelphia last May 13 was racist mass murder. Philadelphia's black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode rushed forward at the time to "take full responsibility" for this grotesque massacre, claiming even that he would "do it again." But the searing memory of that inferno would not go away, the televised spectacle of a whole neighborhood going up in flames while water cannons (which earlier that day had poured 600,000 pounds of water on the MOVE house) stood idle. Nor did the support for Goode's mass murder, a chorus extending from Reagan's top cop Meese to Goode's fellow black Democrats, silence the anguished cries of the victims. The foundations of the \$110,000 homes being built by the city to replace those it incinerated could not bury the smell of scorched flesh and bone burned beyond recognition, and the sight reminiscent of the World War II firebombing of Dresden.

So Goode appointed a hand-picked commission—composed of a former

high-level FBI official, a former Pennsylvania state supreme court justice, and various cronies and supporters—to give his administration a whitewash. "A farce, a circus," is how Goode's commission was described by Louise James, a former MOVE member whose son was one of the eleven incinerated by the Philly cops. Even former mayor William Green, who appointed Goode as city managing director during his administration, criticized the commission as a panel of "allies, supporters and recipients of city business," comparing it to Nixon appointing his own Senate Watergate committee.

### Wilson Goode: "Mayor of Murder"

With the exception of the powerful testimony of Louise James and her sister LaVerne Sims who indicted Goode as the "Mayor of Murder," the hearings, now in their third week, have indeed been a circus of cover-ups, buck-passing, pettifogging and lies. But as the various actors scrambled to get out of

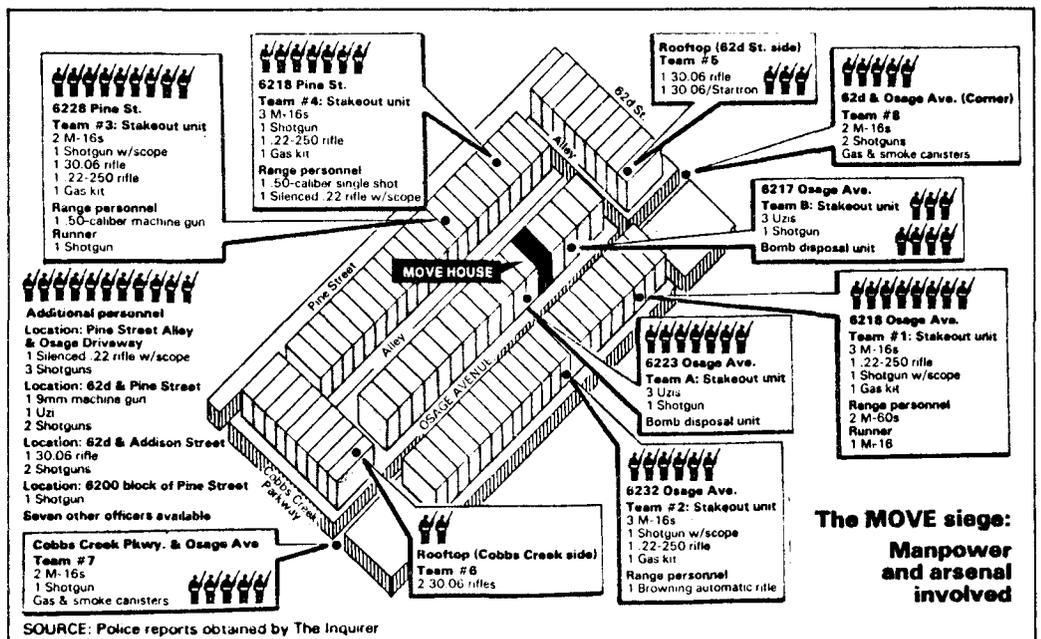
the line of fire, repeatedly contradicting each other, and above all because of the sheer magnitude of this monstrous racist crime, the hearings have been compelled to reveal, as we said from the very beginning, that the MOVE massacre was a carefully planned conspiracy to commit state terrorism, a conspiracy that extended from Philadelphia city hall to Meese and Reagan's White House.

The one incontestable fact to emerge was that from the moment of this heinous crime, Philadelphia officialdom did nothing but lie. The most incredible testimony came from the mayor himself. Elected on the claim that he was a "competent, hands-on manager," Goode testified that subordinates kept him ignorant of the details even though the operation involved the military mobilization of an entire city government in collusion with the feds. In particular, Goode said he knew nothing of the plans to drop a bomb from a helicopter until he saw it on TV in his office. He then obscenely claimed to



AP

The mayor and his battalion of death. Racist murder conspiracy ran from Democratic mayor Goode to the FBI and Reagan's White House.



Hasler/Philadelphia Inquirer

have watched the ensuing fire rage out of control for an hour, incinerating the MOVE house and surrounding black neighborhood, because he thought it was being put out...until he "realized" that what he saw on his screen was not water but "snow" or electrical interference!

Goode's testimony was flatly contradicted by his former deputy and managing director Leo Brooks (who was forced to resign over the bombing) and chief of police Gregore Sambor. Brooks, a former army major general, claimed he was so out of touch that he first heard about the evacuation of the West Philadelphia neighborhood over his car radio as he returned from Virginia the day before the assault. Contrary to Goode's claims, both Brooks and Sambor testified that the use of explosives against the MOVE house had been planned for over a year. And Sambor openly bragged that he asked fire officials to allow the fire to rage unimpeded, purportedly to burn a "bunker" off the roof, thereby contradicting earlier statements that firefighters were prevented from putting out the fire because of gunfire from the MOVE house.

Realizing they could be up on homicide charges, several key police personnel, including Lieutenant Frank Powell, the bomb squad commander who dropped the bomb, and William Klein, who built the bomb, have refused to testify on grounds of self-incrimination. But on October 24, two cops, Sergeant Albert Revel and Officer Michael Tursi, revealed that the water cannons *could not* remove the "bunker," and that the police had contingency plans to plant explosives on the roof of the MOVE house before the May 13 bombing. Other cops testified that prior to the helicopter bombing, Sambor ordered at least three powerful explosives charges to blow open the house. One explosion blew the front off the house and off three neighboring houses, leaving a pile of rubble waist-deep.

Perhaps the most important testimony to come out of the hearings is that directly linking the MOVE massacre with the Reagan administration. Shortly after the bombing, Sambor told the *New York Times* (19 May) that he and his aides went over the plans for the assault with local FBI agents on May 11 and "The F.B.I. found the plan sound." Revel revealed in his testimony that the city obtained Browning automatic rifles, an M-60 machine gun (which fires 800 7.62mm calibre rounds per minute) and an anti-tank gun with the help of an



UPI  
1978: Delbert Africa under the jackboot of "Philadelphia Stake-Out" SWAT team, as 55-day siege of MOVE ends with assault by an army of 600 cops.

agent of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The ATF is the same gang which sent an agent to help organize the 1979 Klan/Nazi massacre of five leftists in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The following day, the commission released a letter from the FBI confirming that in January it gave the cops 39.75 pounds of the extremely powerful

military explosive C-4. What Goode originally called an "entry device," police now claim contained two pounds of Tovex TR-2, the Du Pont high explosive used in underground mining, combined with 1.25 pounds of C-4.

While Jesse Jackson rushed to the side of his fellow black Democrat Goode, various reformist and centrist pseudo-socialists fell over each other apologizing for the Philadelphia mayor and/or denying White House involvement, obscenely blaming the MOVE massacre on the martyred victims. It fell to the Spartacist League to expose the horrendous racist crime, and that the murderous conspiracy necessarily ran from the black Democratic mayor to the racist Republican administration in Washington. It was up to the Trotskyists to show elementary human decency and compassion for the family and supporters of the incinerated MOVE members. We demanded freedom for their comrades, 13 of whom are still incarcerated because they tried to defend themselves from a 600-strong cop assault on their Philadelphia home in 1978 in which one cop was killed, and for Ramona Africa who is being held on \$3.2 million bail because she survived the May 13 racist holocaust.

It is our obligation to evoke outrage over the hideous racist MOVE massacre, engraving it forever in the memory of the working class and its allies. Proletarian vengeance for the MOVE martyrs! ■

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## Spartacist Election Rally: We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!

The 1985 New York City Spartacist Party election campaign culminated in a spirited rally November 2 at Borough of Manhattan Community College. Summing up this activity we wrote:

"So here we are, the Spartacists, a principled early communist party of the Lenin-Trotsky persuasion, with a few hundred members, which just ran an election campaign in Reagan's America, in Koch's New York. We told it like it is; some people liked what we had to say, we had a good time saying it, and what it's all about is building the party of workers revolution: socialism is what we want, and communism is how to get it.

"The Spartacist Party was campaigning deep into the second term of the most right-wing administration since Herbert Hoover—and at least he was isolationist. If you add up everything negative from Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge and Hoover—racism, blow up the world, hate the working class, glorify the rich—in Reagan's America, we've got it all, and in a virulent superpower that's on its way down."

We reprint below excerpts from speeches by Spartacist candidate for mayor Marjorie Stamberg and Manhattan borough president candidate Ed Kartsen.

**Kartsen:** Reagan's America is becoming increasingly racially polarized, as I think everyone in this room knows, and the murder of the eleven MOVE members, including five children, in Philly marked this polarization. The black mayor, Democratic Party lackey who performed this massacre, atrocity, racist murder, is being ridiculed even by more or less standard Democratic politicians. Wilson Goode nationally symbolizes what Reagan expects from every mayor throughout this country. In order to defend this system, you need Philadelphia. And in New York City, Koch is Reagan's man to defend capitalist law and order.

Koch is fully aware, of course, that according to all the estimates half of the black and Hispanic youth in the city are unemployed. He knows that there are people who are going to live in the



Workers Vanguard  
**Ed Kartsen and Marjorie Stamberg wind up Spartacist New York election campaign with rousing red rally, 2 November 1985.**

subways, in the tunnels, many of whom are going to freeze to death this winter. Koch knows that industrial workers in this city are increasingly facing wage freezes and wage cuts, disintegration of union conditions and job conditions across the board. Koch knows that social services are disintegrating. Koch is on a campaign to make Manhattan safe for multibillionaires, or millionaires, which is what you need to get an apartment.

In order to conduct this war, he also needs his army of killer cops. Murderers such as Sullivan and the eleven cops that kicked to death Michael Stewart are mobilizing day in and day out in the courtrooms in order to enforce Koch's racist license to kill. And they're getting away with it. Koch has of course got the media behind him, and in fact the *New York Times* went so far as to criticize the Spartacist League for making the issue of cop terror a central focus of its campaign. The Wednesday issue of the *New York Times* stated as much, that we "play up" this issue. Well, black

people are justifiably outraged at the acceptance of racist murder as the normal way things are supposed to run. Even Koch's extensive campaign hasn't stopped an increasing wave of rage at that racist pig Koch—a term and a headline that we're very proud of.

And "police procedure" is used in order to justify every instance of cop terror against minorities and union members day in and day out. As far as we are concerned the only proper procedure under these conditions of mass cop brutality—from the stun gun torturers in Queens to the drunken cops who are marauding the streets of Manhattan—is to organize mass defense squads of responsible working men and women, linked to community organizations and unions, exercising their right of armed self-defense.

### New York City: For the Working People!

Koch's black Democratic Party lackeys like Dinkins, who is my major opponent for borough of Manhattan president, did nothing more than cover for Koch when he called Farrakhan a racist. He's covering for Koch's mass racist terror. But Farrakhan by supporting Hitlerism is incapable of leading black people anywhere but to race war, which is a dead end. Hitler used Jews as scapegoats, just as the intention is here to use Jews as scapegoats. Metzger of the Ku Klux Klan makes that clear when he says Jews and blacks are the enemy. So Farrakhan preaches that Jews and whites are the enemy. The flames of anti-Semitism are being fanned in order to divert class struggle against the capitalist system of exploitation. Our slogan is "New York City: For the Working People!"

It is defense of the profit system internationally that is motivating Reagan to do everything in his power to launch a war against Nicaragua. Reagan invaded Grenada to teach Latin America a lesson. But 700 armed Cuban construction workers nearly beat back the forces of 6,000 combined elements of

the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force. And you can bet that staggered Reagan's attempt to teach Latin America a bloody lesson in Yankee imperialism. Defense of the profit system, in the form of the International Monetary Fund, which is one of the biggest loan sharks in the world, is why Reagan is out to force a war in Latin America. Defense of the apartheid capitalist system leads him to solidarize with Botha in South Africa.

And the primary threat to capitalist domination of the earth remains the Soviet Union, the home of the first workers revolution in history. Capitalism has been abolished and a planned economy has given that society in many areas a remarkable power of industrial strength. You can see factories being ripped down in this country, but industrial development continues in Russia. Russia needs a political revolution to place the interests of working people fully in command, through reinstatement of Soviet democracy. But a social revolution is needed here, to abolish the profit system. In Russia there are no unemployment lines. The KKK and Nazi-lovers don't dare ride in Moscow.

We need a workers party in this country and in all countries. And that means mobilizing workers to smash the cop terror in New York City. That means mobilizing against the "contras" in Nicaragua. It means in Afghanistan fighting to crush the pro-slavery mullahs. It means mobilizing to smash the Nazis and KKK terror throughout this country. It means achieving working-class justice with vengeance for the victims of the Philly bombing and the victims of cop terror in this country. It means reinstatement of the understanding that a picket line means *you better not cross*. I'm calling on everybody to join in this fight to build a workers party. Join us in protest and struggle, for the rebirth of the Fourth International!

### A Tale of Two Cities

**Stamberg:** We have a racist mayor in this city who praises the cops for shooting down a black grandmother in the Bronx because she was supposedly behind on her rent. His Republican opponent wants to treat homosexuals like the new lepers. And from the most conservative to the most liberal, all of the capitalist candidates in this city are hard opponents of labor, all of them call for more cops. That's a program for more racist murder in this city.

The Spartacist Party has been campaigning in these elections on No-

vember 5 for a revolutionary answer to Crazy Eddie Koch and Mad Dog McGrath. We've been fighting, as the banners and the signs that you see around here show, to smash the racist terror from Soweto to Harlem, for a New York City where the working people can live. And that is, as every speaker here tonight has said, a fight to build the revolutionary party of the working class.

Revolutionary election campaigns, as the Communist International said, must take up all mass actions, strikes, demonstrations and whatever the fight is of the masses and the working people of its time. And that is what we have sought to do in this campaign, from our



Workers Vanguard

### Spartacists take 1985 NYC election campaign to Lower East Side.

protest against "New York's own" cover-up coroner Elliot Gross the ghoul to our emergency demonstration to try to save the life of the black South African anti-apartheid fighter Benjamin Moloise, to our support to the hotel strikers back in June in New York, and also the recent Columbia workers campus strike.

### The Russian Revolution in Our Program and Our Blood

James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, said in a speech in 1939, and this was in the midst of an earlier war buildup, "We are, in fact, the party of the Russian revolution. We have been the people, and the only people, who have had the Russian revolution in their program and in their blood." Well, comrades, the Spartacist League today in this country and the international Spartacist tendency around the globe is the party of the Russian Revolution. It's in our program and it's in our blood. And when all the rad-libs and the liberals try to avoid the Russian question, for instance over

Nicaragua, our platform says "Defense of Cuba and the USSR begins in Central America."

Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?* that a revolutionary socialist party must be a tribune of the people. It must react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears. And here in Reagan's America with the so-called Moral Majority riding high, in the generalized climate of social counterrevolution, our struggle has focused on the most vulnerable. Our fight for full democratic rights for homosexuals has become quite urgent in this city, especially as the AIDS issue has become the focal point for all-sided bigotry. It's in a revolutionary tradition. When the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia, they abolished reactionary anti-homosexual legislation.

We've been saying that the anti-Soviet war drive is at the heart of it all. That Reagan's war on what he calls the "evil empire" was behind his war on labor, was behind his smashing of PATCO, behind his war on blacks at home, behind the firebombing of MOVE.

For anyone who genuinely opposes Pentagon militarism, who wants to fight Yankee imperialism, the only way is through workers revolution. Because as Trotsky said more than half a century ago, the question for revolutionaries is: whose hands are the weapons in? For us the Soviet arsenal, the bomb, the missiles—we are for them, we defend them, we want them. That is the reason to this date that the U.S. has not been able to go through with its schemes to roll back those revolutions from Eastern Europe to Southeast Asia. And that is why we hail the Cuban troops in Angola, why we say "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and why we say a hallmark of our campaign is defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

We have mounted this campaign in New York City to build the revolutionary party. We do want people to go to the polls on Tuesday—I've been telling everybody, look for the symbol of Spartacist, that's the hammer of workers power, the four of the Fourth International. But mainly and most important, we hope to win many of our friends and sympathizers here to the Spartacist League. Because our task is to build the cadres to forge a revolutionary workers party as the tribune of the people, the memory of the working class in struggle, as the combat party to lead the working class and the oppressed to power and to open the doors to a socialist future. ■

# Black History and the Class Struggle



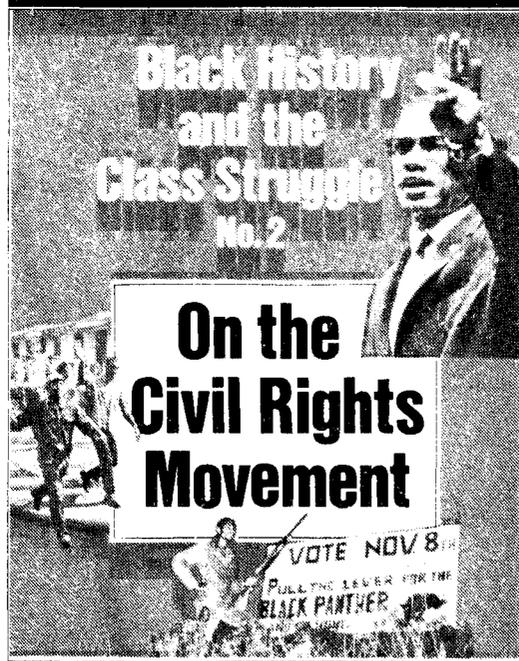
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