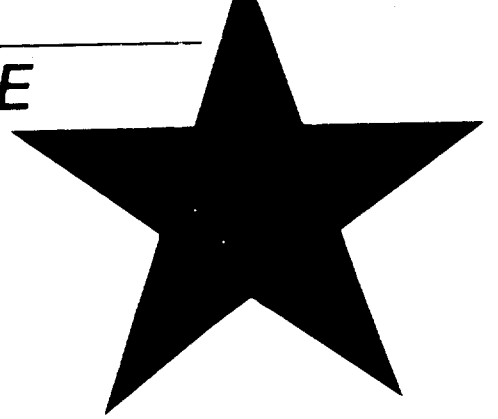


PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE

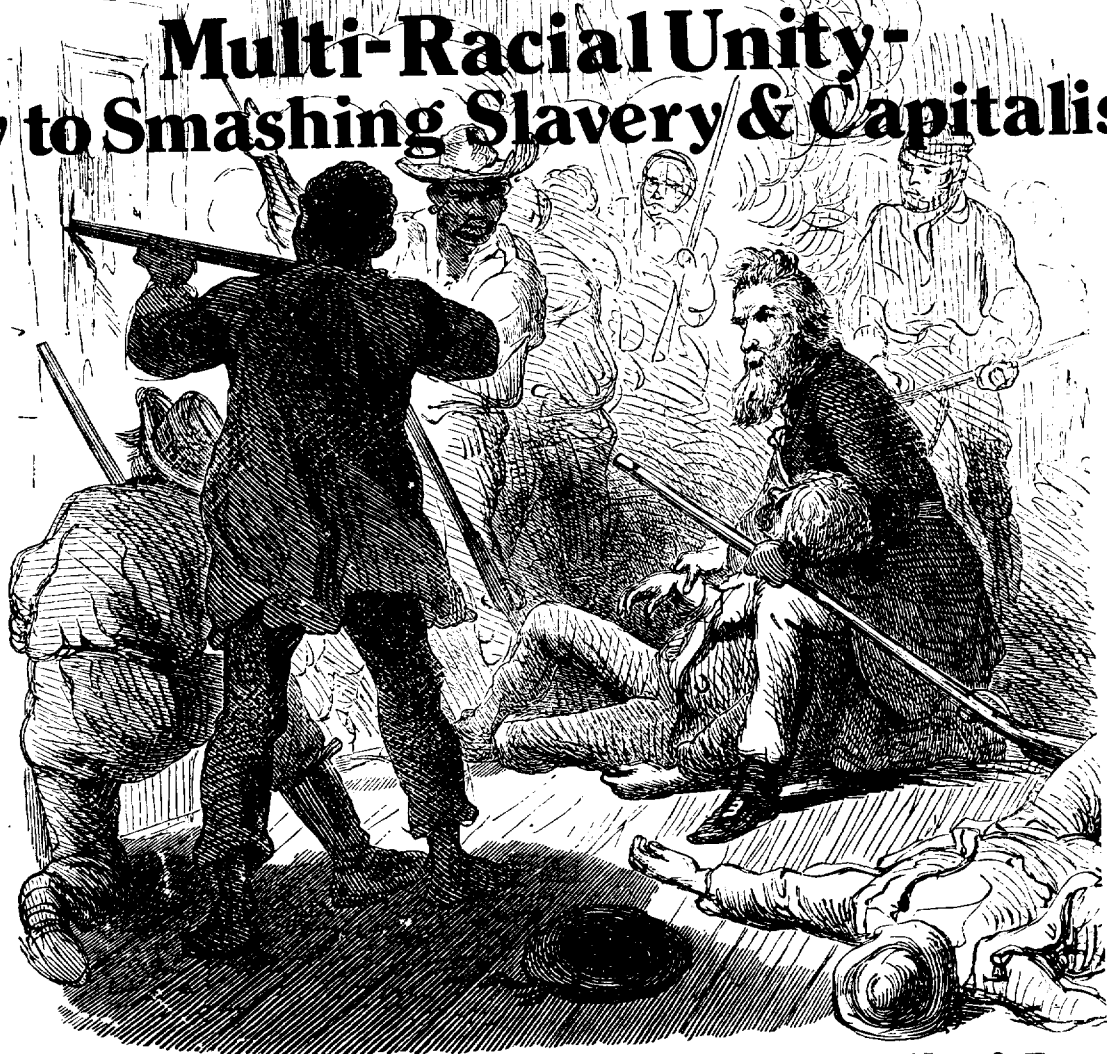
PL



Vol. 12 No. 4
Fall 1979
75c

John Brown's Raid

Multi-Racial Unity -
Key to Smashing Slavery & Capitalism



History as Science • Anti-Nuke Movement • Bolsheviks & Peasants

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GM, Ford, Chrysler

(SEE PAGE 3)

STRIKE AGAINST MASS LAYOFFS!

CHALLENGE

The Revolutionary Communist Newspaper

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

August 22, 1979 Volume 16, Numbers 12/13

10¢

Tupelo, Miss.

STOP COP-KKK TERROR IN 'NEW' SOUTH!



TUPELO, Miss., Aug. 19 - A group of workers pointed guns and racist harassmenters massed in front of the police station demanding "Death to Racism!"

AMONG THE MARCHERS

workers from Tupelo and students of Mississippi. Black, Latin American and white workers marched together from the working class neighborhood of Arrows and 60 Challenges were sold. Both white workers were very receptive to the rally was held at the police station the most represents the cutting edge of oppression though some workers felt uneasy about the police station, knowing the brutality of the able of, (the CAR has been organizing the death penalty for Hansel Rogers, the cop who

Every week CHALLENGE-DESAFIO brings you news of workers in struggle for socialism and against racism on the job, in the schools and neighborhoods, here and around the world. CHALLENGE strives to present the unconditional truth of class struggle, so our class can learn from experience how to win.

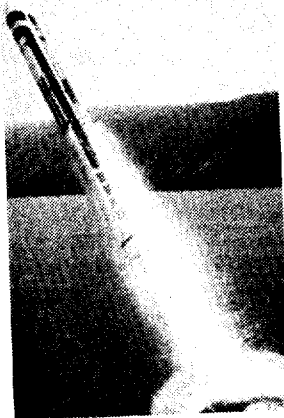
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PL★

Fall 1979

Volume 12, Number 4

PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE
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EDITORIAL

The Anti-Nuclear Movement

The rising cost of nuclear power is pushing the U.S. ruling class to a new reliance on other fuels. They have taken advantage of this setback to create a new "Trojan horse" anti-nuclear movement to divert workers from fighting racism and the ruling class. This editorial is based on a report from the National Committee of PLP.

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John Brown's Raid— Guns Against Slavery

The raid on Harper's Ferry grew out of a massive anti-slavery movement, and a conviction that racism and oppression will not yield to words. The article also draws lessons from history for today's struggle to build multi-racial unity and smash wage slavery.

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Can History Be A Science?

Bourgeois schools teach us that history is a chaotic series of random events. Dialectical materialism shows us that history, like all other sciences, has laws and an orderly process of development. It also has an inescapable conclusion—socialist revolution.

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Dialectics: Outline for Study

Prepared for the PLP national cadre school on dialectical materialism, this outline is a beginning guide for learning—and applying—the science of revolution.

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The Bolsheviks and Peasants

In 1917 and after, the Bolsheviks believed that Russia's landless peasants, the vast majority of the population, could not be won to socialism. The origin and consequences of this strategic error are examined in this article.

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In Struggle

First appearance of a new feature in PL Magazine, this section will reprint significant articles from *Challenge-Desafio*. These articles are selected to show different areas of the Party's work, and the Party's analysis of the struggles reported.

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The articles appearing in PL Magazine are published because the Editorial Board believes they are generally useful in the political ideological development of the international revolutionary communist movement. However, only the editorial and documents of the National Committee of the Progressive Labor Party represent the official policies of the Party.

notes and comment

We welcome letters from readers about articles in PL Magazine and related topics as well as comments on the magazine itself. Please write to:

PL MAGAZINE
GPO Box 808
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11202

From The Editors

We hope you have noticed and approved of the improvement in PL Magazine over the past year.

The magazine is now appearing regularly and on schedule four times a year, and has a new and attractive format. The editorial committee in New York has been expanded, with stress on soliciting aid from comrades in other areas. The editors are attempting to assure that high quality articles and cultural features are obtained, with enough lead time so that each can be carefully examined and improved before publication. Articles will include all major policy statements of the Party, and important topical issues such as the nature of Soviet imperialism and fascist ideology in health care.

PL Magazine remains the main theoretical organ of the Party. It is here that questions can be discussed in a depth and breadth not always possible in the weekly *Challenge-Desafio*. Thus, the magazine serves as an essential half of the theory-practice dialectic by which we grow and develop. It is the most important journal of political theory and practice in the world today in so far as our Party is in the leadership of the international struggle of the working class against capitalism and revisionism.

Despite the importance of this magazine, many Party members and friends do not read or sell the magazine. In fact, we do not actually know how many are sold. We would like to launch a struggle to urge all members to read PL and distribute it in a mass way. We would also like to be able to measure our success. To this end, we suggest that magazine articles be read and discussed at club meetings and that figures for sales be collected along with *Challenge* figures. If this is done, there will also be more constructive criticism, and more articles forthcoming. One person in each area should also take responsibility for distribution to newsstands, libraries and book stores.

We hope to hear from you soon with numbers and suggestions.

—The Editorial Committee

On Poetry

To the Editors:

Neither poem is about revolution. The "Workers United" poem is about the way our message reaches the masses and how the masses, symbolized in the fist through the broken window, the voice saying "thank you," pin the ribbon of victory on our demonstration. Although understated and a little oblique, it is clear enough and discovers the reason for optimism in the small sign given by a member of the working class. The "Motown" poem is a different matter. Its tone is ironic: how a musical star, through the decadence of rock, rises out of the working class to leech on it through his music. The irony is twofold. The rock star's success is made because the working class consumes his music, and so on. Are the poems politically inspirational? I hardly think so. But they are good poems and written from a working class perspective and sympathy.

I think they are suitable for PL. My view is that a poem with a good political line but bad technique is not a good political poem. Lurking behind the bad technique is bad politics. The old form and content argument. Content may be primary (even that is an oversimplification), form

secondary, but that doesn't mean form doesn't count. Good politics requires an appropriate form, not the disregard of form. These poems are technically good and pro-working class, although not revolutionary. Let them go. Until we have a poetic practice to go on, we'll never acquire the experience to construct a bona fide revolutionary working class culture. Of course until we have an ascending, at least somewhat mass revolutionary working class political movement under the guidance of the Party, we will not be able to construct a bona fide communist culture. This is primary, but in the meantime, poetic practice is necessary.

Best wishes,
P.S.

I have a comment on one point made in the article on the KKK (Summer, 1979; page 70.) The author lists three reasons why fascism was not yet on the agenda for the U.S. bosses in the late 1920's and 1930's. (1) that the capitalists had not fully centralized their power, which would have been necessary in order to institute fascism; (2) that although the U.S. bosses were very hard up, "The U.S. ruling class did not feel the same level of urgency to opt for fascism, as the German, Italian and Japanese bosses, for instance, as the U.S. bosses had slightly more economic leeway"; and (3) "Probably the key reason for the decline of the KKK and the halting of any drive for fascism in the U.S. was the multi-racial, and often

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REVISTA PL

—PL MAGAZINE in Spanish—
A Spanish edition is now available, including Put the Line on the Line, Armed Insurrection and the PLP statement on the anti-nuclear movement and a summary of other major articles. Copies may be ordered at 50c each, using the coupon on page 80. The next Spanish issue will appear in January.

On Fascism

To the Editors:

The articles on the history of the Ku Klux Klan have performed a very valuable function for readers of PL magazine and for the working class as a whole. It is an important contribution to understanding the nature of fascism and should be carefully studied by members and friends of the PLP. Furthermore, it is an excellent opportunity to distribute PL Magazine to large numbers of people who have never seen the magazine; there are thousands of people who would thank us for introducing them to these articles and to PL magazine in general. Widespread distribution should be systematically organized.

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For more information about the Progressive Labor Party, or to discuss PL's ideas with PL members, write to addresses above.

Statement of Solidarity from Ethiopian Workers

The following is a statement of solidarity from some Ethiopian workers living in the United States who are participating in the May Day march organized today by Progressive Labor Party and International Committee Against Racism. We are making this statement of solidarity for the following reasons:

First, May Day is the holiday of the international working class, the symbol of the international nature of the working class and of the worldwide scope of its struggle against capitalism. The proletariat is, by its very nature, an international class because the capital which exploits and oppresses us is worldwide in scale. This fact is never more true than at present. When South African auto workers rebel against apartheid, when Iranian oil workers strike against fascism, they are more and more directly confronting the GMs, Exxons, and Citibanks—the main forces of imperialism for which the Vor-

sters, the Somozas and the Shahs are mere scabs and puppets. But no matter how imposing the class enemy's forces may appear, the working class, when led by revolutionary communists, is assured of ultimate victory.

Second, we have chosen to celebrate May Day this year with the International Committee Against Racism in particular because of InCAR's demonstrated history of militant struggle against racist and fascist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party. The international working class is a multi-racial and multi-national working class, and racism is therefore the enemy of all working people. We urge all people, including our fellow Ethiopian workers and students, to join International Committee Against Racism.

Third, we recognize that national borders and the national divisions they engender are artificially created so that the bourgeoisie can divide workers and increase their ex-

ploitation. At this time the bosses are attempting to divide our class with propaganda about "illegal aliens." We must reject these lies, and demand an end to racist deportations: as Marx and Engels wrote 131 years ago in the Communist Manifesto, "Working people have no nations."

Finally, we are marching on May Day because we know that racism can only be completely obliterated when the source and cause of racism is completely destroyed and that means the capitalist system must be smashed with socialist revolution. To achieve that revolutionary goal, all workers must reject narrow nationalist outlooks which impede proletarian internationalism and which have been the fountainhead of capitalist restoration in those countries which have experienced revolutions.

We workers and students from Ethiopia therefore join you this May Day in saying:
FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!
POWER TO THE WORKERS!

4 communist-led, movement against the growing fascist malignancy. The growth of the leftist Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was a crucial factor in this movement as the CIO was instrumental in preventing the KKK and other fascist movements from gaining a foothold in the industrial working class. The mood of industrial workers often is the decisive element in how far the bourgeoisie can go in instituting its nationwide designs. That a large part of the multi-racial working class often rose up against the KKK and Co. was probably the main reason why no serious fascist threat developed in the U.S. (or

Canada, either.)'

The role of the CIO in organizing anti-racist, anti-fascist activity, and in developing anti-racist consciousness was extremely important. While the Communist Party was probably not a truly revolutionary communist, Marxist-Leninist party by the middle 1930's, the fact remains that there were very significant revolutionary aspects to much of its work. However, I do not think that this was primary in stopping the bosses from instituting fascism.

Mass militant reform activity, even if the reform activity has many revolutionary aspects, cannot discourage the bosses away

from fascism if their system is totally crumbling and they are forced into fascism. Such a mass movement can discourage them from instituting certain specific forms of repression at particular times and this is important, but the only thing that can stop fascism dead if the bosses have made up their minds is Leninist-led socialist revolution. It is true that mass support can stop particular fascist abuses—even Dimitrov, a known communist, won his freedom and was able to spit in the eye of the Nazi government because of this support. However, the other side of the coin is that the German working

class—which was militant, and was primarily anti-Nazi—was not capable of stopping fascism as a whole.

As Dutt (**Fascism and Social Democracy**) pointed out, the Roosevelt regime in the United States accomplished many of the same things that fascism in Europe accomplished, especially by getting the workers to labor under near slavery conditions with very low wages. The Communist Party (CP) and the CIO forced the bosses into giving many concessions; this was very important both for the spreading of political consciousness and for alleviating some of the severe misery which the working class had endured. However, if the U.S. system had been completely collapsing, the bosses would not have granted many of those concessions, **no matter how mass or heroic the CIO and the CP had become.** If U.S. capitalism had been in even more trouble than it was, the bosses would have opted for fascism.

The bosses use some fascist techniques all the time. However, **deciding to institute fascism on a major scale is not a matter of choice.** If the bosses had been weak or desperate enough, they would have tried to bring in fascism no matter how strong the opposition, no matter what the costs. This would not have been a bad thing. Fascism means that the bosses are weak and can be smashed with communist-led revolution.

To sum up, the strength of the CP-led CIO was probably very important in stopping the KKK and in building anti-fascist, anti-racist consciousness, and in stopping certain specific fascist-type abuses. How-

ever, they are not what prevented the bosses from bringing about fascism as a whole. The bosses were not yet forced into it. Had the CP been more revolutionary, they might have sufficiently weakened the bosses and then overthrown the capitalists, or at least severely damaged the U.S. empire and set the stage for revolution at a later date. But they weren't, and they didn't.

The danger in the article's emphasis on the CIO is that it opens the door to the false and illusory ideas that: (1) fascism is a matter of choice for the bosses, and therefore, (2) a mass movement can stop a **determined drive towards fascism** by the bosses without making a socialist revolution. Since there was no revolution in the U.S., that is the logic of saying that the CP-led mass movement was the primary reason that the bosses could not institute fascism. This is wrong, and opens the door the various revisionist strategies of building non-revolutionary sell-out "united fronts" with liberals.

While fascism as a system can only be destroyed by socialism, we must not be mechanistic in applying this to daily work. As stated before, a mass militant movement that is not yet armed with guns can still win some important **political** and temporary **military** victories over particular fascist abuses. Politically, and most important, a mass, anti-fascist, anti-racist movement can prevent the bosses from winning a mass base among workers; this would make the fascism very weak and unstable, as in South Vietnam, rather than so utterly devastating, as in

Nazi Germany. Building a militant, mass movement, including INCAR can mean the difference in saving millions of lives. Furthermore, our determined and militant security teams, combined with the strength and unity of our rank-and-file have prevented police attacks on our demonstrations from Boston to Chicago to Tupeio to Los Angeles. Although we were not armed with guns, we were able to beat back these specific fascist-type attacks. This is very important and must not be minimized.

We reject all idiotic theories that say we should engage in random terrorism or we should "sit back and wait for the magic day when workers rise up." "This is what makes trotskyites such a pitiful bunch of clowns. However, while the mass movement is very important, it is ultimately capable of stopping **genuine** fascism only when it is armed with guns and led by a Marxist-Leninist party. And **genuine, full-fledged, no-choice** fascism is what the ruling class of the U.S. is being forced towards in the 1980's. Not Roosevelt's "semi-fascism." Not Joe McCarthy's brutal "fascist-like" repression of part of the working class. But full-fledged, desperate political and economic suppression of the working class similar to Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, Chile, Argentina, etc. There will be variations, of course, but one thing remains the same—**genuine** fascism will only be defeated by a mass movement armed with guns, and led by a Marxist-Leninist party.

To smash fascism, build the party!

Comradely,
S.O.R.

This editorial, which originally appeared in CHALLENGE-DESAFIO, is based on a report from the May, 1979 meeting of the National Committee of the Progressive Labor Party.

The Anti-Nuclear Movement

The Bosses Build a Trojan Horse

On May 6, over 100,000 people marched in Washington against nuclear power. This was an important event! important, but for whom? Who will the anti-nuclear movement benefit? Is the anti-nuclear movement really a mass movement from the grass roots against government and corporate power, and for the progressive workers and others? Or is the anti-nuclear movement and the large action in Washington, D.C., actually an example of the cynical use by the ruling class of the millions of people who are concerned with nuclear safety? Who are the leaders, anyway?

- "Proposition 13" Governor Jerry Brown of California. A recent article in an oil industry newspaper states, "Brown's position with the oil industry cannot be discounted ... Brown and his staff have been sincerely working with California (oil) producers and refiners." The same newspaper (**The Oil Daily**) headlines another article, "Better Times Ahead for Oil Industry in California?" talking about "Friendly Jerry," and how "Oil producers can count on the support of the state government."

- Jane Fonda, who introduced Brown at the Washington rally, is already a multi-millionaire, and about to reap fantastic additional profits as a result of her movie, **The China Syndrome**.

- Ralph Nader and Barry Commoner, who have advocated a return to "labor intensive" production, at lower wages—in other words, back to the sweatshops?

The Shift To Coal Builds Up Steam

It's been several months since the large anti-nuclear march on May 6th in Washington. In the *Challenge-Desafio* editorial of May 23rd we commented on the demonstration and on the implications of the anti-nuclear movement. That editorial is reprinted here.

It has now become public fact that the ruling class has retreated from its ambitious plans to build a huge nuclear energy capability to offset the vulnerability of its oil supplies. The bosses are abandoning serious expansion of nuclear power. This is not because of mass pressure or safety factors, but because of economics. The plain fact is that nuclear plants are enormously expensive to build and operate. Coal and oil are cheaper and sufficiently efficient.

Currently, the smallest nuclear plant costs over \$1 billion to build. Given the fact that the ruling class is in decline and more and more limited in terms of capital investment, nuclear energy is no longer attractive. Carter's last two energy addresses barely mentioned nuclear power—he uttered one sentence, saying that the government couldn't close existing plants. On August 8th, New York State's Energy Office

issued a 15-year master plan for the state's energy supplies. The plan emphatically rejected any new nuclear plants beyond the two already about 80% built. The state energy commissioner said that the plan was "generally consistent with the plan outlined by Pres. Carter in July." (New York Times, 8-8-79)

Coal, rather than oil, is to be the main new source of expanded energy supplies, and it is no accident that the big oil companies own over 80% of the coal supplies in the country. Oil companies and large banks have taken a financial bath as a result of their investments in the nuclear energy field. It is no accident that the large banking interests of the nation, located in New York, who control the state and nation's politics, influenced the state to take the lead in putting down nuclear energy as a major new source.

Thus, the anti-nuke movement is no reform movement. The ruling class long ago determined the ineffectiveness of nuclear power. And as long as they were moving away from nuclear, why not look good in the process? So they built and financed the anti-nuclear movement to involve large numbers of the middle class in a useless

activity for a plan the bosses had already agreed on. In this way they appear responsive to mass pressure. And at the same time they win sections of the population to their leadership. The new confidence they win as a class on the nuclear issue is credit stored for their move to war and fascism.

More and more the bosses are moving to directly lead the mass movement in many issues. As the C-D editorial points out, the anti-nuclear movement, the ecology and consumer movements, "left"-labor coalitions and the endless liberation movements of women, gays, and ethnic groups, all place the bosses at the head of mass movements, as do the openly fascist groups like the Nazis and the KKK. To take any of these as reform movements is a mistake.

In this period all political developments must be viewed in the context of the ruling class's plans for war and fascism. Do the bosses build mass movements for our interests or theirs? The sooner people face this question, the better! Movements cannot be determined by subjective factors. They can only be judged by this test: Which class do they serve?

•The environmentalists, who have just advocated decontrol of oil prices, thereby "forcing consumers to use fuel more sparingly." (*Wall Street Journal*, March 21) Pay more for less!

If you detect a link to the oil companies, you're right. Who benefits more from a shut-down and/or limiting of nuclear plants? The major oil companies, of course. And since the oil used to replace the nuclear power would come from OPEC, with whom they have made a deal and therefore get additional profit of 80 cents a barrel over and above their normal huge profits, the major oil companies have even more to gain. So for whom are anti-nuclear

protestors working? The people, or Big Oil?

Does this mean that the nuclear industry is made up of good guys? Of course not! Are they murderers? Of course they are. They care no more for workers' health and well-being than the auto bosses, the coal bosses, or the oil bosses. Bosses are bosses, the world over, and they must be wiped off the face of the earth. The question is not whether nuclear power is safe, but whether anything is safe in the hands of these scum. Any worker could have told the nuclear bosses that the system was designed badly. Anytime a hanging yellow tag covers up a crucially important

EDITORIAL

light (reported in the New York Times, May 8), the system is screwed up because the bosses just don't give a damn. Any group of workers could have designed a better system—(and the bosses along with it) to smithereens and take control themselves!

BEWARE THE BOSSES BEARING GIFTS

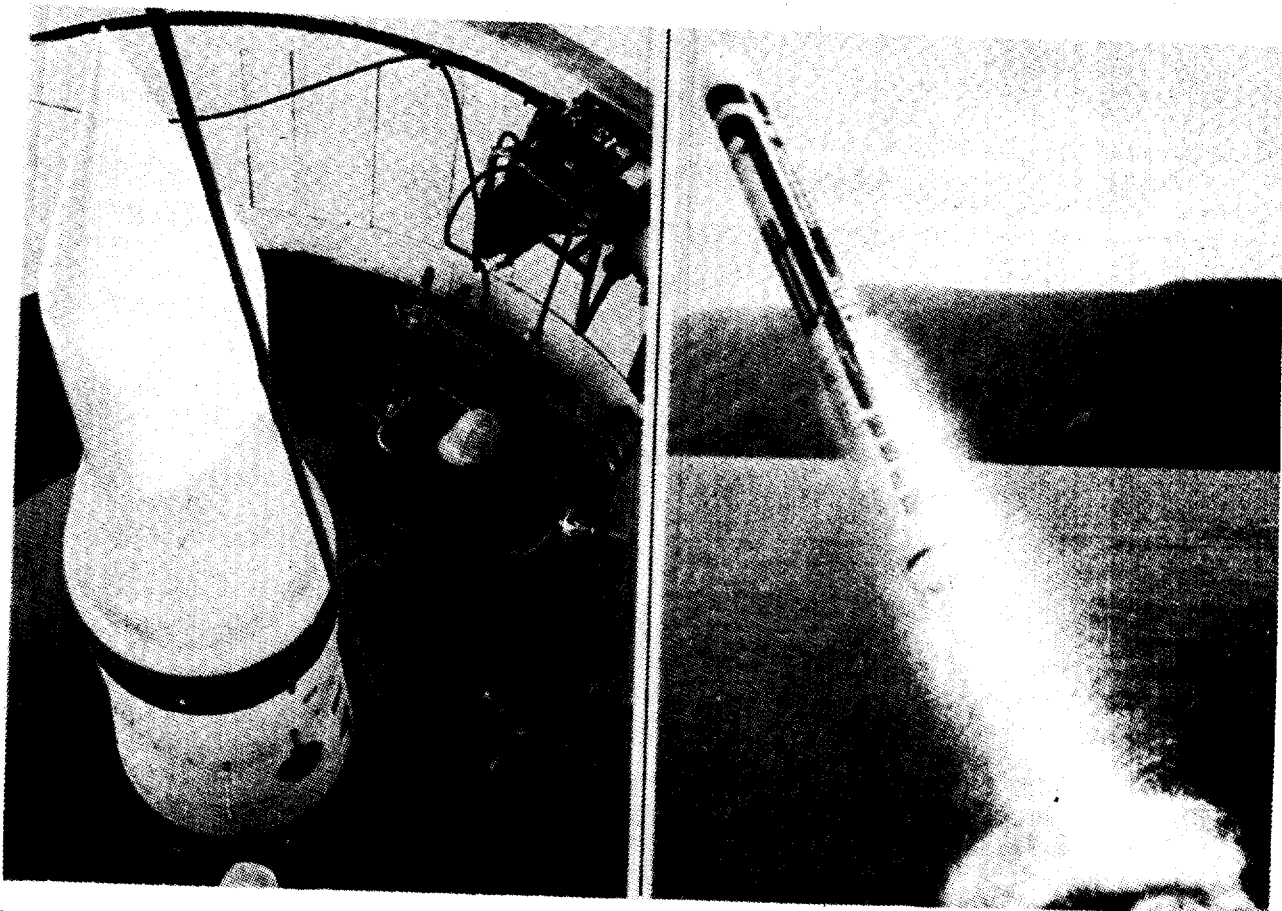
The big bosses' spokespeople at this rally, and their media, have been blaring forth about the evils of nuclear power. Has the ruling class suddenly become concerned with workers' safety? Over and over again we have been bombarded in the bosses' media with reports about unsafe nuclear power.

Unsafe compared to what? To coal, which maims and kills hundreds of miners each year, as well as causes emphysema in people who breathe its dust? To oil production? More cancer is caused by one oil refinery in one year than all of the nuclear plants put together over all of their lifetimes. Are any of the leaders of the anti-nuclear movement showing any concern over those forms

of cancer production? Have they ever? Or have they marched for better hospital care for workers (where you might have a real chance of reducing the death toll from cancer)? Have they ever marched against the evils of racism which kills more in a day, every day, than any one nuclear plant ever could, even in the worst conceivable accident? Have they ever campaigned against deteriorating housing in our cities, where an epidemic of tuberculosis is raging?

That is the significance of the anti-nuclear movement in relation to permanent mass unemployment for millions of black and Latin youth? What of the millions of lives which have been destroyed in the past years by a system that can only thrive on mass unemployment, especially among black and Latin workers? The anti-nuclear movement, organized and led by the bosses (the movement has received large sums of money from GM heir Stewart Mott—cars don't run on nuclear power); pales next to the question of war and fascism. One nuclear

The real nuclear safety issue—the working class must disarm the bosses' plans for war and fascism.



warhead is more lethal than all the nuclear plants in existence, and we know there are thousands upon thousands of nuclear weapons. We know that the ruling class is mobilizing itself and the masses to use nuclear weapons in a war against their Soviet competitors in an effort to save their sinking profit system.

In order to mobilize for war, the ruling class is moving towards fascism. It needs to bamboozle and coerce millions into their profit web. At the moment, tens of millions of workers and others in the U.S. are not won to killing other workers, or dying themselves, for the rulers' profits. So when the bosses organize a movement that seems to be beneficial to our interests, we should be **ON GUARD**. Certainly the bosses will never organize a movement against their own interests. Nor will the bosses organize to commit suicide. The May 7th issue of **Fortune** magazine points out, in part, the disenchantment of the ruling class with nuclear power, which had already reached huge proportions long before the Three Mile Island accident. **Fortune** says:

Whatever facts emerge, the mishap has dealt a further, severe setback to a technology that was already beginning to lose supporters where it needed them most among electric utilities. Their executives' growing disenchantment with the atom had nothing to do with reactor safety, which they did not—and do not—consider an important problem. It arose from the licensing battles, the expensively ratcheting safety standards imposed by regulators, and the construction cost overruns that were steadily eroding the savings that are the chief selling point of nuclear electricity. (Our emphasis)

Fortune, one of the prime mouthpieces of the bosses, makes it overly clear that safety is no concern of theirs. The bosses who are moving to close down the nuclear plants are guided only by two things: profits and the cynical use of the masses' grievances to win them to march under the bosses' flag. For example, the **Fortune** article says:

The heavy capital charges to pay off the plant would make up nearly three-quarters of the cost of producing nuclear electricity,

Ebasco's study indicates. And when all other charges are figured in, including fuel, nuclear electricity would turn out to be a mere 2% cheaper than electricity from the coal plant....

Even before Three Mile Island, the electric companies were starting to desert uranium and drift back to coal as a fuel for new power plants. Of the 32 large generating units ordered last year, 27 were coal-fired, three were gas-turbine or oil-fired and only two were nuclear....

Coal is the only real alternative for utilities, at least for some time to come, even though it is hazardous to mine and dirty to burn. Its use will probably cause far more fatalities than all the nuclear mishaps that may occur.

And there is a controversial theory that a large increase in coal burning might accelerate the carbon dioxide buildup in the atmosphere, which already threatens to warm the earth's climate, perhaps melting polar ice caps and flooding seacoast cities (see "New Fears Surround the Shift to Coal," **Fortune**, Nov. 20, 1978)

With all its disadvantages, coal is, of course, abundant and comparatively cheap. And the cost difference between coal and nuclear power has been narrowing....

Charles Komanoff, a New York City energy consultant who has made many of the cost studies quoted by anti-nuclear groups, contends that nuclear electricity in future plants will be at least 50% more expensive than electricity from coal.... (Our emphasis—editor)

Obviously the big bosses are not concerned with safety but only with profits. At the anti-nuclear demonstration no mention was made of a need to shut down the unsafe coal industry. Not a word about closing down the oil industry. Ironically and tragically, right after the rally many oil workers were drowned or electrocuted when an offshore oil rig near Galveston capsized. In other words, the anti-nuclear marchers—mostly middle class and virtually all white—do not see themselves affected by racism. They do not view themselves as hurt by unsafe coal mining and oil production. Their short-sighted concern is that they and their families can be hurt by nuclear power.

This is what makes it easier for the bosses to draw them into their orbit. The bosses exploit selfishness amongst this section of people.

The battle over nuclear power is **not** a mass movement against the ruling class's interests. It is simply another dog-fight between different ruling class interests. The prize is **profits** not people's welfare, and nuclear power is losing because it is turning out to be **unprofitable**, not because any boss is concerned about anybody's health. As early as 1975 the **New York Times** ran a story headlined, "Is Nuclear Power Too Costly?" One month later the headline was, "Hope for Cheap Power From Atom is Fading." And the **Miami Herald** in Dec. 1978 headlined: "Nuclear Power Industry 'Is Withering on the Vine.'" A utility spokesman says in the article, "They are too expensive." It is the greedy grab for profits and more profits that is fueling this dogfight among scum, not any concern for people.

The large banking institutions are no longer willing to lend huge sums of money, often to smaller utility companies, in a losing profit effort. And those large companies, including some of the oil companies, who have invested in nuclear power are pulling out. Last year Exxon lost \$66 million in nuclear investments. These oil barons are pulling out, leaving the small fry to whistle. The big buildup previously given to the use of nuclear power is now being reversed. In the past we were told nuclear power was the workers' panacea. But before the Three Mile Island accident occurred, the bosses had launched their campaign to reverse the development of nuclear power plants. The Jane Fonda picture, The China Syndrome, was an important step in this process.

WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT

As **Challenge-Desatio** has pointed out over and over again, the U.S. ruling class is moving quickly to war and fascism. The essence of fascism is to preserve the profit system for the capitalist class. This is done primarily by suppressing the working class and organizing workers to fight in imperialist wars to secure areas for exploitation. However, an important aspect of the fascist development is for the larger capitalists to smash the smaller bosses within their own ranks. The bosses try to streamline their operation in a futile attempt to

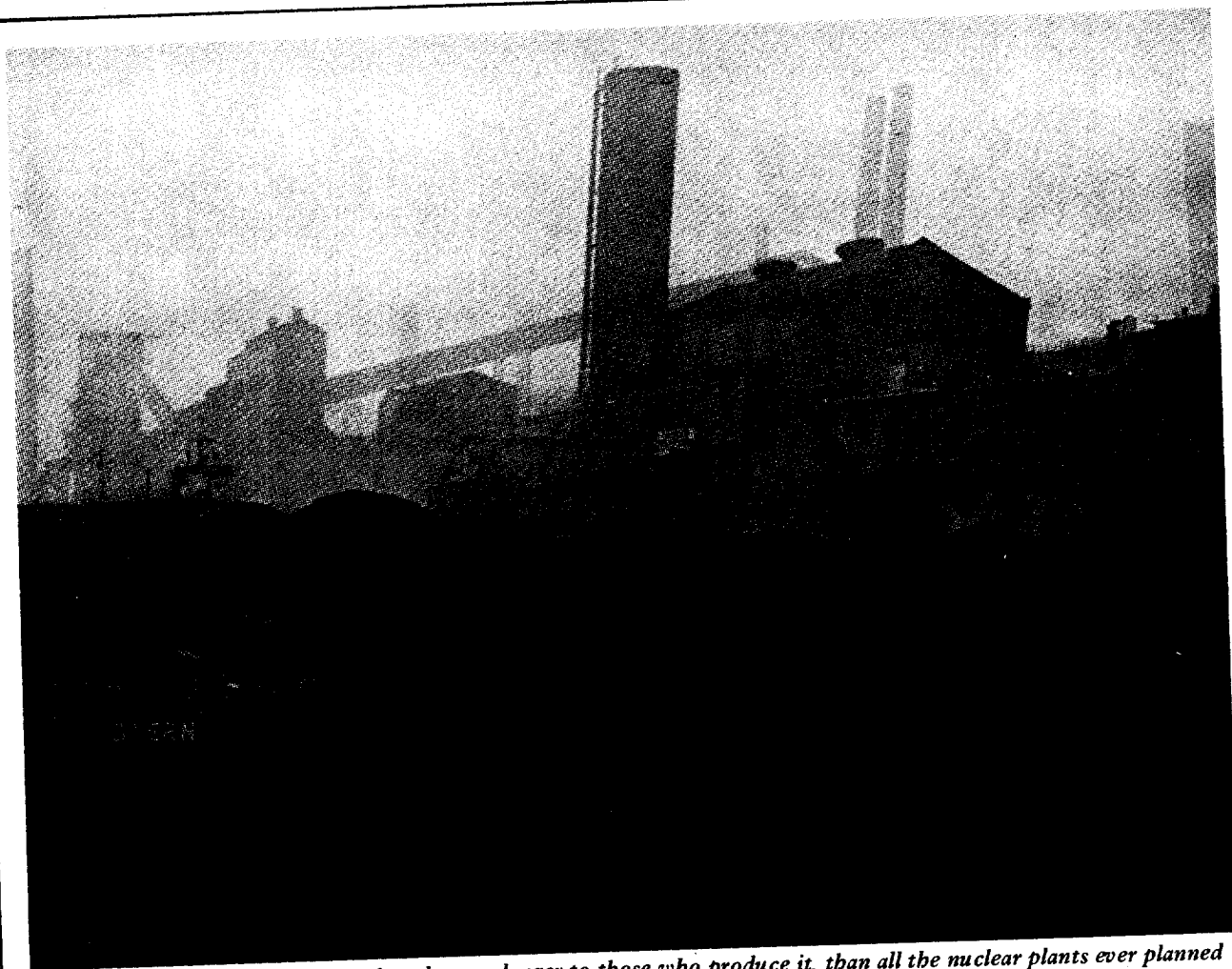
make it more effective and profitable. Recall the early period of Hitler when his forces, in The Night of the Long Knives, murdered thousands of other Nazis who were part of the Roehm gang. In that period the Hitler forces represented the big industrialists (Krupp, I.G. Farben, etc.), and the others reflected the lesser ones.

This intra-imperialist fight within the U.S. sharpened considerably during the Watergate period. It was then that the "old money" forces (headed by the Rockefeller interests) disciplined the "new money" people (primarily in the South and West). The political machine around Nixon, which represented "new money," was dismantled. This fight is still going on, with many twists and turns. However, the essence of this struggle is for the main section of the ruling class—still parading behind a liberal facade—to secure more complete control over the economy and the political levers in the country. This is why many of the liberal politicians, particularly Kennedy, can so easily assume an anti-nuclear stance. They do this because it serves their class interests:

The relatively recent involvement of Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. of California, Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and Representative Morris K. Udall of Arizona also has forced President Carter... to modify his outspoken backing for nuclear power in the face of criticism from political rivals." (**New York Times**, May 13)

WORKERS AND ALLIES: FIGHT FOR REVOLUTION, NOT FOR THE BOSSES

As we have pointed out, it is impossible for the bosses to move to war and fascism unless they win the workers and others to their ranks. Initially they are not going to crassly announce their fascist plans. In the early period of the development of fascism in Germany, the Hitlerites lulled many German workers into passivity and into Nazi ranks because they said they were for "National Socialism." Millions of German workers looked to socialism as the only alternative to capitalism. During the rise of Hitler, it was fashionable in Germany to be "anti-establishment," especially against Jewish bosses. There are few politicians today, including the President and presi-



There is more pollution from coal, and more danger to those who produce it, than all the nuclear plants ever planned or built could cause. Coal is the new favorite fuel of the U.S. ruling class, sponsors of the anti-nuclear movement.

dential aspirants, who are not "anti-establishment." Being anti-Washington is the most "American" thing on the market. Millions of people became enmeshed in the Nazi web because the bosses, hiding their actual class aims, built the mass movement around the aspirations of the masses. Hitler said he would provide jobs, law and order, clean streets, smash the bosses and even secure peace. However, alongside this program the German bosses gradually built up the political ideas of racism, jingoism, and other concepts that supported German imperialism.

Today in the U.S. we know that the bosses are doing similar things. But they, too, are building up mass movements under their leadership for their goals. These movements break up into many strands. There are the open fascist groupings such as the Nazis and the KKK. Naturally, they are easy to spot. However, it would be naive to believe that the bosses are using only this one obvious tactic.

In the labor movement, the bosses are building the Fraser leadership. Fraser is the president of the United Auto Workers. He and his counterparts in the Machinists (Winpisinger), the Mine Workers (Miller) and the Farmworkers (Chavez), all have been working with might and main to betray the workers every inch of the way. (Chavez, the most liberal of this gang, has called over and over for the deportation of undocumented workers.) Why should these misleaders now suddenly reflect the interests of the workers on the political level? The lesson of reformism is clear enough. The reform leaders are tools of the ruling class. Their job is to keep the workers within the confines of the system and win them to fascism. If they involve themselves in building movements, **it is only to maintain the grip of the bosses over the working class.** The steady erosion of workers' conditions is testimony to their leadership. Their only skill is to fool the workers into believing that they are acting in the workers' interests. This act is get-

ting harder and harder, as workers from New York to the fields of California are striking in their own interests.

Similarly, the nationalist leaders in the black and Latin areas are playing the same role as the Judenrat (betrayers of the Jewish workers) did in Hitlerite Germany. One of the latest examples of this is demonstrated by Jesse Jackson who is taking the line of "blaming the victim," the same line being put forward by the bosses. Jackson's "leadership" to the black masses says not to organize for revolution along multi-racial lines, but to "study harder." Jackson tells the masses that their plight is not due to the racist profit system, but because they haven't helped themselves through study. Well, there is something to the idea of helping one's self. The way to help yourself is to fight for revolution.

Then there is **Ebony** magazine coming out in agreement with the KKK line that undocumented workers should be deported because they are stealing the jobs of black and Latin workers. They are doing the bosses' dirty work in placing the cause of unemployment on other workers instead of where it belongs—on the capitalist system.

Finally there is the whole welter of "liberation" movements, from the Gay Liberators to the Women Liberators. These movements are organized by and for the bosses. During the last Presidential election, the Gay Liberationists supported Carter. Gloria Steinham admitted working for the CIA, and **Ms. Magazine**, one of the leading publications of the Women's Movement, is put out by the Kinney Corporation, a wing of I.T.&T. Recently a new women's mass circulation magazine, called **Self**, hit the stands. "Self" is an apt name for the logical development of fascist ideology. Certainly **Self** stands in opposition to the communist, working-class concept of "We."

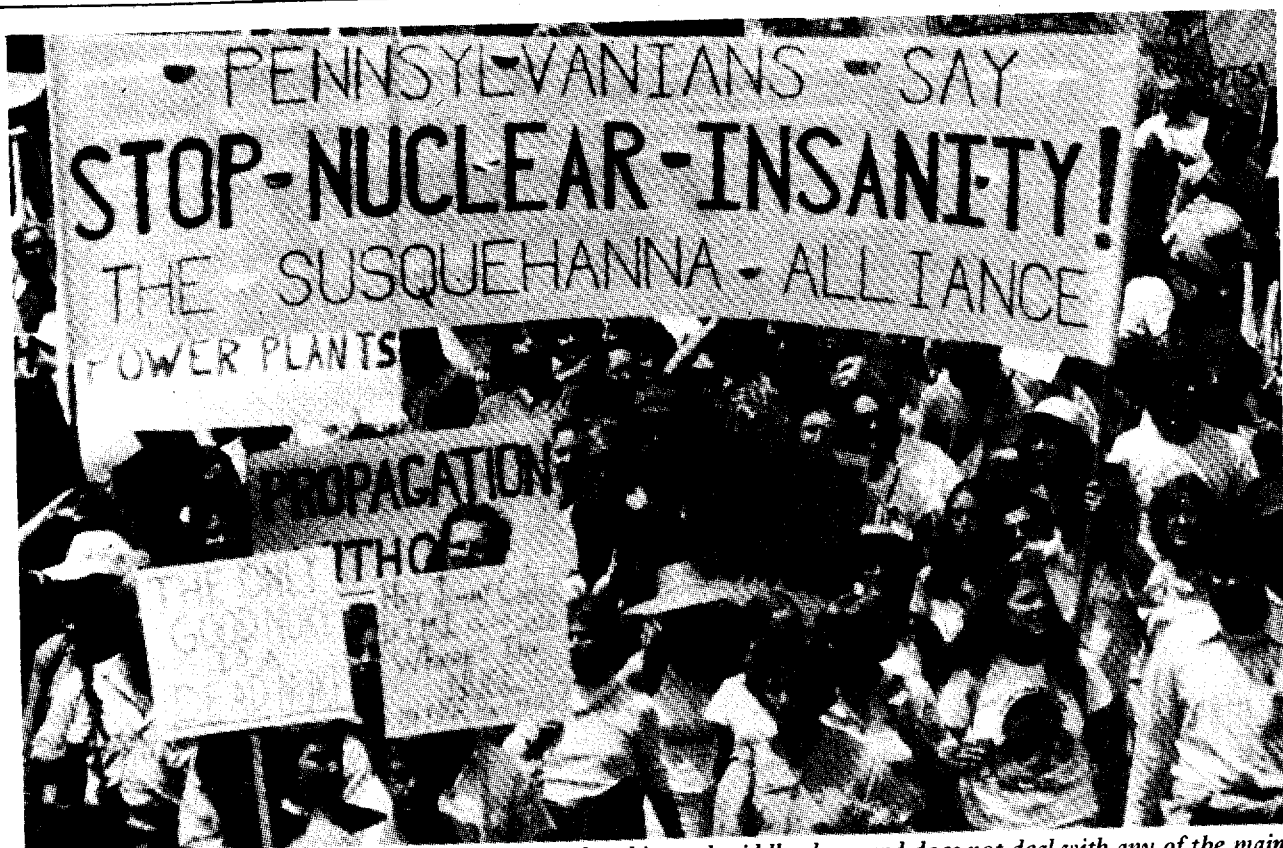
Within the context of these developments comes the anti-nuclear movement. It is a reactionary movement, organized by the bosses for their purposes. The bosses have developed it in a period when they are moving towards fascism. It is wrong, a serious mistake to become involved in this reactionary movement. It is no accident that many of the same people who only weeks ago were denouncing Jerry Brown as a fascist for his role in the Proposition 13 movement

hailed his participation in the anti-nuclear movement. Brown, the darling of the oil industry in California, the espouser of "fortress America," (he advocates depending only on this hemisphere's oil supplies), and the espouser at the anti-nuclear rally of the old Mussolini slogan of the "politics of the future," finds no problem in leading the openly right-wing anti-tax movement, and the liberal anti-nuclear movement.

It should also be pointed out that the anti-nuclear movement of today follows the anti-nuclear testing movement of yesterday. Again the futility of reformism is pointed up. These reform movements, touted and built by the "Communist" Party-Socialist Workers Party axis, have only helped lead to the proliferation of all forms of nuclear power and weaponry. By diverting the masses from revolution, they have helped engage millions in a futile exercise. They have been able to do this by pandering to the peoples' fear of nuclear power, and channeled this fear into pacifism and non-violence. The only way to make anything safe in this world is to place it in the hands of the working class. **Only workers' power is safe power.**

We call upon all participants in the anti-nuclear movement to withdraw. You are only hurting yourselves and others by enmeshing yourselves in the bosses' web. The only way to secure your aspirations for safety or whatever else, is to unite with the working class. The only way to have a secure future is to become involved with the International Committee Against Racism (InCAR) and the PLP. March under the workers' flag of revolution, not under the bosses' flag of reformism. We realize it is difficult to believe that by building the anti-nuclear movement you are aiding the bosses' plans. But it is in this period that the bosses are building fascism. The bosses are not in the business of building anti-fascist movements.

A recent issue of **Challenge-Desafio** reflected this same weakness. We compared the anti-nuclear rally movement to the anti-Vietnam war movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. The anti-nuclear movement is not the anti-war movement. In the first place, the PLP helped launch that movement. It started as a grass roots movement with a cutting edge against the bosses. It took several years before our leader-



The ruling class-led anti-nuclear movement is mostly white and middle-class—and does not deal with any of the main issues facing the U.S. working class.

ship was defeated and the anti-war movement was fully co-opted by the bosses. Today the bosses are still using the same Fonda-Hayden-Commoner-Brown machine to divert the masses from their real interests. Down below, the bosses have the CP-SWP axis to help mobilize the workers and others for the rulers' aims. It is the revisionists (betrayers of Marxism-Leninism) and the Trotskyites who provide the legions of poster-hangers and stickerers. It is they who supinely organize the masses for the bosses' fascist goals.

We in PLP should point out to the thousands of open-minded people in this movement its reactionary nature, and what to do about it. We should not only put forward our line in a massive way, but we should help people break away from the leaders of this reactionary movement. We must always remember that **IT IS THE LIBERALS WHO HELP OPEN THE FLOODGATES TO FASCISM.** The liberals of the day in the Germany of the 1920s and 1930s played exactly the same role. They diverted the masses from revolution. They were aptly characterized by the communist movement as social-fascists.

The bottom line that we should inject

into the mass movement is **anti-racism.** Racism is the fundamental contradiction in the working class and in the mass movement in general. It is no accident that the anti-nuclear demonstration was barren of black and Latin workers. Consequently, this action took on a racist hue. There is a deliberate aim of the ruling class to organize the masses into separate tents, one tent for women, one for white workers, one for black workers, one for Latin workers, one for the middle class, etc. The ruling class trembles at the spectre of a unified mass movement under communist leadership.

OUR GOAL IS TO DO JUST THAT! More and more, workers in the shops and in the fields across the country are responding to the class struggle with class actions. Many are responding to PLP's ideas. More and more are joining our ranks, and the ranks of InCAR. This is where we should keep our eyes focused. This is where the future lies. The future is with the working class. The ruling class stinks from the destruction of workers' lives around the world. The ruling class stinks from the corpses of racism, pollution, war and fascism. We will eradicate this stench once and for all.

By R.A.

John Brown's Raid— Guns Against Slavery

John Brown led a multi-racial group of five black men, including two ex-slaves, and sixteen white men in seizing the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia) on Oct. 16, 1859. Their plan was to take the thousands of muskets stored there into the Appalachian Mountains, and from there to make raids on slave plantations. Freed slaves who wished to join the guerrilla army would be trained in the mountains and help make further raids. This process, plus the slave rebellions it would encourage, would continue until slavery was eliminated.

John Brown's band made tactical errors. They were trapped in the arsenal. After a two-day gun battle, the survivors were captured by U.S. Marines led by Colonel Robert E. Lee, who became military leader of the Confederacy.

Harriet Tubman, escaped slave and organizer of hundreds of trips south to aid other slaves in escaping, famous as "General" Tubman of the Underground Rail Road, had helped in preparing for the raid. She had intended to participate, but was sick and her departure for Virginia was delayed. Meanwhile, for fear of being discovered, John Brown had started the raid two weeks earlier than planned. By the time General Tubman and others she had recruited arrived, the raid had been defeated.

John Brown and other captured survivors were tried for murder, treason against the state of Virginia, and inciting slave rebellions. They were convicted and hanged. The entire judicial process took less than eight weeks. The slave



The raiders firing at Federal troops from the engine house. The man in the foreground is one of the hostages taken by the raiders on their way to seize the Arsenal.

owners of Virginia were so afraid of attempts by abolitionists to rescue John Brown that a total of 1500 members of state militia, federal troops and Virginia Military Institute cadets guarded the execution.

While in jail awaiting death Brown predicted his hanging would do more to free the slaves than his original plan. In a note he handed to a guard on the day of his execution, Brown wrote that his only error had been to underestimate the amount of violence necessary to destroy slavery. Most bourgeois historians claim that John Brown's intense hatred of racism and his actions against slavery prove that he was insane, particularly because he was white and not enslaved. Yet, despite this most agree with Brown's own evaluation. They admit that the raid on Harper's Ferry and the trial and execution that followed swung the abolitionist movement onto the path of destroying slavery by force rather than "moral persuasion" and piecemeal reforms and escapes. The raid also encouraged a new wave of rebelliousness among slaves. Fear of slaves and abolitionists gripped

the slave owners, and provided the final push into secession and the setting up of a separate country based on the maintenance of the chattel slavery of four million black men and women. That in turn led to civil war and abolition of chattel slavery.

Among abolitionists and wider circles of northern working people, John Brown had become a symbol of hatred of racism and slavery and of defiance of the slave-owners. The song "John Brown's Body" was the marching song of Union troops in the Civil War. It was invariably sung by soldiers and civilians alike at departure ceremonies for newly-formed regiments of volunteers: "John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the ground, But we go marching on."

Long before 1859, John Brown had been advocating the necessity of violence to destroy slavery. He practiced what he preached. In the struggle in the territory of Kansas between advocates of slavery and "free labor," Brown and his sons and friends led numerous armed struggles against pro-slavery terrorists. He became known as "Old

Osawatomie Brown" during 1855-56. On May 24, Brown and his followers made a night raid on the homes of some particularly vicious pro-slavery terrorists, captured five of them, and killed them with broadswords. Kansas entered the Union as a free state.

Within less than two years after John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry the Civil War was in full swing. By 1865, about 1,300,000 union troops had marched through the South to the tune of "John Brown's Body." About 200,000 of these troops were black men, many of them escaped slaves or slaves freed by the advancing Union Army. These black troops, and many of the white troops, were opposed to slavery and racism. They were an armed expression of multi-racial unity. This was in marked contrast to the Lincoln administration, which was grossly racist and wanted to maintain the union with the least possible change from the racism necessary to maintain capitalism.

That hundreds of thousands of white workers picked up the guns to destroy slavery is a hard pill for white racists and black nationalist misleaders to swallow. They frown on unity of black and white workers based on common class interests, and instead advocate unity with white or black bosses. That John Brown and other white men and women put their lives on the line against slavery and racism contradicts the theory of black nationalism.

History was made by these millions of ordinary people fighting back. The twenty others who raided Harper's Ferry are listed below. Hundreds of others aided the preparation for the raid, thousands indirectly. When we say "John Brown" or "Harriet Tubman" we are not talking about some "super-hero" contrived by capitalist press agents to impress us with our own insignificance. We are talking about people whose words and actions and thoughts best summarized the words and actions and thoughts of countless others. Bourgeois heroes reduce us to a passive audience applauding their splendid speeches or exploits. Revolutionary leaders encourage our strengths, so that we can consciously participate in understanding and changing the world. John Brown is marching on in us every time we help one fellow worker to shake off the mental and physical chains of capitalist enslavement by daring to join with others to fight the enemy. We write this article not to glorify John Brown,

but to help lead our class closer to revolution by learning from John Brown and from the millions that he gave leadership to and learned from. Much of the material we quote makes too much of John Brown the individual. We ask the reader to discard that, while retaining the other essential points of the quotations.

John Brown was a Christian, not a Marxist, and he did not attack the capitalist system along with slavery. We now realize that racism cannot finally be destroyed without destroying capitalism. But we study John Brown so that we may learn from his strengths: multi-racial unity, boldness in seizing the offensive, reliance on the masses to embrace violence to destroy a ruling class. These qualities are going to be more and more in demand now and in the near future. A celebration of their existence in the past is in order.

We in the PLP are preparing for another civil war, this time to destroy wage-slavery and with it, all oppression. History—the story of the struggles of the working classes—is the material out of which our ideas on how to make a revolution are produced. The Party and the working class must learn history to develop and embrace revolutionary theory. Revolutionary theory does not develop primarily from the conditions in one's own city, plant or campus, or even from studying present day society as a whole. It comes from studying change.

THE LESSON OF HISTORY: RELY ON THE MASSES TO CHANGE THE WORLD

John Brown's father was a "conductor" on the underground railroad. John Brown was born, in 1800, into a household that harbored fugitive slaves. Blacks were portrayed by Southern slave owners as happy with slavery and unfit because of their "inferiority" for a life of freedom alongside whites. Racists in the north repeated the picture of blacks as servile, shuffling, meek, cowardly and dancing in blissful ignorance. This general argument has been raging about all oppressed and exploited people for thousands of years. Today we are told that white workers in the United States are happy beer drinkers glued to the boob tube incapable of thoughts more complex than the feud between Reggie Jackson and Billy Martin. Left out of the picture are the recent strike wave in New York City, the coal strike last year,

The Harper's Ferry Raiders

John Brown, born 1800 in Torrington, Conn. Tanner, surveyor, sheep herder, seller of wool.

John Henry Kagi, a self-educated writer, teacher and lawyer. He was run out of Virginia for anti-slavery views. Killed at Harper's Ferry.

Aaron Dwight Stevens of Mass. Condemned for leading an army mutiny against a pro-slavery major, he escaped from prison and joined Brown in Kansas. Hanged after the raid.

John E. Cook, a young law student from Brooklyn, N.Y.

Charles Plummer Tidd escaped after the raid, and died as a 1st Sgt. in the Civil War.

Jeremiah G. Anderson, 27, a sworn abolitionist. Killed at Harper's Ferry.

Albert Hazlett, a Pennsylvania farm worker. Executed.

Edwin Coppoc, a farmer

and a Quaker. Executed.

Barclay Coppoc, 20, brother of Edwin. He escaped, returned to Kansas, participated in anti-slavery raids in Missouri and died in the Civil War.

William Thompson, 26, a neighbor of the Browns at N. Elba, N.Y. Killed at the Ferry.

Dauphin Thompson, 20, brother of William, also died at Harper's Ferry.

Oliver Brown, 20, was John Brown's youngest son. He died in the battle.

John Anthony Copeland, 25, an Oberlin-educated free black. He was hanged.

Stewart Taylor, 23, a Canadian wagon-maker. Killed in the Arsenal.

William H. Leeman, 19, the youngest raider. Shoe factory worker from age 14. Killed.

Osborn Perry Anderson, a black printer, escaped and later

fought through the Civil War.

Francis Merriam, wealthy young abolitionist. He escaped and served as captain of a black company in the Civil War.

Lewis S. Leary, 25, black and the descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier. Worked as a harness-maker. He died of wounds suffered at the Arsenal.

Owen Brown, another of John Brown's sons. He survived the raid and died in 1891.

Watson Brown, 24, another of Brown's sons. He, too, was killed at Harper's Ferry.

Dangerfield Newby, a freed slave. Unable to buy his wife and seven children out of slavery, he joined the raiders and was killed in battle.

Shields Green, an escaped slave with a young son in bondage. He met Brown through Frederick Douglass. Green was hanged after the raid.

the millions of working people who participated in and supported the movement against the Vietnam war, and the hundreds of thousands of GI's, black, latin, asian and white, who fraged officers, deserted and in general made it impossible for the U.S. ruling class to continue the war.

John Brown saw with his own eyes blacks who were opposite of the racist stereotype, who had planned ingenious and daring escapes from slavery, and had carried them out with courage and fortitude, in the face of whippings, jailings and often death if captured.

Slave owners and their racist apologists had an answer of course: the blacks who escaped were the lunatic fringe, a malcontent handful of the four million black men, women and children in bondage. Perhaps if John Brown had restricted his gaze to slavery as it was at a particular moment in the United States, he would have found that answer half-convincing. But John Brown looked far and wide. He looked at history, recent and ancient. He studied the slave rebellion led by Nat Turner in Virginia in 1831 that had the slave-owners in hys-

terical fear, forced to admit that every one of their slaves was a potential "assassin" of his "beloved" master. He knew in detail of the formation of armies of thousands of slaves on the island of Santo Domingo, and their success in annihilating their French masters and establishing the black Republic of Haiti in the 1790's.

John Brown studied the uprising of slaves on the island of Sicily in 73 B.C., led by Spartacus. It took the "invincible" Roman legions two years to destroy this uprising. John Brown studied the struggle of the masses in Italy, in a movement led by Garibaldi, to set up a unified republic and destroy the power of feudal mini-states and their mini-kings. "He stated that he had read all the books on insurrectionary warfare that he could lay his hands on: the Roman warfare, the successful opposition of the Spanish chieftains during the period when Spain was a Roman province,—how, with ten thousand men, divided and subdivided into small companies, acting simultaneously, yet separately, they withstood the whole consolidated power of the Roman Empire through a number of years... the successful warfare waged by Schamyl, the Circassian chief, against the Rus-



The men who marched on Harper's Ferry: Twenty-two men dedicated to smashing slavery through multi-racial unity

sians" (Testimony of Richard Realf before the Senate Committee investigating John Brown, in DuBois, p. 216)

From his own participation in the abolitionist movement and from his knowledge of the uprising led by Spartacus and Toussaint L'Overture, of the slave rebellions of Nat Turner and others, of the struggle for the Italian republic, John Brown arrived at two profound conclusions: 1) people fight back against oppression. 2) their struggle causes change. These conclusions were the opposite of many that were heard then and are heard today: "Nobody where I work wants to do anything." "You can't fight city hall." "You can't win." "The more things change the more they stay the same."

While John Brown was engaged in the fight against chattel slavery, the European revolutionaries Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were leading the working class in the fight against wage-slavery. Based on their participation in the revolutionary movement and their study of history, including the history of the development of the natural sciences,

they developed the philosophy of dialectical materialism. This philosophy, outlined in the **Communist Manifesto** of 1848, when applied to history, proves that John Brown's conclusions were and are correct. Class struggle is the motive force of history. Periods of seeming passivity among the oppressed, however prolonged, are replaced by blazing struggle, like the explosion of a "dormant" volcano. Systems of class exploitation, although they seem at times permanent and even "natural," end. We are no longer cultivating crops and building pyramids in the Nile Valley. Slavery has ended. Feudalism has ended. Capitalism will soon end. Most people do not yet realize this, just as most people in 1859 did not yet realize that slavery was on the verge of extinction. Slavery had existed for over 200 years and appeared permanent, like capitalism at the U.S. bicentennial. Even socialism, which will replace capitalism, will in turn be replaced by communism and the end of class society.

Not only does the struggle of opposites cause irreversible change in social re-

lations, but in the relations of the entire universe as well. Atoms, mountains, planets, stars, galaxies—all are born to die and be transformed into something else, if not in seconds, then in millions of years. In the most apparently “stable” object, electrons are whirling around the nuclei of atom at close to the speed of light. Powerful atomic forces are tugging against each other. Passivity is relative, activity is absolute. While we cannot develop this point within the confines of this article, we urge the reader to study the Manifesto and other writings of Marx and Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung and others on dialectical materialism, including the articles “Can History Be A Science” in this issue of **PL Magazine** and “Dialectics—Comprehending and Transforming Reality” in **PL**, Vol. 10, No. 6

Of all the questions raised by John Brown’s raid, this question is the most fundamental. If the oppressed are essentially passive, and if you can’t win, and if nothing really changes anyway, then we in PLP should quit the Party and seek more “immediately gratifying” things to do. But if the workers are essentially active in struggle, and if we can win, and if everything constantly changes, then you should increase your participation in and commitment to the revolutionary process, by joining the Progressive Labor Party, and by helping recruit others.

Participation in the class struggle and the study of dialectic materialism in general and of history in particular, are the ways of resolving this question.

MASS REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE IS THE METHOD OF CHANGE

Slavery in North America began in the colony of Virginia in 1619, when the first shipload of blacks arrived. Slavery was born in the violence of capture in Africa, and violently delivered to the new world in the form of leg-ironed bodies jammed into the filthy holds of sailing ships. Slavery grew up in the violence of the overseer’s whip on the field-hand’s back, and as slavery reached maturity at the turn of the nineteenth century, the violence required to maintain it intensified because of its relationship to capitalist industry.

Slavery was first of all a system of production. In its earlier days in North America, the surplus produced by the slaves (the amount above and beyond

that required for their own survival) was primarily consumed by the local slave-owners. For the part of the surplus that was sold in commerce, demand was relatively limited.

The industrial revolution changed all that, in particular the development of the steam power-driven English cotton industry. The demand for cotton to feed the ever-faster spinning wheels of the English factories became relatively insatiable. Competition between manufacturers placed a premium price on the cotton crop brought in first, and plantation owners scrambled to have their cotton baled on the pier before their neighbors. Their method was to increase the hours of work of the slave, and the intensity of work during those hours, to the point where the field hands no longer had the time nor the energy necessary to reproduce themselves and guarantee a next generation of slave labor. The African slave trade having been ended legally (although in fact some slave trading continued), breeding plantations were therefore established. There, at the foothills of the mountain where the ships could not reach and the soil was not as good for cultivating cotton, slaves were grown. Karl Marx compared the cotton fields to the mines worked by slaves in ancient times:

Where not the exchange value but the use-value of the product predominates, surplus labor will be limited by a given set of wants . . . No boundless thirst for surplus labor arises from the nature of production itself. Hence in antiquity overwork becomes horrible only when the object is to obtain exchange value in its specific independent money form; in the production of gold and silver. Compulsory working to death is here the recognized form of over-work . . . Still these are exceptions in antiquity. But as soon as people, whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labor . . . are drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalistic mode of production, the sale of their products for export becoming their principal interest, the civilized horrors of overwork are grafted on the barbaric horrors of slavery . . . Hence the Negro labor in the Southern States of the American Union preserved

something of a patriarchal character so long as production was chiefly directed to immediate local consumption. But in proportion, as the export of cotton became of vital interest to these states, the over-working of the Negro and sometimes the using up of his life in 7 years of labor became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. (Capital, V. I, p. 235—emphasis ours.)

Marx obtained this information about field-hand life expectancy from reading the slave owners' own writings on the economics of managing plantations. This "calculated and calculating" murder is comparable to the daily violence of capitalist production today: each hundred million dollars of surplus equals so many workers killed by black lung, red lung, chemical-caused cancer, and so many workers killed and maimed by industrial "accidents," all to maximize profit and, therefore, competitive advantage.

Slaves fought back against the violence of overwork, and the slaveowners enforced their system of production with the violence of the whip, the chain, the branding-iron, the bloodhound, the jail cell and the noose. "In the Old South, violence tended to be more personal and more socially acceptable than elsewhere. Slavery, after all, depended upon physical force or the threat of force, and from childhood slaveholders were accustomed to striking their chattels with impunity, because blacks struck whites at the risk of their lives." (Thomas, p. 20)

Richard O. Boyer writes of how Andrew Jackson, later the president of the U.S., advertised a \$50 reward "for the capture of a man he owned who had escaped, 'and ten dollars extra for every hundred lashes any person will give him up to the amount of three hundred.'" Boyer quotes John Calhoun, senatorial theorist of "states rights," on one of his captured runaways: "I wish you would have him lodged in jail for one week, to be fed on bread and water and to give him 30 lashes well laid on.'" Thousands of newspapers carried advertisements like these:

"**RANAWAY**, my negro man Richard. A reward of \$25 will be paid for his apprehension **DEAD** or **ALIVE**.

"**RANAWAY**, a negro woman and two children. A few days before she went off I burnt her with a hot iron on the left side of her face. I tried to make the letter M.

"**RANAWAY**, a negro woman, named Maria, some scars on her back occasioned by the whip." (Boyer, pp. 50-51)

Behind these threats of death, these brandings and whippings lay the power of the federal government. Slavery had been written into the United States Constitution. Article IV of this racist document

In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are...the movement of the slaves in America started by the death of John Brown, and...the movement of the serfs in Russia...

I have just seen in the *Tribune* that there has been a fresh rising of slaves in Missouri...the signal has now been given. If things get serious by and by, what will then become of Manchester?

—Karl Marx, to Friedrich Engels
January 11, 1860

guaranteed the slaveowners that "No person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws there, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any Law or Regulation thereof, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due." This Article also guaran-

teed State governments that the Federal government would respond to any request for help in putting down "domestic Violence." This provision was used in 1831 to send federal troops to aid Virginia in the suppression of the slave rebellion led by Nat Turner, and to send U.S. marines to Harper's Ferry in 1859.

With the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 the slaveowners used their control of the Federal Government to begin a pro-slavery offensive. This law not only restated the Constitution's provision that it was illegal to aid escaped slaves, it required citizens of Northern states to assist in their recapture when asked to do so by private slave catchers and/or federal marshalls. The penalty for refusing to help could be six months in prison or a \$1000 fine, even if the person being seized had never been a slave at all. Under this Act, there were numerous kidnappings of free blacks and their "return" to slavery. The Act had other features we would now call fascist, such as no trial by jury (northern juries generally would not convict anybody accused of helping an escaped slave, even if they had clearly done it) and no testimony allowed by the person being captured.

How could this have been tolerated in the "democratic" United States of America? We have something similar today. The U.S. Immigration Dept. mans checkpoints on roads leading north from the Mexican border (in some cases hundreds of miles above the border) where they randomly stop and search vehicles, particularly those containing people who "look Latin." Those who cannot prove their citizenship or produce documents showing they are legally in the country are jailed and deported. The Immigration Department has employed similar tactics in raids on factories, movie theatres and other places where there is a concentration of latin workers. The super-exploitation of black slaves led to escape from slavery which in turn led to slave-catching, which created a cloud of terror under which the entire working class lived. The super-exploitation of workers in Latin America (and elsewhere) leads to escape into the U.S., which leads to the hunt for undocumented workers, which creates a cloud of terror under which we live today.

This cloud seemed small to white workers not obviously affected by it, prior to the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. After this Act, the danger to all became more evident. As John Brown put it,

"the Fugitive Slave Law will create more abolitionists than all the lectures we have had for years! (Quarles, p. 25) But this Act was not a "mistake" on the part of the slave owners; it was a necessary reaction to sharpening internal contradictions within slavery, and between slaveowners and some sections of northern industrial capitalists.

Similarly, the U.S. ruling class today is facing sharpening internal contradictions with the working class, and, externally, with the Russian imperialists. They are discussing plans, based on the Immigration Department's "green card" and the computerized Social Security System, for forcing all workers to carry identity cards and be subject to imprisonment if they cannot produce the card. So what appears today to many workers who are citizens as a small cloud on the horizon is developing into a thunderstorm of fascist terror. Only by joining the struggle against deportations led by the International Committee Against Racism and the Progressive Labor Party, only by advocating the unity of all workers and the "abolition" of all borders, can you help today to prepare the working class for the task of overcoming fascism with socialist revolution tomorrow.

Before the Fugitive Slave Act a part of the abolitionist movement had advocated violence against slavery. The Ram's Horn, a black newspaper in New York to which John Brown subscribed, for example, called for slave rebellions. Henry Highland Garnet, an escaped slave who became a close friend of John Brown, told the National Negro Convention in Buffalo in 1843:

Brethren, arise, arise! Strike for your lives and liberty. Now is the day and the hour. Let every slave throughout the land do this, and the days of slavery are numbered. You cannot be oppressed more than you already have been—you cannot suffer greater cruelties than you have already. Rather die free men than live to be slaves. Remember that you are FOUR MILLIONS.

Although there had been some aid by this movement to slave rebellions in the South, this violence had been mainly verbal. The Fugitive Slave Act gave northern abolitionists the opportunity to pick up the gun against slavery where they lived. They responded by forming associations in many northern cities and

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towns dedicated to armed resistance to slave catchers, including federal marshalls. John Brown's involvement in this movement was to lead in the formation of the League of Gileadites in Springfield, Ohio, where he was living in 1851. This League asked its members to be constantly armed and ready to spring to the defense of any fugitive slave or free black threatened with capture or already captured. Although it had white supporters, its membership, other than John Brown, was apparently all black. This was a weakness. The League was never tested in combat because no slave catchers came to Springfield, most likely out of fear for their lives.

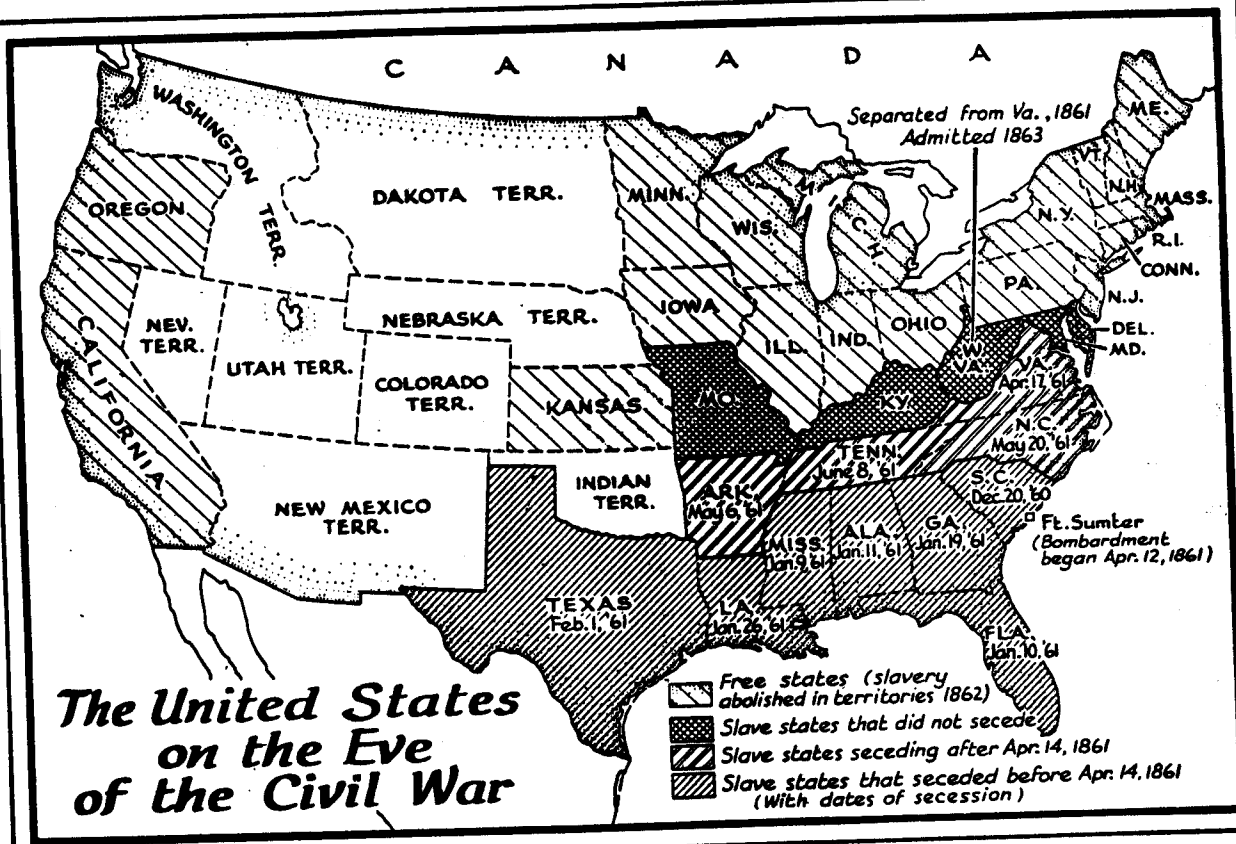
The next stage of the Federal Government's pro-slavery offensive, growing out of the increasing desperation and weakness of the slave system, was the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. This Act set aside the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had prohibited slavery in the Territories (newly-obtained parts of the U.S. not yet made into "states"). Slavery could exist until and unless the Territory was admitted to the Union with a State constitution prohibiting slavery. The constitution was written by the elected representatives of the territory, so the stage was set for what appeared to be an electoral struggle between advocates of slavery and advocates of free labor and free soil. Kansas was the territory where this struggle was fought out. **Just as elections did not win industrial unions, or the eight hour day, or civil rights, elections did not decide the issue in Kansas. Violent class struggle did.**

The first round went to the slave owners. They themselves did not go to Kansas—they were waiting until the issue was decided to bring their slaves and set up plantations. Instead, they sent "border ruffians" from the slave State of Missouri, just as the wealthy bankers and bosses of Boston stayed at home on Beacon Hill in 1975 discussing their liberal and conservative racist opinions while they mobilized white workers and unemployed teenagers of South Boston to go out and throw rocks at Black school children. In South Boston in 1975, in Missouri in 1855 some whites found their sense of superiority in the supposed inferiority of blacks, instead of identifying with blacks and all other members of the international working class, producers of everything of value. Thousands of these border ruffians, crazed by racism and liberal quantities of booze into fighting

the battles of the plantation owners, crossed over into Kansas to join with others of their ilk who had actually moved there to stuff the ballot boxes, terrorize free-state settlers, and elect a pro-slavery legislature and governor. This government was recognized as the official government of Kansas by President Buchanan.

White workers who had escaped wage-slavery by moving to Kansas and setting up farms and small businesses, white farmers who had moved to Kansas seeking more acres and fertile soil, fought back. They set up their own anti-slavery territorial government, which in turn enlisted citizens into a militia to counter the armed border ruffians and their supporters, federal troops and marshals. This movement had two related weaknesses which led to repeated defeats and the verge of disaster. 1) Most of the white settlers shared their enemies' belief in the inferiority of blacks, and did not want to live in a multi-racial environment. Therefore they either were not opposed to slavery, but only to its extension into Kansas, or advocated the abolition of slavery coupled with the "return" of the slaves (who had by this time almost all been born here) to Africa. A tiny handful of blacks, precursors of today's black nationalists, advocated such "colonization" schemes, and were thus in objective and sometimes organizational alliance with out-and-out racists.

2) Because the settlers were not won politically to the abolition of slavery and to multi-racial unity, but only wanted to be "let alone" to raise their crops ("do their own thing"), they did not **take the offensive** militarily against the pro-slavery forces, but only called out their regiments when they were directly attacked. As anyone who has ever been in a physical fight knows, you cannot win if your opponent is throwing all the punches and you are just trying to block them. Sooner, rather than later, you will get hurt. In Kansas, the main free-state settlement, Lawrence, was burned several times, and hundreds of free-staters were killed in battles and in attacks by the border ruffians on unarmed men, women and children. The South was on the verge of winning this preview of the Civil War. Abolitionists looked with horror at "bleeding Kansas," and saw the "slave-power," as they called it



spreading throughout the country.

Some did more than look.

A small minority of the settlers had gone to Kansas not only to farm, but mainly to fight in the front lines against slavery and racism. Among these politically motivated forces were five of John Brown's sons, their families, and other relatives and friends. Their letters describing developments in Kansas convinced John Brown to go west, with another son, a son-in-law, and a wagon-load of rifles and ammunition.

On arriving in Kansas, John Brown was commissioned captain of a Company of Liberty Guards by the free state legislature. Thus he came by the title, "Captain Brown" by which he was frequently called for the remaining four years of his life. His conduct in battles in the area of Osawatimie Creek earned him another name, "old Osawatimie Brown."

"Badly outnumbered at Black Jack on June 2, 1856, the Brown forces refused to wilt under fire... Twenty-five Missourians were taken prisoner, Brown exchanging their two leaders for his previously captured sons, John, Jr. and Jason." (Quarles, p. 33)

"Brown's reputation as a guerrilla leader grew.... At the end of August

(1856), he fought a skirmish at Osawatimie in which he led a band of thirty or forty men against two hundred and fifty commanded by a Mexican war veteran, John W. Reid. Though badly outnumbered, Brown fought back hard and succeeded in escaping with the bulk of his force." (Ruchames, p. 33)

John Brown and his troops were ordinary people, not supermen. Their bravery flowed out of political conviction and collective organization. The by-laws of the Company in the summer of 1856 included the election of officers, collective disposal of captured property, and trial by jury.

A reporter from the New York Tribune visited the camp at this time. John Brown told him, "I would rather have the smallpox, yellow fever, and cholera altogether in my camp, than a man without principles. It's a mistake, sir, that our people make, when they think that bullies are the best fighters, or that they are the men fit to oppose these Southerners. Give me men of good principles; God-fearing men; men who respect themselves; and, with a dozen of them, I will oppose any hundred such men as these Buford ruffians.'" (quoted in DuBois, p. 163)

Before any of these battles could take

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place, the killing of the five pro-slavery terrorists at Potawatomie had to occur. Lawrence had been sacked on May 21, 1856, while the demoralized free staters were trying to negotiate instead of shoot. John Brown's company, summoned from Osawatomie, arrived only to see the ruins. The border ruffians had shot up and terrorized the town for several hours. The Federal government had recognized the pro-slavery regime, and the rest of the county was sullenly going along. The morale of the free staters was low; some were getting ready to go home while the getting was good. The pro-slavery forces were issuing warnings of death for those who remained. On the night of May 24, 1856, about eight men led by Brown knocked on the doors of five of these racist vermin, escorted them out to the woods, and hacked them to death with broadswords. Even commentators who are generally favorable to John Brown shy away from supporting this deed. Quarles, for example says "Brown's name would be forever tarnished" by the incident, in which "five pro-slavery men were cruelly put to death." (Quarles, p. 33)

James Townsley was an eye-witness of the raid. He had been pressed into service by Brown's band as a somewhat reluctant guide to the pro-slave settlement in the Swamp of the Swan. In 1879 he wrote about the incident in the *Lawrence Daily Journal*:

I desire also to say that I did not then approve of the killing of those men, but Brown said it must be done for the protection of the Free State settlers; that the pro-slavery party must be terrified, and that it was better that a score of bad men should die than that one man who came here to make Kansas a free state should be driven out...

I then thought that the transaction was terrible, and have mentioned it to but a few persons since. In after time, however, I became satisfied that it resulted in good to the Free State cause, and was especially beneficial to Free State settlers on Potawatomie Creek. **The pro-slaverymen were dreadfully terrified**, and large numbers of them soon left the Territory. It was afterwards said that one Free State man could scare a company of them. (*Lawrence Daily Journal*, Dec. 10,

1879, quoted in Ruchames, pp. 208-209, emphasis Townsley's)

In South Boston in 1975 thousands came out to cheer for Louise Day Hicks as she spewed forth racist garbage, and hundreds followed R.O.A.R.—Restore Our Alienated Rights—in throwing rocks at black school children. When CAR and PLP organized even small numbers to stand up to these Racists On A Rampage, most of them politically "left the territory."

And so it goes. "Bullies," to use John Brown's word, won over through racism to do the bidding of the ruling class, be they capitalists or slave-owners, can never match the dedication of working-class forces fighting for their own liberation, united in multi-racial unity. Today, some see only the superficial arrogance of the boss and the superficial passivity of the workers. They conclude, as did most of the free staters, that we cannot win and should not fight. We can learn from John Brown to look deeper, to the profound weakness of the bosses and the strengths of the working class. We conclude that we can win and must fight.

W.E.B. DuBois explained in his biography of John Brown the relationship of the killings at Potawatomie to events in the whole nation.

Not only was there 'hell in Kansas' but the North was aflame—the very thing which John Brown and Lane and their fellows designed. A great convention met at Buffalo and mass meetings were held everywhere. Clothes, money, arms and men began to pour out of the North. It was no longer a program of peaceful voting; it was fight. The Southern party was certain to be swamped
.... (DuBois, pp. 139-141)

DuBois explains how the Buchanan administration, fearing that events would develop into a general offensive against slavery—a civil war—had to reverse its policy from one of using Federal forces to keep Kansas a slave state to one of compromise. Free state professional politicians, described by John Brown as "always ready to sacrifice his principles for his advantage," (Ruchames, p. 220) tried to create a state where slave owners and free soilers could peacefully co-exist. As the Civil War was soon to demonstrate, this could not be. Pro-slave forces were not conditioned by slavery to compromise. They

could not keep their hands off the club and rifle. Free soilers continued to fight back. The war simmered until 1858 and ended with the total defeat of pro-slavery forces and the adoption in 1859 of a state constitution prohibiting slavery.

After the tide had turned against slavery in Kansas, the next and last act of the pro-slavery offensive prior to secession itself was the Dred Scott Decision of March 6, 1857. Dred Scott was a slave whose owner had taken him into Minnesota, a territory where slavery was prohibited, and Illinois, a free state. In Missouri in 1846 Dred Scott petitioned a Federal Circuit Court for the right to bring suit for his freedom. There followed twelve years of litigation culminating in the 1857 Supreme Court Decision. Chief Justice Taney, a well-known pro-slavery advocate, wrote the opinion for the majority of the Court.

**look deeper to
the profound weakness
of the bosses
and the strengths
of the working class...**

He ruled that Dred Scott was a slave, and therefore not a citizen of the United States, and therefore not entitled to bring a law suit into a federal court. The Court's opinion went on to rule that no black person, slave or free, was a citizen of the United States, because at the time the Constitution was ratified—and continuing through 1857—blacks were "considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges, but such as those who held the power and the Government might choose to grant them." (quoted in Fehrenbacher, p. 343) This Supreme Court decision in essence made slavery legal throughout the United States, and officially endorsed racism as the doctrine of the U.S. government.

It was "an unusually bold venture in a desperate struggle for power" by the slave owners (Fehrenbacher, p. 3). The venture failed. The decision unleashed a wave of hatred of slavery and racism that dwarfed the reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act in breadth and depth. Intended to avert the necessity of secession, the decision helped make secession the only possibility for the slave owners. When secession did occur, hundreds of thousands whose hatred had been aroused by Taney's open advocacy of the rightness of slavery and racism were inspired to pick up the gun and smash this racist doctrine along with the Confederacy.

In September, 1856, hopeful, with reason, that free-staters had their Sharpes rifle at the ready and would no longer supinely submit to slavery, John Brown left Kansas. He headed east—in order to head south. In his mind was the idea of an offensive against slavery. Instead of attacking the expansion of slavery, attacking slavery itself. Instead of fighting on territory coveted by the slave power, fighting on territory already firmly in its possession. Instead of limiting slavery, abolishing slavery. Brown's criticism of Spartacus was that instead of waiting to be attacked in Sicily, he should have marched on the capital of the Empire—Rome.

In the spring of 1857, John Brown was in Connecticut, contracting to buy 1000 pikes, which were intended to be placed in the hands of 1000 liberated slaves.

In the course of his travels to recruit men for the raid, he was back in Kansas in 1858. He left Kansas for the last time in January 1859 with eleven freed slaves whom he and other members of his band conducted on an 82-day trip through frozen wilderness to freedom in Canada, harassed by federal troops during part of the way.

A number of valuable lessons can be learned from this prelude to Harper's Ferry.

When one of the slaves snuck across the Missouri border to inform Brown that he and his family were about to be sold, and wished to take the risk of escaping rather than face separation, Brown "at once decided to go to the rescue." (Quarles, p. 54) Brown and his men made an armed, mounted invasion of Missouri and freed the slaves, at the cost of one dead slave-owner, that very day. As we in the Progressive Labor



Escaped slaves arriving at a station on the Underground Rail Road. Brown, his parents, and many of the participants in the raid had long participated in this mass action against slavery

Party and the Committee Against Racism develop a reputation for attacking racists and racism, we are more frequently approached by others on the job, on campus, or in the neighborhood seeking help. Many of these are golden opportunities to build the revolutionary, anti-racist movement. They must be quickly seized and made part of our overall program, and not fritted away. In many instances, a delay of a day can be a day too long.

The raiders seized "horses, oxen, foodstuffs, bedding and clothing" in addition to the slaves. Brown was convinced that "the masters should bear the costs of transporting their former slaves to freedom." Although he had never read Marx, or, so far as we know, the classical bourgeois economists, he seems to have penetrated through the nonsense of the slave-owners' and bosses' economic utterances—"Where would you have a job if it weren't for us"—to the labor theory of value. "In a larger sense, Brown held that whatever his party took belonged in reality to the slaves, their

labor having produced it." (Quarles, p. 55)

Again and again during the flight to Canada violence against the state apparatus was proven to be the absolutely necessary method of change. "The blacks were armed with rifles . . . and had practiced daily in order to become familiar with their use." "Their last day in Kansas . . . was appropriately marked by a battle between Brown and the federal forces sent by the commandant of Fort Leavenworth (anti-Indian "hero" of many a racist Western movie). The Brown party, aided by some fifteen volunteers from Topeka, defeated a force nearly four times its number and took prisoners." (Quarles, pp. 56-57) These fifteen volunteers from Topeka were but the tip of an iceberg. Large parts of the trip to Canada were essentially public, and the physical and moral support of thousands sapped the morale of federal troops and private slave catchers before they even engaged the escaping slaves and Brown and his men. Under such circumstances, a little determination to

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meet violence with violence went a long way. Samuel Harper, one of the escaped slaves, later told of the experience. "The governor of Kansas, he telegraphed to the United States marshal at Springdale: 'Capture John Brown, dead or alive.' The marshal he answered, 'If I try to capture John Brown it'll be dead, and I'll be the one that'll be dead.'" (DuBois, p. 197)

A federal marshal in Cleveland felt the same way. Following the safe arrival of the eleven slaves in Canada, Brown, John Henry Kagi (who had emerged as Captain Brown's main "lieutenant") and others returned to the U.S. to continue the preparations for Harper's Ferry. March 23, 1859 saw Brown holding a public meeting in Cleveland. Brown "stated that inasmuch as President Buchanan had offered \$250 for his capture, he wanted it known that he would give two dollars and fifty cents for the safe delivery of the body of James Buchanan in any jail of the Free States." Quarles continues,

Brown could thus confidently challenge federal authority in Cleveland because the city was in a highly emotional state over the so-called Oberlin-Wellington rescue. Thirty-seven rescuers of runaway slave John Price were lodged in a Cleveland jail awaiting trial. Sensing the angry mood of many citizens, the federal marshal's office quietly ignored the numerous posters calling for Brown's arrest. (Quarles, p. 61)

A massive, militant anti-slavery movement, powerful enough to markedly limit the actions of the federal government, existed. It had been called into being not by John Brown, but by John Price and the thousands of others like him who escaped from slavery. **John Brown did not march on Harper's Ferry to create a movement, but to put that movement on the offensive, as he had helped to do in a more limited context in Kansas.**

Militarily, the offensive nature of raiding an arsenal inside Virginia, the oldest and most powerful slave state, is readily apparent. Politically, the offensive nature of the raid is often glossed over. Of all the possible methods of obtaining weapons, John Brown and his men choose to capture a federal arsenal. They made a direct onslaught on the armed might of the government of the nation—crime of crimes. **Their purpose could only have been to dramatize that it was precisely this armed might that upheld slavery.**

The federal government tried, with increasing difficulty as it was exposed by its actions, to pretend to be "neutral" between slavery and free labor. It made moderate-sounding statements about the need for "compromise" between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces. Just as today the President and the Labor Department talk about compromise between business and labor, about "mediation" and "impartial arbitration"—when what they really mean is enforcement of capitalism with an iron hand. Similarly, attorneys general, police departments, and the American Civil Liberties Union talk about "protecting the rights of the Nazis and the anti-Nazis, the racists and the anti-racists alike."

At Oxnard, California last summer, at dozens of other demonstrations and attacks against the Ku Klux Klan in the past year, it was only the presence of hundreds of cops that kept the KKK members from being torn apart by anti-racist fighters led by PLP and INCAR. Likewise it was only the power of the federal government to enforce laws north and south, to concentrate force against rebellion and escape, that protected the slaveowners from being engulfed by slaves and abolitionists.

Proof that the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry was seen by the guerrillas as primarily a strategic political target rather than one picked for tactical military reasons is evident from a Convention in Chatham, Ontario that took place May 8-10, 1858, as part of the preparation for the raid. At this Convention a "Provisional Constitution" was adopted, which differed from the U.S. Constitution primarily in that it outlawed slavery. Article 45 of this Provisional Constitution stated that the aim was to reform the government rather than overthrow it, and that the flag "shall be the same that our fathers fought under in the Revolution." (Quarles, p. 48) Many of the blacks at this convention did not agree with Brown's patriotism and fought against this Article, but after prolonged debate, including support by some of the key black leaders, it passed. After this debate, the entire constitution was passed unanimously. **The purpose of the document was to provide a means of governing liberated territory.** So, despite the disclaimer, the delegates were voting to create another country until and unless the United States agreed to abolish slavery. Following the adoption of this Constitution, several of the positions in what

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was to be the new provisional government were filled. John Brown was elected commander-in-chief, and Kagi secretary of war. The raid on Harper's Ferry was not only an attack on the United States Government, it was the beginning of an effort to overthrow the authority of the U.S. government in whatever areas the new power, based on the abolition of slavery, could consolidate its control. Had the guerrillas succeeded in building base areas in and around the Appalachian Mountain chain, they would have been on a collision course with the U.S. government. Instead of the Civil War that did occur less than two years later between a Confederacy of slave owners and the U.S. government there would have been a war between a federal government supporting slavery and slaves and their free black and white allies.

President Buchanan did everything he could to conceal the revolutionary implications of the raid on Harper's Ferry. He made no attempt to prosecute Brown and the other survivors on federal charges. Although their act of attacking a U.S. military installation was certainly a federal crime, he was content for them to be tried in a state court for "treason against the state of Virginia." This helped direct the anger of northern working people against the slave owners rather than against their protector in Washington as well. Buchanan tried to portray Brown and his band as a handful of isolated madmen and the raid on Harper's Ferry as an unexpected and unpredictable bolt out of the blue. He tried to conceal the relationship of the guerrillas and the raid to the slave rebellions, the fugitive slaves, the growing abolitionist movement, the civil war in Kansas. Buchanan wrote,

John Brown was a man violent, lawless and fanatical... His ruling passion was to become the instrument of abolishing slavery, by the strong hand, throughout the slaveholding States. With him, this amounted almost to insanity.... He was so secret in his purposes that he had scarcely any confidants....

But "facts are stubborn things" and the facts forced their way out even through Buchanan's pro-slavery pen:

In the already excited condition of public feeling throughout the South, this raid of John Brown

made a deeper impression on the southern mind against the Union than all former events. Considered merely as the isolated act of a desperate fanatic, it would have had no lasting effect. It was the enthusiastic and permanent approbation of the object of his expedition by the abolitionists of the North, which spread alarm and apprehension throughout the South.... On the day of Brown's execution bells were tolled in many places, cannon fired, and prayers offered up for him as if he were a martyr (from James Buchanan, *Mr. Buchanan's Administration on the Eve of Rebellion*, quoted in Rozwenc, p. 29-30)

John Brown and his men placed their greatest confidence in the most oppressed and most intensely exploited sections of the working class. Today, a disproportionate number of these workers are black, latin and other so-called "minorities," and live in inner-city ghetto areas. Today as 120 years ago with regard to the black slaves, we are constantly told by a chorus of racists that these workers are too oppressed, too tired, too concerned with immediate needs, too stupid and/or too inferior to make revolution. But it was the rebellion and escape of slaves that brought forth the abolitionist movement, and it is the heroic rebellions of these minority and white workers today that has brought forth our revolutionary movement.

The one fact that President Buchanan was too blinded by racism to see, or too gripped by racism to acknowledge, was the reaction of the slaves to the raid on Harper's Ferry. Buchanan wrote that "John Brown, after all his efforts, received no support from the slaves in the neighborhood." In fact, John Brown's raid raised the level of rebellion among the slaves to new heights. His band held hostage a slaveholder, Lewis W. Washington, a greatgrand nephew of George Washington. "On the night Col. Washington was taken, a free black who had been visiting among the slaves had not raised the alarm at Charlestown, leaving its inhabitants to find out about the raid from other sources and several hours later. Train engineer William Wooley reported that before the early morning train which had been halted at Harper's Ferry was permitted to resume its journey some 300 slaves had gathered around the cars, shouting that they wanted their

freedom, having been slaves long enough.

"A great change came over Harper's Ferry slaves immediately after the raid," wrote local resident Jennie Chambers. They were not as reliable as before, often congregating without their masters' knowledge. Another resident of the neighborhood, Presbyterian minister Charles White, wrote on Nov. 10, 1859, that 'several masters have been beaten or attacked by their servants.'... Harper's Ferry whites sought to pretend that the local blacks were indifferent to the raid... But in the weeks after the raid there could be no pretending about the unprecedented number of fires in the country. Night after night, reported a Richmond daily, 'the heavens are illuminated by the lurid glare of burning property.' The torch was put to stock yards, barns, stables, haystacks, and agricultural implements, causing a general suspension of work on some farms. Wheat was threshed earlier than usual, its owners not daring to let it stand until the other fall-work had been done...

"Among those suffering loss of property were three of the jurors who had tried and convicted Brown, among them the foreman of the jury, Walter Shirley," (Quarles, pp. 107-108)

The slaveholders' dread of insurrection increased not only in Harper's Ferry and the rest of Virginia, but throughout the South. "Slave patrols were strengthened, as in Mississippi where a succession of flaming cotton mills hinted ominously at a wave of arson... Slave quarters were carefully searched for firearms. A slave in Clarke County, Va. 'Negro Jerry,' was sentenced to hang for conspiring with slaves to rebel." (Quarles, p. 159)

The Weekly Anglo-African, a black newspaper, pinpointed a source of the slaves' inspiration and the Southern ruling class' hysteria in the multi-racial nature of Brown's squad. "It asserted that Virginia would never have trembled at 17 or 1700 white men in arms, even if they had all been John Browns. It was the 5 black men, armed to the teeth, and the 500,000 black men in their midst 'armed with a quarrel,' who caused the Virginians to shudder in fear." The racist myth of the servile, shuffling black was contradicted by the reality of blacks, shouldering guns. During the Civil War, 5 black men with guns multiplied to 200,000. Osborne P. Anderson, the one black guerrilla who got away, and who then fought in the Civil War, wrote in the

first biography of the anti-slavery leader, "John Brown did not only capture Harper's Ferry for twenty hours, but he held the whole South." (Quarles, pp. 106-107) Perhaps it would have been even more accurate to say that the attackers of Harper's Ferry held the whole nation.

During the next six weeks Brown spent in jail, and following his execution, abolitionists in virtually every city and town in the North held mass meetings attended by a total of tens of thousands, and read about in the press by millions. These meetings were in the main led by the militant abolitionists, many recent converts to the advocacy of violence, and in particular, by blacks. In New York, "on the Sunday following the raid, Henry Highland Garnet told his congregation that it was the duty of every freedom-loving person to affirm the rightness

Five black men armed to the teeth and 500,000 black men... armed with a quarrel...

of the raid....he asserted that the only right slavery had was to die..." (Quarles, p. 117) At another New York meeting, "James Green, a former fugitive, urged his listeners to get a gun and to use it when necessary. Another speaker, J.J. Simons, said that Blacks should follow Brown's example and that this was not to be done by prayer, the best prayer for the slaveholder being powder and shot... Speaking to an all-white audience at Brockett's Bridge, New York, William J. Watkins (a black man)... extolled Brown, calling him a hero... Watkins added that the slaves were destined to be free even though they might have to wade through seas of blood... A gathering of Blacks at the Zion Church in Providence, Rhode Island, although calling attention to their abhorrence of bloodshed and civil war, expressed their full sympathy with their friend Captain

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Brown, proclaiming him a hero... Blacks in Cincinnati... adopted a resolution declaring that the death of Brown and his associates would mark an era in the abolitionist crusade... In Cleveland a well-attended meeting of Negroes passed a resolution declaring that it was the duty of the 'free-men' of the North to go to Charlestown and liberate John Brown." (Quarles, pp. 117-118)

December 2, 1859, when John Brown was hanged, was called "Martyr Day" by blacks. Throughout the North, blacks did not report for work, wore black arm bands, attended mass meetings. Thousands of whites participated as well. In Boston, "the abolitionists held a standing-room-only meeting at Tremont Temple, with 3,000 gathered outside... in Philadelphia... at a mid-morning meeting in National Hall, called by the abolitionists and attracting upwards of 4,000, an address by Robert Purvis brought the meeting to an abrupt close by order of the police." (Quarles, pp. 125-127) Purvis supported Brown to the hilt and advocated armed slave insurrection. "A Philadelphia paper expressed no surprise that blacks should revere John Brown but was shocked and bewildered 'that placid and pleasant looking white women and white men should display any other emotion than loathing and terror at a conspiracy for butchery and devastation' such as Brown had engineered." (Quarles, pp. 127-128)

Quarles sums up the results of all those mass meetings this way: "Among abolitionists their dislike of violence, previously one of their proudest boasts, now yielded to their stronger desire to see slavery brought low. Even before Brown went to the gallows, William Lloyd Garrison had done an about-face on pacifism. 'Brand that man as a hypocrite and dastard, who, in one breath, exalts the deed of Washington and Warren, and in the next, denounces Nat Turner as a monster for refusing longer to wear the yoke and be driven under the lash.'" (Quarles, p. 152)

"Abolitionist literature, hitherto more reflective than incendiary, reflected this mood of physical force. In the spring of 1860, the American Anti-Slavery Society published a thirty-six page tract, 'An Account of Some of the Principal Slave Insurrections... During the Past Two Centuries.' In its December 1859 issue, The Anglo-African Magazine reprinted

'The Confessions of Nat Turner,' prefacing it with an editorial comparing Turner's methods with those of John Brown. Thomas Wentworth Higginson wrote an article on conspirator Denmark Vesey (a freed slave) and another insurrectionist, Nat Turner (a slave) both accounts appearing in the sedate pages of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Higginson's sketch on Turner asserted that his plan and that of John Brown were both 'deliberately matured; each was in its way practicable.'" (Quarles, p. 153)

Support for John Brown was not limited to articles and mass meetings. "As John Brown waited in his cell for hanging on December 2, 1859," Rev. Higginson "was organizing an expeditionary force to storm the jail at Charlestown, Virginia and rescue him. At the same time, Lysander Spooner, prominent Boston attorney, who had called off his own plan for invasion of the South when he heard of John Brown's, was enlisting men and money to kidnap at pistol point Gov. Henry A. Wise of Virginia and hold him hostage... his life to be taken if John Brown were executed... In Ohio's Ashtabula County, where a secret anti-slavery, semi-military organization had been organized by John Brown, his eldest son, and others, scores were under arms determined to protect from arrest those leading citizens of their community who had known of John Brown's invasion or helped prepare for it. In Iowa at Springdale, where John Brown's company had drilled, an armed organization similar to that in Ashtabula was patrolling the roads, its members intent on preventing the arrest of any of its citizens... In Concord, Massachusetts... Franklin B. Sanborn, another who had helped plot and finance the invasion... was soon resisting the arrest of federal marshals long enough and stoutly enough to permit cultured Concord to raise a mob that rescued him... In New York, German veterans of the Revolution of 1848, meeting on November 22, agreed to join with others from Boston and Ohio in invading Charlestown with bombs and hand grenades on the day of the execution to rescue Brown as he approached the gallows guarded by fifteen hundred federal and Virginia troops." (Boyer, pp. 16-17)

John Brown rejected the rescue plans. To advance the anti-slavery cause, he said, "I am worth now infinitely more to die than to live." The realization that slavery could not be limited, but had to



Harper's Ferry as it appeared to Brown from the Maryland side of the river. Inset shows the entrance to the Arsenal area, with the corner of the engine house in the right foreground.

be ended, and that the slave owners would not give up their class position, but had to have their power violently destroyed, radiated from the jail in Charlestown throughout the North, beyond the ranks of the abolitionist movement. "Northern workers held mass meetings to express sympathy for John Brown. In Ohio, the Social Working Men's Association of Cincinnati, made up of many German Marxists, drew up a set of resolutions which declared: "The act of John Brown has powerfully contributed to bring out the hidden consciousness of the majority of the people.'" (P.S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the U.S.*, p. 289)

Transforming the opinions of the masses had been anticipated by Brown, and was part of the reason he chose to strike at the Federal Arsenal. Frederick Douglass, explaining why he had originally planned to participate in the raid and then declined, wrote of a conversation he had with John Brown two months before the assault: "Brown for Harper's Ferry and I against it—he for striking a blow that should instantly arouse the country, and I for the policy of gradually and unaccountably drawing off the slaves to the mountains, as at first suggested

and proposed by him." (quoted in Quarles, pp. 77)

Why does one act of violence get a mass response, while another only a mass audience? What made the ghetto rebellions of the 1960's or the raid on Harper's Ferry different from the recent killings of politicians and business executives by German and Italian terrorists and the bank hold-up by Patricia Hearst and the Symbionese Liberation "Army"? Precisely that one was intimately connected with and grew out of the mass movement, and therefore responded to the deep needs of the masses, while the others were planned and executed by people who stood apart from the mass movement, had no confidence in the masses being able to develop a political understanding, and therefore ended up being looked at by the masses as another side show in the bosses' circus of freaks. The strategy of terrorism, for all its seeming militancy, is essentially a liberal one because it relies on scaring the bosses into reforms within capitalism rather than developing a mass movement capable of wiping out the bosses with socialist revolution. Terrorism, like all forms of liberalism within the movement, tends to prevent the masses

JOHN BROWN

from adopting a strategy of mass revolutionary violence. It is based on the idea that someone else—secret conspirators—will kill a few bosses and scare the rest.

This was not John Brown's plan. He intended the attack by a few to be the prelude to a mass war on slavery by thousands of slaves and abolitionists. In a different form that is what happened.

John Brown was a conspirator second, and a public advocate of violence against slavery first. He was a conspirator in the sense that he tried to ensure that only those who needed to know, the direct participants, were aware of the time and place of the raid on Harper's Ferry or the descent on the Swamp of the Swan or the battle at Black Jack. If you are serious about winning, and not suicidal, why tell the enemy the tactical details? But as to the overall strategy of attacking slavery with violence, and the overall politics of destroying slavery, John Brown told all those who needed to know—the entire working class, or, at any rate, all those he could reach. One reason they needed to know is that without their help the plan could not succeed. Boyer writes,

It was because much of the North was imbued with a war psychology that John Brown by 1859 could publicly disclose his purpose of attacking the South's slavery by force of arms, asking and receiving contributions to bring his plan into actuality at a good many public meetings, some of which were widely attended. If his plot was a conspiracy, and it was one of the strangest in American annals, it was also perhaps the most public conspiracy in the history of the United States. In whole communities, from Ohio to Iowa to Massachusetts, his purpose was general knowledge months before he attacked Harper's Ferry, Virginia with his little army of white and black.

"The most public conspiracy in the history of the United States"—what an excellent description of the revolutionary process. Do we in PLP tell the ruling class the identity of our non-public members? Did we announce to the Chicago police in advance that we were going to invade Nazi Headquarters in Marquette Park in April, 1978? On the other hand, we have made it clear for over fifteen years now in every speech, in every

issue of our newspaper, that we are planning a crime against capitalism—the overthrow of the United States government. We have, in one form or another, from tens of thousands of private conversations to tens of millions of leaflets, announced this plan to millions of workers and requested their help, without which we cannot succeed.

The message of Harper's Ferry, the need for mass violence to destroy slavery, was clearest to those in the North who were closest to the experience of enslavement—to blacks. Prior to the Civil War, Blacks by and large did not celebrate the Fourth of July, feeling that the U.S.A. was not "their" country. Their big public holiday was August 1, the day the British Act of Parliament freeing the slaves in the West Indies went into effect in 1834. On the first August 1 following Harper's Ferry, in 1860, the turnout in many cities was bigger and more militant than before, and was characterized by a new feature—organized squads of blacks bearing arms. Blacks had been fighting for the right to enlist in a number of state militias, but had been barred by racism.

But the message of Harper's Ferry was by no means restricted to blacks. When the Civil War broke out less than two years later hundreds of thousands of whites, including entire union locals, answered the call for volunteers. A large number, although perhaps not a majority, were consciously motivated by hatred of slavery and of racism. From Harper's Ferry, "the people of the North learned, as little else could have taught them, that the structure of slavery remained intact primarily through the power of the whip, the gun and the gallows and that when these were gone there was little else left.... It was then that many in the North realized that the issue of slavery and freedom would be decided by the weapons the South had chosen. The battle at Harper's Ferry demonstrated what those weapons were" (Ruchames, p. 39).

Things are easier to see in retrospect than while they are happening. We in PLP say that capitalism, if not dead, is dying. True, the death throes of the capitalist system, like those of the harpooned whale, can and do kill people. Nevertheless, they mark the end of the life of the organism. Relatively few people, although the number grows daily, understand that capitalism is in its final agony. In 1859, relatively few understood that

slavery was on the verge of extinction. By 1861 it was clear to millions, by 1863 to millions more, and by 1865 chattel slavery was gone. Wendell Phillips, one of the leaders of the abolitionist movement, spoke at the burial of John Brown in North Elba, New York, on Dec. 8, 1859. It appeared that the slave power was putting John Brown in his grave, but, said Phillips:

He has abolished slavery in Virginia. You may say this is too much. Our neighbors are the last men we know. The hours that pass us are the ones we appreciate the least... History will date Virginia Emancipation from Harper's Ferry. True, the slave is still there. So, when the tempest uproots a pine on your hills, it looks green for months—a year or two. Still, it is timber, not a tree.

**We are planning
a crime against
capitalism—
the overthrow of
the U.S. government.**

John Brown has loosened the roots of the slave system; it only breathes—it does not live,—hereafter.

**MULTI-RACIAL UNITY IS ESSENTIAL
TO WORKING-CLASS VICTORY**

The men who "abolished slavery" lived on a rented farm on the Chambersburg—Harper's Ferry Road until the evening of October 16, 1859 when they started on the five mile walk to the federal arsenal. Their average age was 25. We list them on p. 17. We include only those who marched on Harper's Ferry bearing arms. If we were to include the women who were at the Kennedy Farm House until the last moment, helping to prepare ammunition, equipment and meals, and serving as camouflage; if we included those who helped to recruit the

guerrillas and those who donated money for weapons; and if we included the thousands who aided directly and indirectly in building the movement to abolish slavery, the list of names alone would be longer than this magazine. It would include blacks and whites, chattel slaves and wage slaves, native Americans who helped the Brown family in Kansas, English cotton workers who fought slavery against their immediate economic interests, and workers born in every country on earth. To itemize each one's important contributions to the movement would take an encyclopedia.

Osborn Perry Anderson, one of the black members of the company, described the atmosphere at the Kennedy Farm prior to the raid in the first biography of John Brown; *A Voice From Harper's Ferry*, published in 1861:

A more earnest, fearless, determined company of men it would be difficult to get together... There was no milk and water sentimentality—no offensive contempt for the negro, while working in his cause; the pulsations of each and every heart beat in harmony for the suffering and pleading slave. I thank God that I have been permitted to realize to its furthest, fullest extent, the moral, mental, physical, social harmony of an Anti-Slavery family, carrying out to the letter the principles of its antetype, the Anti-Slavery cause. In John Brown's house, and in John Brown's presence, men from widely different parts of the continent met and united into one company, wherein no hateful prejudice dared intrude its ugly self—no ghost of a distinction found space to enter. (quoted in Ruchames, p. 249)

So high a level of multi-racial unity did not develop overnight. The Brown family was at a revival meeting in the Congregational Church in Hudson, Ohio in 1838 when they noticed that the few blacks present were given seats in the rear, by the stove. They invited the blacks to sit in their family pew, moving to the seats in the rear to make room, and sharply raising the issue of racism within the church. (Quarles, p. 17) In 1848-1849 the Brown's were living in North Elba, N.Y., in a community largely

composed of free blacks, including run-away slaves.

Brown took the horrors of slavery personally. In a letter to his wife after a long absence, he wrote that "his own mounting joy at the prospect of rejoining his family...made him even more sensitive to the lot of the 'vast number' of slaves who experienced separation from their loved ones with almost no hope of ever seeing them again." (Quarles, p. 18) While he was meeting with blacks in Springfield, Ohio to form the League of Gileadites, some of them told Brown they were unable to sleep for fear of their wives or children being kidnapped under the Fugitive Slave Law. In another letter to his wife Mary, Brown wrote, "I want all my family to imagine themselves in that same dreadful condition." (Quarles, p. 25)

Within the anti-slavery movement in Kansas, the Browns stood for making the Territory one of multi-racial unity. They were in a minority among the settlers, most of whom wanted no blacks in Kansas, slave or free.

John Brown's anti-racism with regard to black Americans was part of his general conviction that all oppressed people are more the same than different. Here is an account from an interview he had with a journalist when his company was camped on the Wakarusa River in Kansas in July, 1856, revealing the reporter's racist fantasies about Roman slaves and blacks as well as Brown's reply:

He then went on to tell me of Spartacus and his servile war, and was evidently familiar with every step in the career of the great gladiator. I reminded him that Spartacus and Roman slaves were warlike people in the country from which they were taken, and were trained to arms in the arena, in which they slew or were slain, and that the movement was crushed when the Roman Legions were concentrated against it. The negroes were a peaceful, domestic, inoffensive race. In all their sufferings they seemed to be incapable of resentment or reprisal.

'You have not studied them right,' he said, 'and you have not studied them long enough. Human nature is the same everywhere.' (W.A. Phillips, *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec. 1879, quoted in Ruchames, p. 226)

Struggle against exploitation is the central aspect of the culture of all nationalities. To those who tell us out of the most uninformed prejudice, that whites don't fight back, or blacks, or Cubans, or Mexicans, or Puerto Ricans, or Dominicans, or Haitians, or Jews, or some other group, or workers in general, we can think of no better answer than to rely on the stubborn facts of history that show that **struggle is universal**, and to reply with John Brown, "You have not studied them right and you have not studied them long enough. Human nature is the same everywhere." The slave-owners, with all their talk of the "docile" blacks, knew this well. They were petrified of "outside agitators" and patrolled all night with dogs and guns to keep 'Yankees' and abolitionist pamphlets and newspapers away from their slaves. But what could a handful of abolitionists and their ideas do without the four million slaves? A Virginia legislator spoke in 1832 of the terrifying "suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed could be acted over at any time and in any place, that the materials for it were spread throughout the land and always ready for a like explosion." (Litwack, p. 62)

Whenever the bosses talk about "outside agitators" what they are really afraid of are internal contradictions. Today, the "outside agitators" are the communists of the PLP, fighting to abolish capitalism. The bosses assure us that the residents of the ghettos—this even after the rebellions of the '60's—are too ground down by poverty, too alienated to fight back collectively—yet the bosses organize cops, preachers, and black nationalists to try to snuff out the slightest communist spark in the ghetto. What are they afraid of? The bosses assure us that the auto workers have it too good, are too happy, to get together and fight back. They tell us that the workers hate communism. Yet the bosses organize cops, plant security, KKKers, black nationalists, and, most especially, union hacks to try to stop communists in the plants, to try to instantly fire them when they are discovered. What are they afraid of?

Multi-racial unity developed over a period of years among black and white militant abolitionists as they worked with and got to know each other, along with their families and friends. As we mentioned, the first blacks John Brown met, when he was a small child, were



Slave rebellions struck fear into the hearts of the slave-owners. Above is Nat Turner, leader of one of the most important U.S. slave rebellions. The slave-owners were well aware of the possible consequences for their system.

escaping slaves who stayed over at his house. In the nineteenth century black people staying in the homes of white people as overnight guests or vice versa, was even more unusual than it is today. Far from being woven into the "natural" fabric of society, it more often than not required the tearing of that fabric, such as the act of escaping from slavery. Similarly, today, one of the main ways in which people of different "races" and cultural backgrounds are able to overcome the "natural" segregation of capitalist society and become friends is through joining together to fight the mutual class enemy. **Racist and nationalist ideas cannot be overcome primarily inside one's head. It requires material change in the way one lives.** Thus the importance of building the International Committee Against Racism, and having INCAR chapters lead workers in multi-racial unity against the boss.

With the smashing of slavery and the development of large scale industry, in order to super-exploit black and latin workers at the key point of production,

U.S. capitalism has been forced to create a contradiction between segregation in housing and integration within the factory, hospital, office or campus. The bosses try to bring segregation into the factory too, in the form of racist job classification and reliance on different types of bourgeois culture to keep the workers apart (e.g., Soul v. Country Music). Nevertheless, the workers rub shoulders every day and become acquainted. It is the job of class conscious workers in INCAR and PLP to develop acquaintance into friendship.

Can such multi-racial working-class unity grow in the midst of a society permeated by racism? Then, as now, society was racist to the core, with most of the white workers accepting a good part of the ruling class's racist ideology. But, operating under the surface were developments that required the workers to **either** move toward anti-racist thoughts and actions, **or** suffer severe economic and social setbacks. Both of these possi-

bilities were open, but staying still was not. The farmers and workers who had picked up the gun to keep slaves out of Kansas, despite their racist ideas, had started a war that could not be ended without the abolition of slavery. John Brown's identification with the anguish of the slave and his hatred of the slaveowner had a basis in objective class interest. Karl Marx explained why in articles for the *Vienna Presse*, Oct. 25, 1861 and Nov. 7, 1861:

"The cultivation of the Southern export articles, cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc., carried on by slaves, is only remunerative as long as it is conducted with large gangs of slaves, on a mass scale and on wide expanses of a naturally fertile soil, that requires only simple labor. Intensive cultivation, which depends less on fertility of the soil than on investment of capital, intelligence and energy of labor, is contrary to the nature of slavery. Hence the rapid transformation of states like Maryland and Virginia, which formerly employed slaves on the production of export articles, into states which raised slaves in order to export these slaves into the deep South.

"In the Secessionist Congress at Montgomery, Senator Toombs, one of the spokesmen of the South, has strikingly formulated the economic law that commands the constant expansion of the territory of slavery. "In fifteen years more," said he, "without a great increase in slave territory, either the slaves must be permitted to flee from the whites, or the whites must flee from the slaves." Marx explained why the war had to be fought to a conclusion without compromise on the issue of slavery:

"With the relinquishment of its plans of conquest the Southern Confederacy would relinquish its capacity to live and the purpose of secession. Secession, indeed, only took place because within the Union the transformation of the border states and Territories into slave states seemed no longer attainable. On the other hand, with a peaceful cession of the contested territory to the Southern Confederacy the North would surrender to the slave republic more than three-quarters of the entire territory of the United States.

"Thus there would in fact take place, not a dissolution of the Union, but a reorganization of it, a reorganization on the basis of slavery, under the recognized control of the slaveholding oligarchy.

In the Northern states, where Negro slavery is in practice unworkable, the white working class would gradually be forced down to the level of helotry. This would accord with the loudly proclaimed principle that only certain races are capable of freedom, and as the actual labor is the lot of the Negro in the South, so in the North it is the lot of the German and the Irishman, or their direct descendants.

The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, between the system of slavery and the system of free labor. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other." (Marx, *Civil War*, pp. 67-68)

Just as slavery had to expand or die, wage-slavery must expand or die. As capitalists compete domestically and internationally, they increase investment in machinery to lower the cost of production. But rate of profit is the surplus value extracted from labor divided by the total invested. Therefore, as investment in machinery increases, the rate of profit must decrease. Faced with this declining rate of profit (even with absolute profits at record heights) the capitalist turns to his workers to squeeze out more surplus. Thus, decline in real wages, cutbacks in schools, hospitals, etc., stepped up racist attacks on black and latin workers to justify lower wages and living conditions, union busting. Internationally, stepped-up competition between imperialists for control of Africa, Asia and Latin America for the super-low wages that are paid to workers there, and stepped-up fights for world markets to sell the flood of products created by the more advanced machinery but which the workers increasingly cannot afford to buy back.

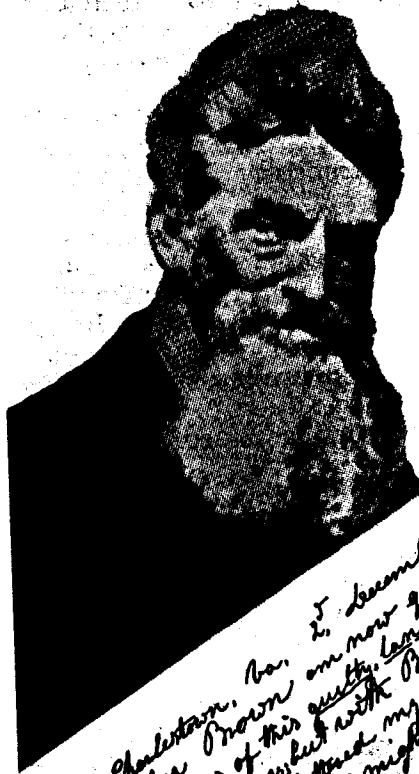
These developments are leading the U.S. ruling class today closer and closer to war with their chief imperialist rival, the Soviet Union, and closer and closer to the fascism within the country required to maximize profit and to force the working class to support and fight that war. War and fascism will mean the death of millions of working people and their families, and qualitatively increased suffering for millions more. Relatively comfortable, higher-paid workers will be plunged into conditions similar to those already existing in ghettos such as the South Bronx or Harlem or in the Watts

area of Los Angeles. Appeals by the bosses to race hatred, patriotism, nationalism and anti-communism will be used to win the workers to accept wholesale slaughter and degradation. Only multi-racial unity and communist leadership can transform severe economic and social set-back via socialist revolution, into working-class victory. Both possibilities are open to the workers, but staying still is not.

Objective political-economic processes determine the limits of the potential development of the working class. The subjective efforts of the workers themselves determine their actual developments within those limits. In the States that became the Confederacy, anti-slavery forces among white farmers and workers had been developing as the crisis of slavery deepened. In 1857, the same year as the Dred Scott decision, Hinton Rowan Helper's *The Impending Crisis of the South* was published. Helper, a non-slave holding North Carolinian, "exploited class divisions and struck at white solidarity by condemning slavery as an economic curse for the plain folk of the South." (Fehrenbacher, p. 527) But the anti-slavery forces were not strong enough to withstand the attacks of the secessionists, and were temporarily silenced. 270,000 white southerners died fighting to maintain the slave owners' system (90,000 in battle, 180,000 from disease), and several hundred thousand more were injured. Most of them never owned a slave. Of the one and a half million heads of families in the South in 1860, "only about one-fourth... owned any slaves at all, and of these as estimated 60 percent owned no more than five." (Thomas, p. 6) "In 1860 only about 2,300 people owned as many as 100 slaves and extensive acreage." (ibid.)

Racism propelled these white workers and farmers to their deaths on behalf of the plantation owners who exploited them as well as enslaving their black fellow workers. The present U.S. ruling class used racism to send 50,000 U.S. workers to their deaths, and to the murder of one million Vietnamese, as recently as seven years ago. They plan to use racism to line up workers to put down strikes and rebellions here, and to fight our fellow workers, be they blacks in South Africa, arabs in Saudi Arabia, or Russians in Europe.

As the Civil War ground on for five years, and the standard of living in the Confederacy sharply declined with losses



*Charleston, Va. 5 Decemler 1859.
John Brown on now quite certain that
the crimes of this guilty land will never be
punged away, but with blood I had as I now
think, vainly, planned myself that without any
much bloodshed, it might be done*

in battle and a tightening blockade, class struggle intensified. A wave of food riots (largely led by women) broke out in Southern cities. The Southern politicians' answer—in addition to calling the cops—was, Are you with us, or with the slave-loving Yankees? Racism proved stronger than hunger, and the riots were suppressed without leading to the answer to that question that would have reflected class interest—We are with the slaves, against you! A series of strikes was also defeated primarily by racism, such as this one in one of the Confederacy's few remaining growth industries:

The classic example of the effect of black labor upon white occurred in a Richmond cemetery in August 1864. One morning a crew of white gravediggers went on strike against the city in the hopes of getting higher wages. Almost immediately the municipal authorities hired a crew of blacks to dig the graves. When the white gravediggers learned of their replacement, they returned to the cemetery, drove the blacks away, and

resumed digging graves. The black men had broken the strike and then absorbed the anger of the white workers, all within a single day. (Thomas, p. 236)

By August 1864 Richmond and nearby Petersburg were confronted by 100,000 troops of the Army of the Potomac. The city was to fall after an eight-month siege in which everybody who could be drafted was sent to man the fortifications. Thousands were killed. Racism caused these cemetery workers actually to dig their own graves, instead of to fulfill the historic role of the workers as "the gravediggers of the bourgeoisie."

On the other hand, the working people who joined the Union Army including the approximately equal number that died from wounds and disease, provided the armed power that smashed slavery and advanced the interests of the working class. As Marx wrote in *Capital*,

In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hour's agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California. The General Congress of Labour at Baltimore (August 16th, 1866) declared: 'The first and great necessity of the present, to free the labour of this country from capitalistic slavery, is the passing of a law by which eight hours shall be the normal working day in all States of the American Union. We are resolved to put forth all our strength until this glorious result is obtained.' (*Capital*, Vol. I., p. 301)

After decades of struggle, including the massacre of workers in 1886 at Haymarket Square in Chicago that resulted in our international working-class holiday May Day, the eight hour day was finally won for most workers in this century. But, many workers must work overtime or two jobs to survive, and the typical family with the husband working an eight-hour job and the wife working at home has been replaced by a typical

family in which both husband and wife work eight-hour jobs and at home. Furthermore, although the Civil War resulted in emancipation of the slaves, after a brief period of "black reconstruction" it resulted in about 80 years of crude Jim Crow segregation and discrimination and the continuation to this very day of social and economic second-class status for blacks.

What happened? Did the union locals that volunteered en masse make a mistake? Did the 187,000 blacks who enlisted in the Union Army fight and die in vain?

We have seen that the political-economic laws of slavery required that the war end with the Union either all slave or all free. How was this reality grasped by the Union leadership, and how did this effect the outcome?

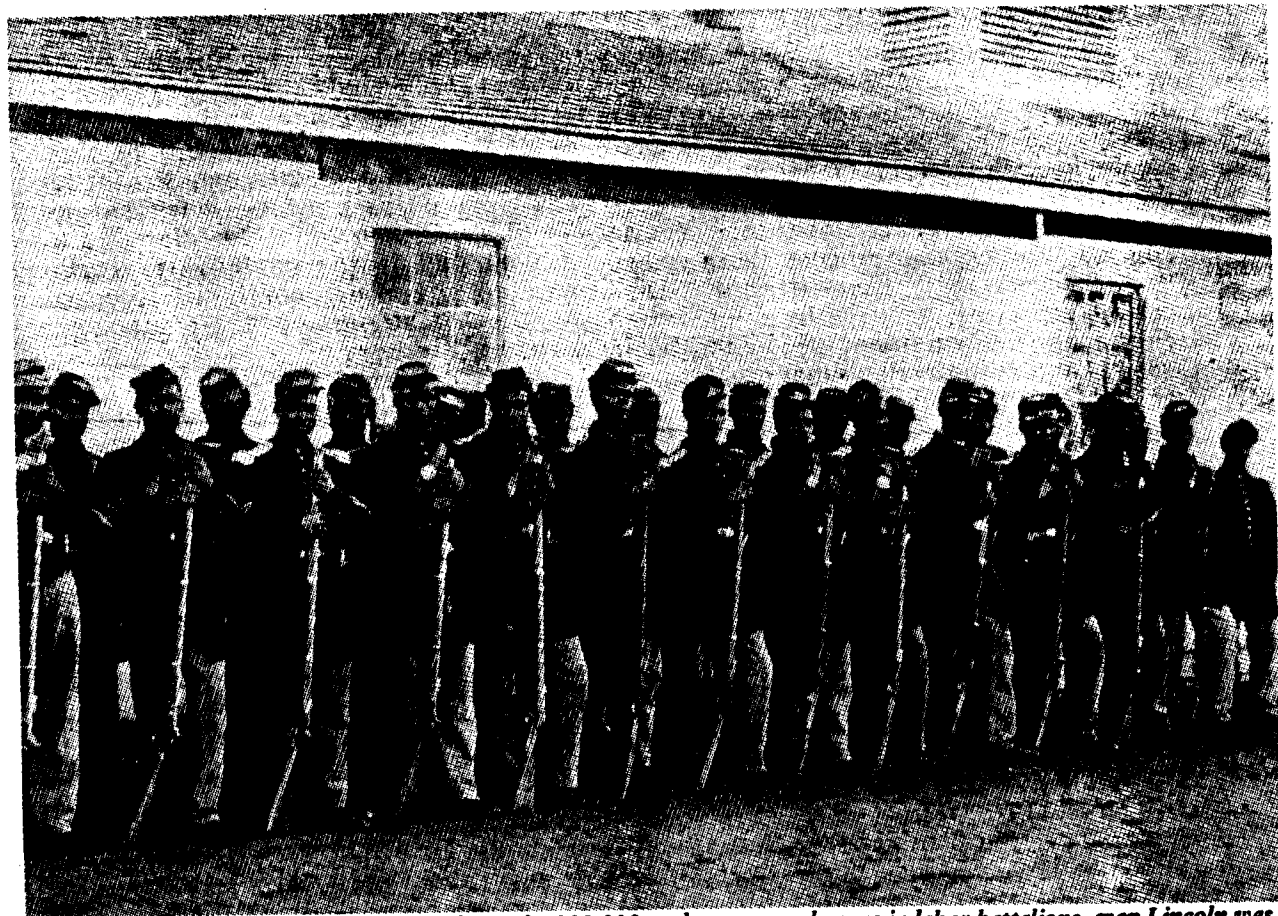
Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States from the beginning of the Civil War until his assassination a few days after the South's surrender. The need to abolish slavery to save the Union was grasped by Lincoln with the greatest reluctance.

Many times during his political career, most notably during the debates with Douglas in 1858, Lincoln openly stated his belief in the inferiority of the Negro. He never retracted these statements.

By his famous phrase "a house divided against itself cannot stand" Lincoln took great pains to explain that he meant the eventual, gradual elimination of slavery, most likely with cash compensation paid to the slave owners for their "property," which would then most likely be disposed of by shipment "back to Africa."

On what we have seen to be the key dividing line between racists and anti-racists, the question of violence, Lincoln showed where he stood in a campaign speech at Cooper Union in New York City in 1860: "Old John Brown has been executed for treason against a state. We cannot object, even though he agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong. That cannot excuse violence, bloodshed and treason." (quoted in Gold, p. 59)

Not only was slavery to be ended gradually and far in the future and at a profit—it was to be ended voluntarily! The Republican platform of 1860 pledged no interference by the national government in the internal concerns of States. Under pressure from secession, the Republicans positively grovelled before



Black troops of the Union Army. With nearly 200,000 under arms and more in labor battalions, even Lincoln was forced to admit their crucial role in the winning of the Civil War.

the slave owners:

A proposal to amend the Constitution in the direction of a perpetual commitment to the sanctity of slave property in states as opposed to territories where it then existed came from the special House committee on sectional conciliation....By March, 1861, the proposed amendment had passed through Congress. It reached the White House in time for Lincoln to refer to it in his inaugural address. Such a restriction on Congress's power was already 'implied constitutional law,' Lincoln said. Therefore, he could not object 'to its being made express, and irrevocable.' (Hyman, p. 46-47) emphasis ours except for 'states.'

This amendment was on the verge of final approval by Lincoln, but the Southern leaders would not give up their war plans in return for its passage.

Even with the war well underway, Lincoln kept trying for a compromise with slavery. In 1861 Major General

John Charles Fremont, (who had been the first Republican nominee for President, in the election of 1856) issued a military order emancipating the slaves in Missouri. General David Hunter likewise emancipated the slaves on islands off the Georgia Coast, Lincoln countermanded both of these orders. Even northern, free Blacks who fought to join the Union Army in 1861 were denied admission. To "make it perfectly clear" where he stood on slavery and racism, Lincoln appointed George McClellan to be commander of the Union Armies. This General, in Nov., 1861, wrote, to one of his political backers,

Help me to dodge the n....r—we want nothing to do with him. I am fighting to preserve the integrity of the Union and the power of the government—on no other issue. To gain that end we cannot afford to mix up the negro question—it must be incidental and subsidiary. The President is perfectly honest and is really sound on the n....r question. I will answer for it now that things go right with him (quoted

in Nevins, p. 304)

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued Sept. 22, 1862 and taking effect Jan. 1, 1863 freed slaves only in rebel states, and not those in Union-controlled Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland and Washington, D.C. That is, it "freed the slaves where the U.S. government was not in control, and refused to free them where it was in control." Even after that Lincoln "still flirted with colonization chimeras." (Hyman, p. 265) Finally, in 1864, Lincoln defended emancipation and enlistment of black troops, against even more overt racists, thus:

There are now in the service of the United States near two hundred thousand able-bodied colored men, most of them under arms, defending and acquiring Union territory Abandon all the posts now garrisoned by Black men; take two hundred thousand men from our side and put them into the Battlefield or cornfield against us, and we would be compelled to abandon the war in three weeks. (quoted in Foner, p. 320)

Production by slavery was the strength of the South, but, once multi-racial unity was achieved, it was the Achilles heel of the South. Super-exploitation of blacks, latins, asians, native Americans is the strength of U.S. capitalism, but once multi-racial unity is achieved, it is the Achilles heel of U.S. capitalism. As is clear from the process by which Lincoln was dragged, kicking and screaming racist imprecations, into becoming the "Great Emancipator" in order to defeat the South, the strength of multi-racial unity is an objective fact, independent of the propaganda, agitation and struggle led by the Abolitionists or by the International Committee Against Racism.

Lincoln did not go through a moral change during the Civil War. He was a racist through and through, from beginning to end. The northern ruling class had been split in 1860 into at least three groups, all in relative agreement on maintaining the Union but in relative disagreement on the question of slavery. All three looked forward to super-exploiting black labor in one form or another after the war. As President, Lincoln had the job of arranging compromises between these factions so that the entire Northern ruling class could avoid defeat at the hands of the Slave Power. The abolition of slavery emerged during the war as the only way to achieve

this end, at which point the big bankers and their moderate republican representatives moved to make this program their own. Inherently conservative, they looked south to see who they could rely on to keep the freed slaves and the increasingly rebellious white workers down. They could see only—the slave owners. And so, as junior partners to Northern capital, the South continued to be ruled by the aristocrats of the plantation and urban hilltop:

As William B. Hesseltine observes, "the men who led the Confederacy were still the leaders of the Southern people" after Appomattox. (Thomas, p. 232, footnote quoting Hesseltine, *Confederate Leaders in the New South*.)

This was hardly the intention of the rank and file of the union army, black or white. Even the relatively racist section of the white troops had no love for the Southern aristocrats, who they blamed for the deaths of their comrades and their own danger and discomfort. "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree" was one of the most popular verses of the John Brown song. The 187,000 black troops fought heroically to destroy slavery and racism. A disproportionate number of them—some 68,000—died. Hundreds of thousands of white troops—a large minority—were anti-slavery and anti-racist by the end of the war. But they had not broken their ties to the racist Lincoln administration and to the capitalist class it represented. Their movement was not an "independent movement of the workers" to use Marx's phrase—it had failed to substitute the red flag for the red, white and blue. Such an independent movement was of course more difficult to build until industrial capitalism, which emerged as the dominant force in the U.S. from the civil war, became more developed along with a massive industrial proletariat.

At any rate, if we are to note this weakness in the rank and file of the union army, and in John Brown and his men, we must note it all the more among the German Marxists who had come to the U.S. in 1848 and participated in the war under Lincoln's leadership (e.g., General Wedemeyer) and in Marx himself, who wrote several letters to Lincoln offering friendly advice, rather than attacking Lincoln for the class enemy of the workers that he was. The workers' movement for the eight hour day that emerged from the Civil War was of great historic im-

portance, but to view it as Marx and the First International did, along with the workers themselves, as "the first and great necessity of the present to free the labor of this country from capitalistic slavery" was, in retrospect, an error. The first necessity for a truly independent movement of the workers was then and is now the advocacy of socialist revolution, because it is the smashing of the capitalist class that will make the working class "independent." The second necessity, without which the first necessity cannot exist, was then and is now an all-out attack on racism. The opposite of racism is proletarian internationalism: Workers of the world, unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains, and a world to win—a socialist world, "independent" of the bosses. Without an all-out attack on racism, we go the way of the Richmond cemetery workers—we dig our own grave.

Lincoln was a racist through and through from beginning to end.

But John Brown and his men, and the abolitionist movement, and the early Marxists, and the black and white union troops, did not fight and die in vain. We stand on their shoulders, learning (if we will take the trouble) indispensable lessons from their strengths and weaknesses. They negated chattel slavery, which led to the gigantic growth and development of wage slavery and to the monopoly capitalism of today. But dialectical materialism teaches us that change continues, that the end of one process is but the beginning of another. We will negate modern wage slavery with socialist revolution—the negation of the negation.

The present ruling class, having incorporated the slave owners as junior partners, absorbed some of their culture. They look back fondly to the "good old

days on the plantation, sipping mint juleps on the veranda," the stench of the branding iron on the skin of the slave masked by the scent of magnolias. John Brown remains convicted of murder and treason. Recently, the U.S. Congress granted posthumous amnesty to Robert E. Lee, who violated his oath of allegiance as a U.S. Army officer and led a war that inflicted 300,000 deaths on the U.S. army. Not that Lee was ever inconvenienced even while alive. In return for collaborating with the northern ruling class after the war, he was made president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) in Lexington, Va. Countless streets, avenues, circles and squares in the South are named for Lee and Jefferson Davis, whose birthdays continue to be celebrated as legal holidays in the States of the Confederacy.

The present main political representative of the U.S. ruling class, Jimmy KKKarter, is an ardent waver of the Confederate Stars and Bars, although of course all his racist statements are made through a grin:

The first unquestionably Southern president of the United States since 1865 (stated) that his favorite motion picture was *Gone With the Wind*. Jimmy Carter then added that he may have seen a 'different version' of the film in his native Georgia. 'My favorite scene was the burning of Schenectady, N.Y., and President Grant surrendering to Robert E. Lee.' (Thomas, p. 306. The quote from Carter is from *Newsweek*, Nov. 28, 1977, p. 85)

Elements of the struggle against slavery are retained in our communist movement. We retain John Brown's open advocacy of mass violence to smash racism. We retain multi-racial unity throughout rank-and-file and leadership. We retain the taking of the political and military offensive against the state apparatus. We incorporate these qualities within scientific socialism: a dialectical materialist philosophy, a democratic centralist party, proletarian internationalism, relying on the working class to destroy capitalism and build a classless society.

Let Jimmy Carter sit in his auditorium and rerun racist films. Workers, soldiers, sailors, students are joining INCAR, a mass, multi-racial organiza-

HANG KILLER COPS!

Thursday's murder of 26 year old Louis Bass by the police is not an isolated incident of police terror. It is one of the many examples that minority communities have witnessed in the past two years. In Brooklyn alone, it was Randy Evans, last summer Arthur Miller, on Thursday, Louis Bass. In light of this record who would you say should be getting bullet-proof vests, cops who carry guns or the average working person?

Cops are well known licensed killers for the U.S. bosses. In light of the staggering U.S. system which is in an economic crises-recession and is preparing for world war against its chief competitor, the Soviet Union, the cops are serving the same purpose as the KKK. They as well as the KKK are needed to create an atmosphere of terror in an attempt to weaken the unity of the working class.

For NYC workers police terror is not unlike the violence of racist hospital and school closings, the deterioration of our living conditions, racist slave conditions in NY's main industry-garment which employs thousands of black and latin workers and massive unemployment. We must take the offensive against cops-KKK-KOON terror. The Committee Against Racism along with the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party have been in the lead against racist attacks whether be the cops in Brooklyn or the Klan in Tupelo, Miss. Our protection lies not even in getting bullet-proof vests but in joining in the mass multi-racial movement being built by the Committee Against Racism. WE MUST DISPEL THE ILLUSION THAT COPS ARE HERE TO PROTECT US. They are not here to defend us any more than police victims of whatever party or nationalist forces. WE MUST RELY ON OUR CLASS- THE WORKING CLASS- BLACK, LATIN, ASIAN WHITE. DEATH TO KILLER COPS! BUILD MULTI-RACIAL UNITY! JOIN CAR! CELEBRATE THE 120th ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN BROWN'S RAID IN HARPER'S FERRY!

For information call 989-5499.

BUILD MULTI-RACIAL UNITY!



Sanity is a class question—the police brutality and endless oppression of workers makes sense to the ruling class. The leaflet inset above leaves no doubt about what is sane for the working class.

tion. They are determined to overcome racism in the heat of class struggle. Within and outside this process, the Progressive Labor Party is gaining strength and size. We will lead the working class to give this racist yet another scene. The White House will be burning. The President will be dying. Capitalism will be "gone with the wind."

SANITY MEANS COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Pro-slavery President Buchanan, as we have seen, charged John Brown with insanity. The paid mouthpieces of the bourgeoisie have followed his lead ever since.

Allan Nevins and Bruce Catton were the big bourgeois historians of the Civil War of the 1940's, 1950's and early 1960's. Their multi-volume works, combining "scholarship" with popularity, have won Pulitzer Prizes, National Book Awards, and numerous other "honors." They have been picks of the Book of the Month Club and the History Book Club. Nevins' Ordeal of the Union is read in most college courses on the Civil War.

We could go on for pages with the list

of "historians" turned quack psychiatrists. The Civil War Dictionary lists "Brown, John: Fanatic abolitionist (1800-1859)... Asserting that he was an instrument of God," (p. 91) Shelby Foote calls the anti-racist, counter-terror attack in Kansas a "massacre" and refers to Brown as "the old fanatic." (The Civil War, A Narrative, Vol. 1, pp. 31-32) Stuart H. Holbrook, in Dreamers of the American Dream, a book which treats 19th century feminists, founders of utopian communities and fighters for the abolition of alcohol with great seriousness, leaves out the movement for the abolition of chattel slavery and refers to "the madman John Brown," "the most lunatic reformer in the country." (pp. 39, 274)

Nevins believes as did Buchanan, that the Civil War could have been avoided, and slavery ended in an evolutionary, non-violent manner. "Instead," he writes, "John Brown's mad raid fell on public opinion like a thunderstroke, exasperating men everywhere and dividing North and South more tragically than ever. The last chance of persuading the South to submit to an essential step, the containment of slavery, was gone."

Catton describes Brown as "a brutal murderer if there ever was one... unbalanced to the verge of outright madness." (*The Coming Fury*, p. 20) Catton regrets that many made a martyr out of John Brown: "The institution of slavery had one maddening quality: it ennobled its opponents... he (Brown) had touched a profound moral issue, an issue that ran so deep he took on a strange and moving dignity when he stood upon the scaffold."

Catton, who shares Nevins' thesis of the possibility of non-violent reconciliation between North and South, keeps the racism rolling: "What had happened in San Domingo (victorious slave rebellion resulting in the republic of Haiti) might conceivably happen on the Yazoo Delta or in the South Carolina rice fields, and John Brown had been so frightening precisely because no one could be entirely certain that his monstrous dream was impossible of attainment." (p. 87)

Samuel Eliot Morrison, the "dean" of American historians, writes in the *Oxford History of the American People*, that, "Excepting that lonely fanatic John Brown, no abolitionist attempted to incite a slave insurrection, but many took part in a conspiracy of evasion (the Underground Railroad escape route)." (p. 521) Here is Morrison's reference to Brown's slaying of five pro-slavery terrorists in the Kansas War of 1856: "A fanatic named John Brown killed a number of innocent people at the 'Pottawotami massacre'." (p. 591) Morrison has received countless awards for lying for the ruling class: he was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom, for example, by Lyndon Johnson, butcher of Vietnam, no doubt another "innocent."

"Scholarship" such as this sets the tone for more popular treatments of John Brown, which merely repeat the same unfounded accusations without benefit of footnotes, and sometimes without words at all. The brochure given out at the John Brown Wax Museum at Harper's Ferry shows a picture on its cover of Brown with eyes bulging out and mouth open in a scream. Actual photos show a composed, dignified expression. Elementary and high school social studies textbooks routinely refer to Brown as a madman.

Clearly, these accusations of insanity are not allegations that Brown was unable to function. If anything, Buchanan and the rest of the pack think that he functioned only too well. It will be re-

called that the Harper's Ferry guerrillas were taken for the cure not to the asylum, but to the scaffold with the endorsement of A. Lincoln. Mental hospitals seem to be reserved for cops like Robert Torsney who kill black children.

John Brown is charged with insanity because, in the eyes of his accusers, mass violence against slavery was illogical, unnecessary and uncalled for. In their eyes it was particularly illogical for a white person to attack slavery, and absolutely uncalled for to attack a federal arsenal and incite slave rebellion.

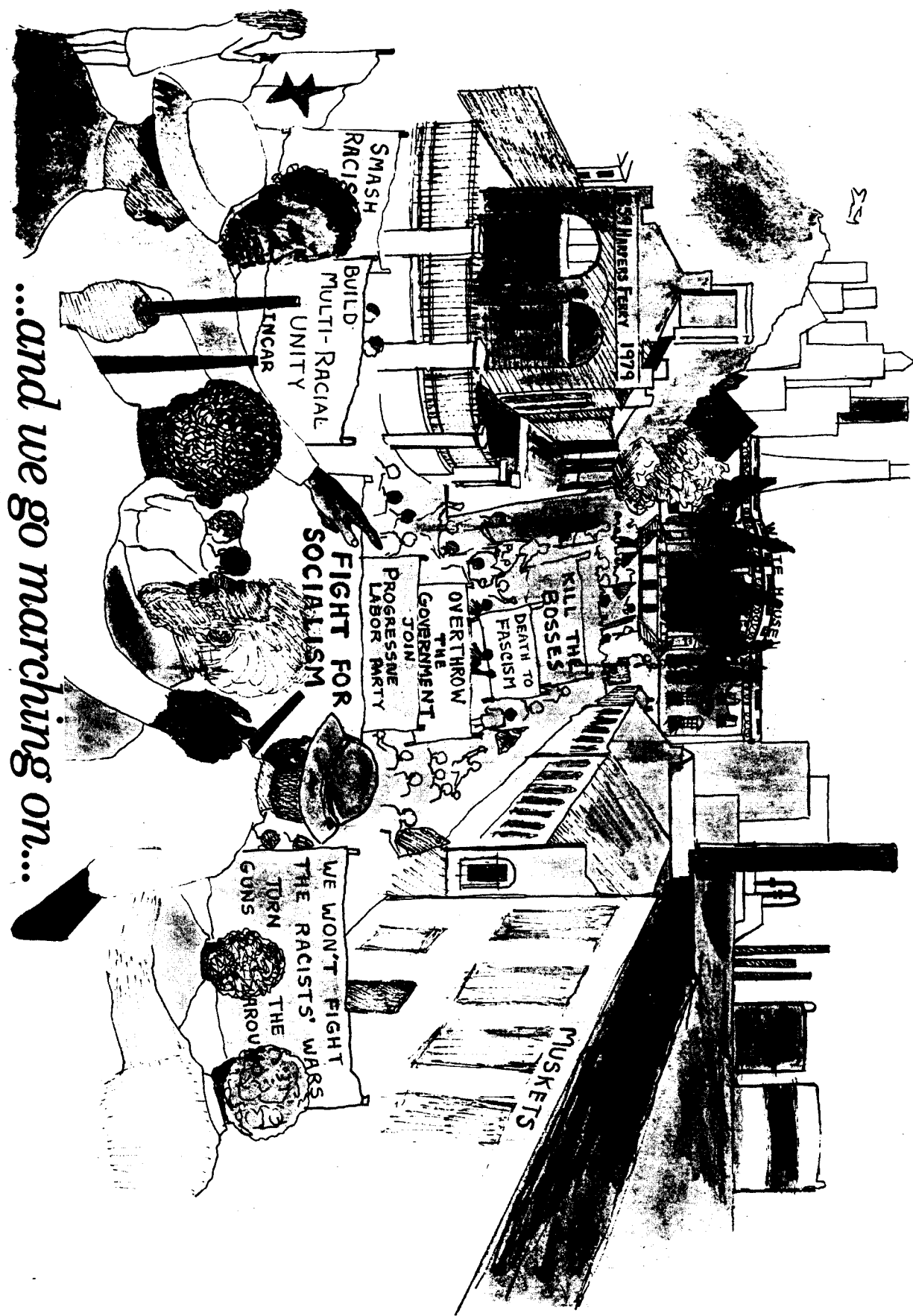
The facts are, as we have shown above that slavery would expand unless smashed by violence; that it was in the class interest of white working people to attack slavery; and that the federal government was the main protector of slavery and therefore the most logical target to attack.

Not that these historians are categorically opposed to anyone giving up his life for reasons of political commitment. They praise Crispus Attucks, a black man who was the first victim of British bullets in the American War of Independence. They chime along with Patrick Henry:—"Give me liberty or give me death." They tell us we should have undying gratitude for the 50,000 young men—disproportionately black and latin—who "gave their lives for their country" in Vietnam. In other words, it is logical—even noble—for a black man to die for the interests of the U.S. ruling class; but it was insanity for a white man to die for the interests of the slaves!

To use the word "monstrous" that Catton applied to John Brown's "dream" of slave insurrection, this is monstrous racism. Recall the Philadelphia newspaper (see above) that "expressed no surprise that blacks should revere John Brown but was shocked and bewildered" that placid and pleasant looking white women and white men should display any other emotion than loathing and terror at a conspiracy for butchery and devastation such as Brown had engineered."

To these racists, any act of violence against slaveowners quickly calls words like "monstrous" and "butchery" to the tongue, but the true "devastation," the day-in and day-out "butchery" against four million blacks gets a rare mention, in terms far less passionate.

This racism is part and parcel of their fear and hatred of the entire working class, particularly when the workers take the offensive against the system as



...and we go marching on...



The use of violence against oppression at Harper's Ferry is not unique in U.S. history. Armed miners above were on strike against Rockefeller's mines in Colorado in 1914. They defeated Rockefeller's private army and won the strike.

did the guerrillas who raided the arsenal at Harper's Ferry. In retrospect, even Harriet Tubman is grudgingly accepted by the bourgeois historians, even though at the time she was called a thief, a murderer, crazy, a man masquerading as a woman, and many other vile racist and sexist terms for her success in leading hundreds of slaves to freedom. With the Emancipation Proclamation, Harriet Tubman was transformed into a "good reformer" while John Brown remains an "insane revolutionary." That General Tubman's experiences in fighting slavery had led her to agree to participate in the raid on Harper's Ferry is rarely mentioned by bourgeois historians.

Racism and anti-working class sentiments always emerge when violence is the issue. In the recent coal strike, the bourgeois press "sympathized" with the miners grievances, but described their violence of the mainly white miners in crude terms similar to the above. During the anti-Vietnam war movement, the bourgeois press "sympathized" with some of the grievances against the government, but when it came to violence on campus, the zoological references

usually reserved for participants in ghetto rebellions were applied even to Columbia University students. These same papers used a far more pleasant vocabulary to describe the dropping of jellied gasoline on Vietnamese villagers!

When pressed, of course, these racists will suddenly "remember" the violence of the slaveowner, or of the U.S. Air Force, but then they have a "defense": Using violence will make you "just like them." On the part of politically sophisticated people, this statement is pure hypocrisy. It is addressed always to the oppressed, never to the oppressor. As for naive people thoughtlessly repeating this statement—shed your dangerous innocence. Do not mouth "God-given" maxims that help only the boss. You probably don't believe it anyway. Do you believe that a woman who fights back against a rapist is "just like him"? There is not a shred of evidence for the proposition that violence against the ruling class makes us like them, unless you want to "prove" it by saying that people have been fighting back for thousands of years and we still have exploitation, "Nothing changes." By this

“logic,” it would have made no difference if the Nazis had won World War II. By this logic, all those slaves escaping to the North on the Underground Rail Road must have run into just as many coming back South, saying “Don’t bother, brother. Don’t risk your life. It’s just exploitation up there too, and it’s colder. Everything is the same. Nothing changes.”

Counter-revolutionaries have another way of putting precisely the same argument against mass revolutionary violence: “Does the end justify the means?” They have repeated this one so many times that it doesn’t sound ridiculous—until one asks, “What else?” God? The bosses’ questions are designed to obscure reality, not clarify it. The questions we workers must ask is does the means—in this case mass revolutionary violence—help us get to our desired end—smashing racism and achieving socialism? The verdict of history is an overwhelming “yes.”

One reflection within the revolutionary movement of these bourgeois attacks is that mass revolutionary violence is necessary, but “regrettable.” Even DuBois’s splendid analysis of the Potawatomie executions, and to a lesser extent of the raid on Harper’s Ferry, is couched in these terms. To “regret” necessity is not to have one’s emotions in line with one’s thoughts. This discrepancy is inevitable. We have been trained on all levels by bourgeois society that “illegal” violence is bad, and as we learn to know better it is generally our conscious political thoughts that change first. Our emotions lag behind, still mired in the “humanism” that says the taking of any life is evil (except when done by the government). But to be effective revolutionaries, we must fight to resolve this contradiction. To quote from one of our songs, about a murderous fire in a coal mine caused by the bosses’ greed for profit, we must learn to “rejoice when they die.” Our only “regret” should be for our casualties, and it should deepen our hatred for the bosses that caused them. John Brown, despite his advocacy of violence against slavery, had not shed a humanistic outlook. He could not have, in the absence of a dialectical materialist outlook with which to replace it. One result was excessive concern for the safety of the hostages (e.g., George Washington’s grand-

nephew) held at Harper’s Ferry. This partly accounted for the band’s failure to get away before the arrival of the Marines. We must learn from this error. The only good Nazi, or KKK member, or, most especially, member of the ruling class, is a dead one. A good rule of thumb is to worry about their health and safety as much as they worry about ours.

The accusation of insanity against John Brown (or Nat Turner, who was and is similarly accused) stands even more revealed as thorough-going racism when we compare it to the historian’s treatment of other violent events of the period.

On August 21, 1863, a band of 300 Confederate troops under William Quantrell, a commissioned officer in the Confederate Army, entered Lawrence, Kansas—eight years before totally destroyed by Missouri border ruffians—and, without a shot being fired against them, killed 100 men and 50 boys, all civilians. On Oct. 2, 1864, Confederate soldiers defeated a Union attempt to capture strategically important salt mines at Saltville, Virginia. After the battle, “the Southerners murdered their one hundred Federal prisoners, most of whom were black, and some of whom were wounded. (Thomas, p. 276) Neither that fine gentleman, commander-in-chief and university president Robert E. Lee nor the Confederate government ever repudiated these or many similar events, nor disciplined anybody involved. Most historians that villify John Brown either don’t mention these events or pass over them in a business-as-usual manner—like another napalmed village or another dead coal miner, or the murder of another ghetto child by another racist policeman.

Part of the accusation of insanity against John Brown involved his belief that it was the will of God to destroy slavery, and that to attack Harper’s Ferry was therefore in accord with God’s will. John Brown was a deeply religious man who saw his own actions and those of others within the context of Christianity. He prayed daily. He had memorized the Bible, and he frequently quoted it. He emphasized passages that suggested that “all men are equal in the eyes of God,” and that “God is no respecter of persons,” meaning that it was not a person’s fame, fortune or skin color that was important, but his inner essence.

The charge itself is just another example of seizing on anything to attack

JOHN BROWN

multi-racial unity and mass revolutionary violence, and can be quickly dismissed. Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and many of the generals of the North and South frequently prayed, knew and quoted from the Bible, and almost invariably justified their actions as dictates of the almighty. Some believed it—it was a more religious age. Needless to say, none of these men are subjected to the charge of insanity, although each of them was further removed from objective reality than John Brown. Stonewall Jackson, one of the Confederacy's top generals, is widely noted to have lost at least one important battle because he halted his troops on Sunday to observe the sabbath in rest and prayer rather than march.

While dismissing the insanity charge, we should investigate the question of John Brown's religion.

Our only regret should be for *our* casualties, and it should deepen our hatred for the bosses.

What made John Brown and some other religious people (the Abolitionist movement was largely a Christian one) attack slavery, while most used religion to justify defending or ignoring slavery? Brown did not use religion as a self-serving escape from political and social obligations, like the "Jesus movements" of today who interpret the Bible to mean we cannot break the law or fight the boss. "Prayer to Brown was a prelude to action, not a release from further involvement . . . Lyman Epps, Sr., a black neighbor of his at North Elba, New York, relates that Brown told him that he did not like to think of Heaven as a place of rest—it 'must be a state of activity where all our powers are being continually developed for the better.'" (Quarles, p. 12)

The outlook of embracing struggle, of

looking for continued development, which John Brown certainly lived in this life as well as anticipated in heaven, is not a typically religious notion. It is more akin to dialectical materialism, which reveals that the only constant is change. Religion contradicts reality by looking for unity and serenity, where there is mainly division and turmoil. It is like a worker with three young children, bills to pay, a house to maintain, shopping to do, company coming and committed to go to a PL demonstration on Saturday looking forward during the week to a restful weekend.

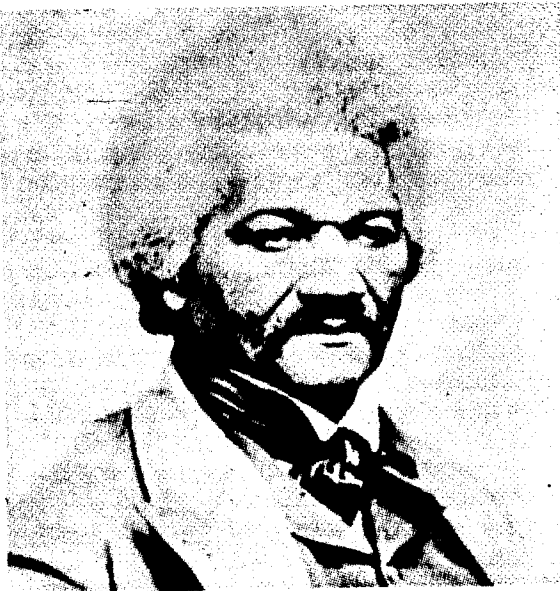
John Brown's religion, and that of the abolitionist movement, was part of the philosophy that justified attacking slavery. But Christianity was mainly used to justify slavery, and the slaves were taught Christianity to prevent them from rebelling. Religion has been used more recently to mislead the civil rights movement, most notably by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. urging black and white demonstrators not to fight back against the violent attacks of Southern sheriffs. "If there is any blood flowing in the streets, let it be ours," said this agent of the ruling class. When Christianity wasn't sufficient to fool some segments of black workers, misleaders came along with the religion of Islam.

All religion is fundamentally counter-revolutionary and must be discarded if we are to make socialist revolution and build a classless society. Religion is anti-scientific and always gets in the way of analyzing objective reality. In practice, this prevents a thoroughgoing class approach. We have seen how some of the tactical errors of the Harper's Ferry raid flowed out of a sentimental concern for the slave-owning hostages. Such an attitude was certainly fostered by religion. The Chatham Constitution outlawed slavery on the grounds that it was a "barbaric" aberration in a free country. Because the analysis was based on religious and humanistic principles rather than on objective reality as revealed by dialectical materialism, the framers of this constitution saw only the **difference** between chattel slavery and capitalism, and not the **similarities** between the two systems and their **interrelationships**. Their aim was therefore limited to the destruction of slavery, and they were unable to think beyond that process to the next stage of development.

It is not that John Brown did not have elements of a class outlook. He did. On being sentenced to death, he told the court:

Had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends—either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class—and suffered and sacrificed what I have in that interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment. (Gold, p. 56)

Nor was Brown's indictment of the country, nor that of others in his guerrilla army and in the abolitionist movement, limited to the single evil of slavery. In the same interview with W.A. Phillips where he spoke of Spartacus, Brown thought society ought to be organized on a less selfish basis; for while material interest gained something by the deification of pure selfishness, men and women lost much by it. He said that all great reforms, like the Christian religion, were based on broad, generous, self-sacrificing principles. He condemned the sale of land as a chattel, and thought that there was an infinite number of wrongs to right before society would be what it should be; but that in our country slavery was the "sum of all villainies," and its abolition the first essential work. (Quoted in Ruchames, p. 220)



Frederick Douglass



Harriet Tubman

But without the science of dialectical materialism Brown could not make the leap from thinking society "ought to be organized on a less selfish basis" to knowing how to organize it that way. The "self-sacrificing principles" of Christianity revealed the hypocrisy and greed of capitalism, but could not reveal the inner workings of the system. The equalitarian ideal within their view of Christianity was good enough for Brown and others to set events in motion that ended in the abolition of slavery and thus completed "the first essential work." But if we are to perform the next essential work, the destruction of wage-slavery, we must discard religion and pick up the weapon of scientific socialism.

Should we therefore turn our back on people who believe in God? No—we should urge them to join INCAR and participate in the class struggle against racism. Within the struggle we who are communists must point out that the way to overcome the evils of capitalism, the rapidly approaching war and fascism, is not to determine the will of God but the will of the working class, and that the aspirations of the working class cannot be satisfied by admission to heaven after death, but only by socialist revolution here on earth. A religious revival swept the Confederate Army as it went



And we go marching on...The fight against racism did not end with the Civil War. The U.S. ruling class today relies on racism for profit today as in the past, and we are building a multi-racial, militant movement to smash it.

down to defeat—at the same time as the massacre of prisoners, as at Saltville, became more frequent (Thomas, p. 277)

In the final analysis, the symbol of religion in the era of monopoly capitalism is the burning cross of the KKK. To extinguish that cross requires that we fight against all forms of mysticism within ourselves, including religion, and learn to live our lives by the scientific guidelines of dialectical materialism.

Within the limits of being able to function in society, sanity is a class question. Lincoln was not insane for not adopting John Brown's plan of organizing slave insurrections, which would most likely have destroyed secession in one year instead of five. He was responding to the needs of a class that did not wish to face the revolutionary implications of a frontal assault on "property" relations and racism.

For the workers in a New York City garment sweatshop this July, taking a coffee break was the height of sanity. The boss's response: "You're crazy, furthermore, you're fired."

Lewis Sheridan Leary and John A.

Copeland, Jr. were two of the young black men who attacked the Arsenal. Leary was killed in the shootout with the Marines, and Copeland was captured and hanged. Henrietta Evans was Leary's sister and Copeland's aunt. She and her family assembled in Copeland's home in Oberlin, Ohio, on Dec. 16, 1859, while her nephew was being hanged in Charles-town, Va. At the moment of execution she stated to visiting newsmen, "If it could be the means of destroying slavery, I would willingly give up all my men-folks." (Quarles, p. 6)

John Brown began a letter from jail to his wife and children on Oct. 31, 1859, and finished it on Nov. 3. He concluded this letter as follows: "P.S. Yesterday Nov. 2nd I was sentenced to be hanged on 2 Decem. next. Do not grieve on my account. I am still quite cheerful" (Entire letter is in Ruchames, p. 137).

Neither Henrietta Evans nor John Brown had a casual attitude about life. Quite the contrary. **These fighters against slavery were determined to have their lives mean something beyond a mere struggle for personal survival.**

Animals "work hard" for themselves and their children. Human beings, a higher form of life, can make their lives meaningful by learning how to work hard for their class. Fear of injury or death is only the apparent cause of people hanging back from participating in the class struggle. The very fellow worker who refuses to go to a demonstration against the KKK because "I might get hit over the head or shot by a cop" may well go to a party that same Saturday night and ride home in a car with a driver who is intoxicated. The more fundamental question is not how to avoid death but how to live. John Brown and his fellow guerrilla fighters, along with thousands of other opponents of slavery, had learned through study and, especially, through practice, how to live for the abolition of slavery. They were therefore prepared, if necessary, to die for the cause. Bourgeois ideology teaches that each person is the center of his own universe—that you are the most important thing to yourself, and that you must therefore guard your own existence and not foolishly give up your life for others (unless they are bosses). But the stubborn facts of life under the bourgeoisie teach us every day that we are not all-important, not the center of the universe—that we are in fact ordinary people like the rest of the workers. This contradiction between what they tell you and how they treat you tends to make people crazy. We can learn from John Brown how to resolve this contradiction in favor of sanity.

Our real importance lies not in our mere physical existence, but in the contribution we can make to the class struggle. Every day that we sell Challenge-Desafio to a fellow worker, or help a friend to join CAR or the Party, or raise the level of struggle against the boss, is important. These acts all help to "cure" the insanity of capitalism by revolution. They are "something to write home about." The revolutionary process goes on outside of us, involves a collective that is far more important than any one of us, and continues after each of our deaths. Therefore it is what we contribute to this process in our life that is important. Death really is a "P.S." like John Brown's.

Although John Brown was brought up in a home that harbored runaway slaves, he was not born asking if anybody else was hungry before he took his mother's breast. He had to struggle against selfishness, like all the rest of us. Until

age 37, he put the movement against slavery second but important, and the struggle to earn a living for himself and his family first. But quantitative acts against slavery gradually led to a qualitative change in his attitude, to fighting slavery first and putting earning a living second but important. This leap forward was made evident at a mass meeting at the Congregationalist Church in Hudson, Ohio in November, 1837. The meeting was a memorial tribute to Elijah P. Lovejoy, an abolitionist editor in Alton, Illinois, who had been killed by a pro-slavery mob a few days before after refusing to heed their warnings to leave town. According to the Reverend Edward Brown, a participant in the meeting and a cousin of John Brown, "Just before the close of the meeting, John Brown, who had sat silent in the back part of the room, rose, lifting up his right hand, saying, 'Here, before God, in the presence of these witnesses, from this time, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery!'" (quoted in Ruchames, p. 189) Concrete actions against slavery, including many smaller ones leading up to those in Kansas and at Harper's Ferry strengthened this dedication and made it a living reality.

The realization that participating in the class struggle by fighting for socialism is primary in our lives is a leap forward that is made evident by joining the Progressive Labor Party. Once we join, our Party club helps us to make our dedication a living reality by raising the level of our participation in the class struggle. Without this collective process, none of us are strong enough to overcome capitalism's siren song with its insane chorus of "Look out for yourself," any more than John Brown could have fought against slavery in isolation from the abolitionist movement and the fugitive slaves. But with this collective process building and guiding the class struggle the bosses' great weapon of selfishness is transformed into their great weakness, and the capitalist system, based on the insanity of individual ego, must succumb to the power of a united working class.

We must not wait too long. In the 1850's the slaveowners' offensive required an immediate abolitionist counter-offensive. Today, and in the 1980's, the bosses' offensive against the working class requires an immediate counter-offensive. Stepped-up racism, unemployment, and inflation, and the move toward fascism and war, must be

met with socialist revolution. This requires that many more people join the Progressive Labor Party, and begin to recruit others even as they do so. It requires that those who have dropped out rejoin, and that all of us rededicate ourselves to increasing our commitment. It requires that we help recruit thousands more to INCAR. It requires that we learn the lessons of the guerrilla fighters who set out to overthrow slavery, and the power of the federal government that protected it, at Harper's Ferry one hundred twenty years ago.

These rich lessons, many of which we have not had the space to go into, are summarized in the section headings of this article. They can be further condensed into one word—**Boldness**. Boldness means we rely on our fellow workers, enlightened by the Party's ideas and their own experience, to attack the

**We ordinary people—
not some
great men—
will make
our own history.**

enemy. Within the limits of our size and strength, PLP has always operated in this manner. We broke the bosses' ban against traveling to Cuba in 1963. In 1964 we broke that ban again, led hundreds in breaking the police ban on demonstrations in Harlem during the first ghetto rebellion of the '60's, and led the first mass demonstration demanding U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. We fought within the emerging student movement for the at first very unpopular idea of allying with the working class, and we led students to do so, in theory and in practice. In 1970 we published **Road to Revolution III**, discarding all nationalist concepts and boldly relying on the working class to directly embrace revolutionary communism. **Reform and Revolution** in 1975 sharpened the application of this concept to the class struggle, as did the Party's

participation in founding the International Committee Against Racism. PLP and INCAR boldly marched through South Boston on May Day 1975, beating back an attack by racists armed with baseball bats. Since then PLP and INCAR have led workers and students to physically attack Nazis and the KKK on dozens of occasions throughout the country, including inside Nazi Party Headquarters in Chicago's Marquette Park and in the Klan "heartland" of Tupelo, Mississippi. At Oxnard, California, we led over a thousand workers in attacking the Klan and on May Day 1979 we led 600 in marching through the supposed Nazi bastion of Marquette Park. Every one of these actions, along with countless others of a similar nature, relied on ordinary people to fight for change. We must now, by increasing the size and strength of the Party, raise the limits of this activity, especially by directly confronting the bosses at the point of production—by leading workers to the offensive around revolutionary communist ideas in the mines, the steel mills, the auto plants, the fields, the garment sweat shops. We must do this in the armed forces as well. We, and our fellow workers, soldiers, students are the John Browns, the Harriet Tubmans, the Kagis, the Learys and the Cope-lands of today. They brought about the most important change in U.S. history to date, the abolition of chattel slavery. We will abolish wage slavery. We dare rely on ourselves to change the world. We ordinary people—not some "great men"—will make our own history. The ruling class tried to stop John Brown and the guerrillas of Harper's Ferry with the bullet and the hangman's noose. They are trying to stop us with jailings and gun-wielding racists in blue uniforms and white sheets. But mass revolutionary violence grows. Multi-racial unity grows. INCAR and PLP grow. Perhaps under workers' power Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, will be renamed John Brown City, and all those "Jefferson Davis Highways" and "Robert E. Lee Boulevards" will be renamed after rebelling slaves and abolitionist fighters. For it is not John Brown that was killed by violence, it was slavery. John Brown lives within us as we go marching on to socialist revolution and the final destruction of racism, to the building of communist society, where the workers of the world shall be the human race.

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This article was originally published in PL Magazine in 1967 (Vol. 6, No.2). As part of our Party's intensified study of dialectical materialism, we are reprinting it now for readers who may not have seen it previously.

By Len Ragozin

Order or Chaos?

Can History Be A Science?

The spread of scientific method to field after field of investigation is the legitimate pride of the post-renaissance western world. The lusty, rising bourgeoisie had no use for the old "god-given" answers or pre-scientific theories of nature. The old myths, divorced from practice, were a barrier to the now-possible vast expansion of production and commerce.

Feudalism in turn recognized modern science as an enemy—that is, as the partner of a class hostile to feudalism—and fought science doggedly, especially through the church. Proposition after proposition which we take for granted today as obvious has a history of struggle against being condemned as heresy. We take natural science for granted only because we have a modern bourgeois education. But Newton, for example, dedicated great effort to harmonizing his conclusions with the teachings of his church. And Newton's predecessors include such as Galileo, who recanted his findings under threat of death, and philosopher Giordano Bruno, who had the misfortune to endorse Copernican astronomy at a time when the feudal church was strong enough to retaliate by burning him at the stake.

But things are different today, and free inquiry is the rule. True? Before we give too much credit to freedom of science under capitalism, let us note first that the discoveries of natural science have not, in the main, threatened bourgeois rule (they did threaten feudalism's god-ordained stability.) Therefore, a nation like the U.S. can encourage this boasted free inquiry—in certain areas of the natural sciences. But

the discoveries of social science can threaten bourgeois rule; and it is in this area that our freedom of education is put to the greater test and found completely wanting.

In the early, revolutionary days of bourgeoisdom, thinking men may have had a heady assurance that the more deeply they penetrated the laws of nature, the more they allied themselves with the rising cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity—that is, bourgeoisdom's liberty to buy and sell, equality under unequal laws, and patriotic fraternity in fighting bourgeois wars.

But this assurance, that the unearthing of scientific truth would in all cases be welcomed by the bourgeois ruling class, soon had to be replaced by a more conditional view. As the new proletarian class grew, new ideas forced themselves to the fore. Investigation freely and deeply pursued began to turn up evidence which called into question the eternal rightness of bourgeois rule. This was especially true as investigation approached the domain of human affairs—in the social sciences. Careful editing and interpretation—at the very least—became needed and were (and are) well paid for by the ruling class.

Biology is the natural science which acts as a bridge to social science, and it is no accident that Darwin's **Origin of Species** at first suffered bitter attack, and was finally crudely reduced—for popular consumption—to a proof that the most ferocious dog-eat-dog competition produces the most noble results. You know, just as in capitalism!

Of course, even superficially it makes more sense to read into Darwin's work the conclusion that any given species makes most progress by organizing within its ranks to cope with the outside environment. Dog-eat-dog hardly applies within the mammalian herd, school of fish, or insect colony. That is, a socialist message could more easily have been drawn—and it is hardly an accident that it wasn't. (Fascinating evidence of the effectiveness of this false-Darwinian brainwashing is found in the sharp dialogues of **The Sea Wolf**, by self-proclaimed socialist Jack London, who in this and other best-sellers also used Darwin to "prove" that it is natural for man to prey on his own species.)

Capitalism's partial support of free inquiry arises because capitalism displays a feature new in history: it depends for its very existence on its con-

stant revolutionizing of productive methods, and thus of science and thought. In biology, for instance, capitalism cannot merely replace feudalism's eternal-species myth with an up-to-date pro-bourgeois myth and then forbid further inquiry, because there are commercial interests which depend for their profits upon effective biological theory. (For instance, effective disease-control opens up tropical areas for investment and colonizer-management.) There are always investors who must strive for progress in this science or face competitive ruin. The same applies of course to the other natural sciences.

Thus capitalism cannot imitate feudalism in trying to strangle practical inquiry. But what if a line of inquiry suggests conclusions non-productive and threatening for the ruling class in general? Then, while trying carefully to maintain the facade of free inquiry which it needs for its enlistment of brain-workers, the bourgeoisie brings out the heavy artillery: money and career promised to the hack revisors, ostracism and worse to threaten the stubborn independent inquirer. Most important, within the educational system the standard textbooks and standard lectures which introduce the new student generation to the subject are carefully designed to sidestep or obfuscate the area of trouble.

As the most obvious instance, when Adam Smith, Ricardo and other classical economists plunged into the scientific investigation of the capitalist economy, it was certainly not as enemies of the bourgeoisie. They rightly considered capitalism to be a progressive force as against feudalism, and offered policies to make it work better. But their researches contained hints that capitalism might possess some disturbing long-run instabilities—hints which were later reinforced, as depressions and mass poverty sharpened the class struggle under maturing capitalism.

With the year 1830 came the decisive crisis. In France and England the bourgeoisie had conquered political power. Thenceforth, the class struggle, practically as well as theoretically, took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms. It sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economy. It was thenceforth no longer a question whether this theorem or that was true, but

whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not. In place of disinterested enquirers, there were hired prizefighters; in place of genuine scientific research, the bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetic.

(Karl Marx, preface to **Capital**)

When Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the later 1800's pushed the scientific method to new frontiers in the investigation of human society, and demonstrated that the "ills" of alienation, poverty and war were an integral part of capitalism, the bourgeois iron curtain came down on all the sciences of society. History, economics, sociology, psychology—all such fields have been placed outside the generally accepted laws of scientific investigation and progress. In these areas bourgeois education waives a most important dialectical conclusion of the modern natural sciences: that the deepest understanding of a phenomenon is reached when it is understood as having a history, as a process, as a coming to be and a passing away.

What did it come from and what follows lawfully from it? When we know this about a planet or a particle, a mountain or a molecule, a mastodon or a microbe, then are we penetrating deeply into the realities of physics, chemistry, and biology. But U.S. education says that this question of process or long-term development is not central to the study of the march of human nature and behavior. History, economics, psychology, sociology—all such sciences of social man are thus castrated or totally destroyed by bourgeois education. Why? Because the long-term answers come out wrong... for capitalism. Feudal persecution of natural science is replaced by capitalist castration of social science.

No Science of History?

The modern method of castration is similar for most of the social fields: all investigation is channelled into the refinement of techniques which will help bourgeois-democratic capitalism to hang on to its rule. Since an intellectual can do a lot of challenging work on short-term, relatively superficial cause-and-effect relations in economics, sociology, or psychology while closing his eyes to the long-term, more fundamental evolutionary questions raised in the field, viable pseudo-sciences are flourishing in these areas. Their practice might be

compared with that of early practical chemistry, for instance, which performed great service for industry (breweries and tanneries especially) though necessarily without using atomic theory. That is, the social sciences are practiced as infant sciences, without expressing broad hypotheses.

But theirs is a forced infancy, an eternal childhood enforced by the establishment's educational system. Some broad hypotheses which would begin to mature them have already been suggested—mainly by the untouchable Marxists. Thus the pseudo-scientists' greatest achievements resemble the prattlings of a very bright child—one who has indeed made an ingenious technical discovery but whose childish limitations show in its presentation—a complete blackout concerning its interrelation with already-known broader questions.

Now history, insofar as it interests the bourgeoisie as a science at all, is treated in like manner: it is searched for bits of data which might help the rulers. But since history is so essentially the study of change, it is well-nigh impossible to create a bourgeois pseudo-science of history which will hang together well enough to build up a discipline of intellectual followers. If you must deny the obvious facts that capitalism itself has a chronology of change, a bloody evolution, and a probable historical end in the offing, you can't build a viable pseudo-science. The main effort of bourgeois education, in regard to history, is therefore to establish the notion that **there cannot be a science of history.**

It is not difficult, provided you have the will of the dominant industrialists and ideologists behind you, to teach history in a manner which makes self-fulfilling the proposition that there cannot be a science of history. (As a matter of fact, as I will show, given the motive it also would not be difficult to teach the investigation of all natural-physical data in the same science-destroying manner.) Thus, history texts and teachers present facts in isolated grouplets, or stirred into a meaningless jumble. Flirtation with over-all theory is tolerated provided it is western-oriented and bourgeois-buttressing—but the facts won't support such theories, which necessarily degenerate into mysticism (a la Toynbee) and repel the thinking student. When the texts and teachers examine (briefly) the work of those who have developed a cogent theory of history—notably

Marxists—the small pieces which don't fit (inevitable in any science) are vastly magnified, and the revealed broad consistencies are denied or dismissed as commonplace. In sheer self-defense students desert the field or are driven back to infant pre-science, piling up any and all details in the pious hope that later some good will come of it (at least a grant!).

The savants produced by such an educational process no doubt firmly believe that history is fundamentally different from the "exact" sciences, that there are special reasons (vastness of scope, non-reproducibility of experimental situations, human free will as an aberrant force, etc.) which make history a non-science. As we shall see, these "special" reasons arise in the mind of the history specialist only because of his narrow specialization; similar dif-

The main effort of bourgeois education is to establish that there cannot be a science of history.

ficulties confront all the sciences.

It would be perfectly possible, for instance, to teach any field of knowledge in such a manner as to destroy it as a science—and without lying too much, either. If the introductory physics courses denounced as meaningless the well-known historical whipsawing of physicists from one theory to its incompatible opposite; if they spent a disproportionate amount of time waxing sarcastic about the anomalies which theory has yet to resolve; and if, most important, they threw at the student **years and years of courses laden with unconnected facts before suggesting a theory frame** which could make sense of the jumble—if they taught that way the science would soon be wrecked and abandoned to the astrologers and alchemists. Of course, the establishment would need a powerful motive to do this—but they

have this motive in the case of social science and Marxism.

If you think that the achievements of "real" science are so secure that no sane man could attack them the way the science of history is attacked, you might be surprised by a book called **Science is a Sacred Cow**, by Anthony Standen (Dutton Paperback D 16). Here is an author who has the needed powerful motive. He is afraid that, because of science, God is slipping. Though presumably a scientist himself, he snipes away at the scientific pretensions of all sciences so vigorously that one gets a taste of what the educational system would be like if feudalism were miraculously restored. A short sample may convince the reader that, given the will, the universities could make students feel just as contemptuous of the science of biology, for example, as most now are of the science of history:

Evidently in biology there is the same tendency to utter pompous nonsense that characterizes scientists of all kinds. But does biology have the virtues of science? That is more questionable.

A typical example of what passes as a theory in biology is the "cell theory." This usually rates a little potted history—"culture" again—and goes along these lines: In 1838 a German botanist named Schleiden had noticed that in a large number of plants the living tissues were always divided into cells. A year later a zoologist named Schwann made the same observation for animal tissue; the two scientists got together, and each was struck with the similarity of the discoveries that had been made in the two different fields. The theory that resulted from this is that the living tissue of **all live organisms is divided into cells.**

"Today we know the cellular theory of living organisms to be a fact: it is no longer a theory." So what? Then the living tissue of all live organisms is divided into cells. This is not a theory, as the physical scientist understands theories, but a simple statement of observed fact.

And yet, the biologist will candidly admit that there are some live organisms that don't have cells! They are degraded things

called slime molds. The biologists get around that by a typical scientists' quibble: all cells have nuclei (another statement of observed fact); the slime molds have a lot of nuclei, but instead of being separated from one another by neat cell walls they are scattered around like plums in a pudding; so it must be that these low organisms have degraded cells, the walls separating cell from cell having vanished away. So that quite strictly speaking, and scientists always insist that they do speak strictly, the theory (or rather the observation isn't true. (pp. 93-94)

The author sounds just like a Sidney Hook attacking the treacherous Marxists! And he could go on all day:

To pep it up a little, and to disguise the quibble, an official pronouncement may be made in some form that **sounds** as if it has a meaning, such as "The cell is the fundamental unit of all life." Anyone can learn and remember this statement, and if ever you undergo a quiz in biology, that is **the answer**, it is what you are supposed to write down. And yet what does it mean? If the cell is a unit, in the sense that bigger things are made up of it, this only means, all over again, that living organisms are made up of cells (except those that aren't). But if the cell is a **fundamental** unit, what does "fundamental" mean? Think about this as much as you like, or as much as you can, but if you are facing a quiz, do not worry about it, for you will never be asked what, if anything, is conveyed by the word "fundamental."

Another of the gloriously vague ideas of biology is "protoplasm." It is the "fundamental" living substance, the content of the cell. It, alone, is alive, and when it is dead it immediately starts to decompose, and is no longer protoplasm. There is no such thing as dead protoplasm. The chemical composition of protoplasm is excessively complicated, and is not the same in any two kinds of animals or plants, even closely related ones, and is probably not quite the same even in two individuals of the same species,

but the biologists call it all "protoplasm," wherever it comes from. "Protoplasm" is a convenient word, so convenient that all that is called protoplasm is, in some mysterious way, the same, although it is different. In just what way it is all the same they are never able to explain, and so they take refuge in a high-sounding phrase, "all protoplasm is **essentially** alike." And nobody asks them what, under the sun, they really mean by this. Their meaning, in so far as they have one, is strictly mystical, or as they themselves would express it, "metaphysical."

The truth is that biologists don't think, at least not in the narrow sense of making formal conclusions, definitely arrived at from definite premises. Their mental processes go by analogy. (pp. 96-98)

If you're intrigued by that sort of thing, the whole book is full of it. And can you say he's lying? It's mostly a matter of emphasis, founded on one easy-to-sell false premise which is: unless a hypothesis is 100% proven, we have no right to use it as a stepping-stone to broader knowledge. This premise, if accepted, would destroy all science, since all data are connected to a reality which is infinite, and is never 100% known.

Biology's chief defense against such attacks is... to ignore them. Some day the science of history will be well enough established in the West to employ a similar defense. But that day is not yet. The following section of this article aims to strengthen the counterattack on behalf of the science of history by approaching it from a somewhat neglected angle, asking: what is a science, anyhow?

What is a "Science"?

A great deal of the success of U.S. educators in establishing history as a non-science comes from their technique of enforced narrow specialization. "Non-science" students have an extremely oversimplified notion of what characteristics a body of knowledge must display in order to be termed a science. In fact, science specialists aren't encouraged to think this through either.

What then is science; and can there be a science of society, a science of history?

An answer is suggested by J. Bronowski, an able and most widely-respected defender of bourgeois science, in his highly-praised (by C.P. Snow, Norbert Wiener, Julian Huxley, etc.) book **Science and Human Values** (Harper Torchbook TB 505G):

To the literary man the question may seem merely silly. He has been taught that science is a large collection of facts; and if this is true, then the only seeing which scientists need do is, he supposes, seeing the facts. He pictures them, the colorless professionals of science, going off to work in the morning into the universe in a neutral, unexposed state. They then expose themselves like a photographic plate. And then in the darkroom or laboratory they develop the image, so that suddenly and startlingly it appears, printed in capital letters, as a new formula for atomic energy.

Men who have read Balzac and Zola are not deceived by the claims of these writers that they do no more than record the facts. The readers of Christopher Isherwood do not take him literally when he writes "I am a camera." Yet the same readers solemnly carry with them from their schooldays this foolish picture of the scientist fixing by some mechanical process the facts of nature. I have had of all people a historian tell me that science is a collection of facts, and his voice had not even the ironic rasp of one filing cabinet reproving another.

It seems impossible that this historian had ever studied the beginnings of a scientific discovery. The Scientific Revolution can be held to begin in the year 1543 when there was brought to Copernicus, perhaps on his deathbed, the first printed copy of the book he had finished about a dozen years earlier. The thesis of this book is that the earth moves around the sun. When did Copernicus go out and record this fact with his camera? What appearance in nature prompted his outrageous guess? And in what odd sense is this guess to be called termed causal laws? (pp. 1-2)

Less than a hundred years after Copernicus, Kepler published (between 1609 and 1619) the three laws which describe the paths of the planets. The work of Newton and with it most of our mechanics spring from these laws. They have a solid, matter-of-fact sound. For example, Kepler says that if one squares the year of a planet, one gets a number which is proportional to the cube of its average distance from the sun. Does anyone think that such a law is found by taking enough readings and then squaring and cubing everything in sight? If he does, then, as a scientist, he is doomed to a wasted life; he has as little prospect of making a scientific discovery as an electronic brain has. (pp. 10-11)

(Let that last sentence be a warning especially to the pseudo-scientists of economics and sociology who make such a virtue of "squaring and cubing everything in sight.")

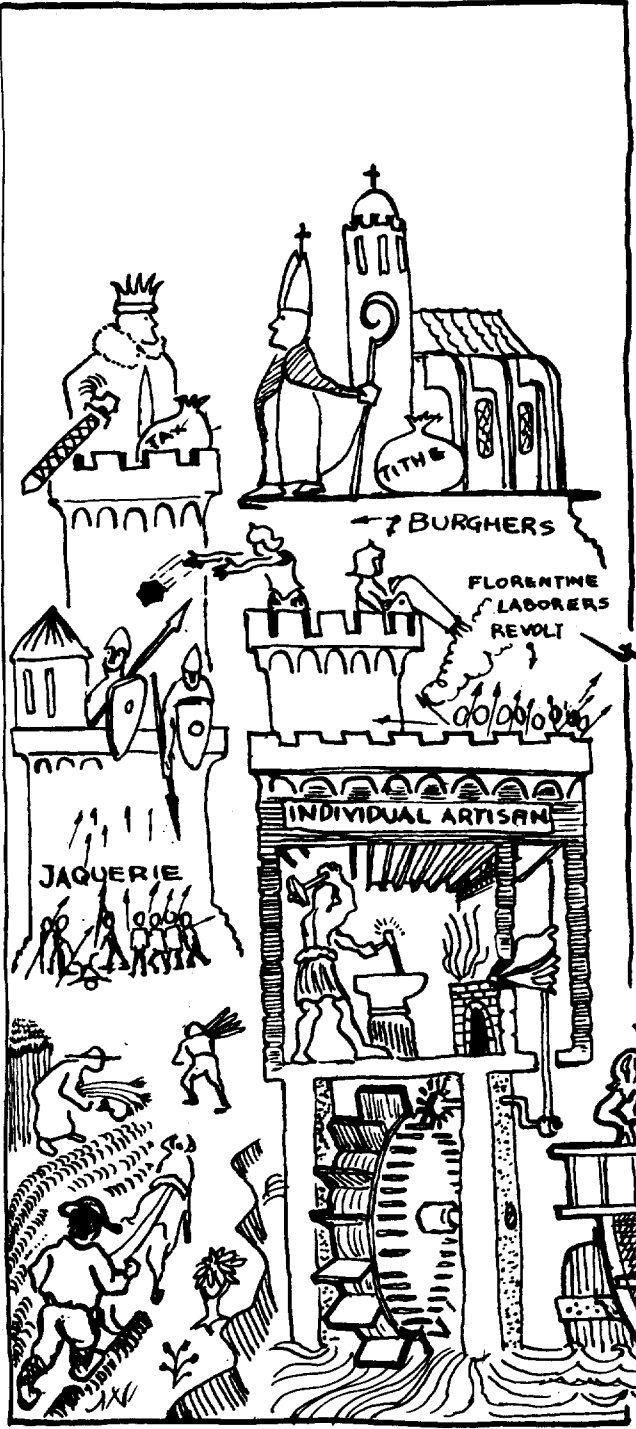
Now this statement is not a bad start in correcting oversimplified notions of what science is. It reads well, and suggests a warm, human presence behind the pen. In the same engaging style Bronowski goes on to enthrone pragmatism as his philosophy, and arrives at the conclusion that the world would be a much better place if all its citizens were converted to the values of bourgeois scientists. As for a scientific investigation of history to determine whether this idealistic conversion is feasible—well, you can't be scientific about everything! But the book is just what the young atomic physicist needs to quell his doubts as he begins his U.S. career.

I do not want to discuss the theses of this book in detail, because I want to recommend it to the Marxist reader who might want to test himself or herself against an able defender of the status quo. Bronowski is no patsy. At the end of a careful reading of this short book, you will feel as if you have been swimming through miles of strawberry jam—which should be good for the mental muscles.

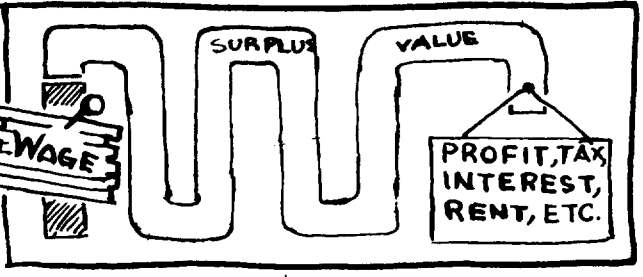
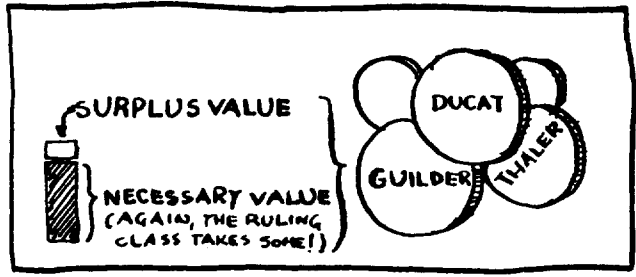
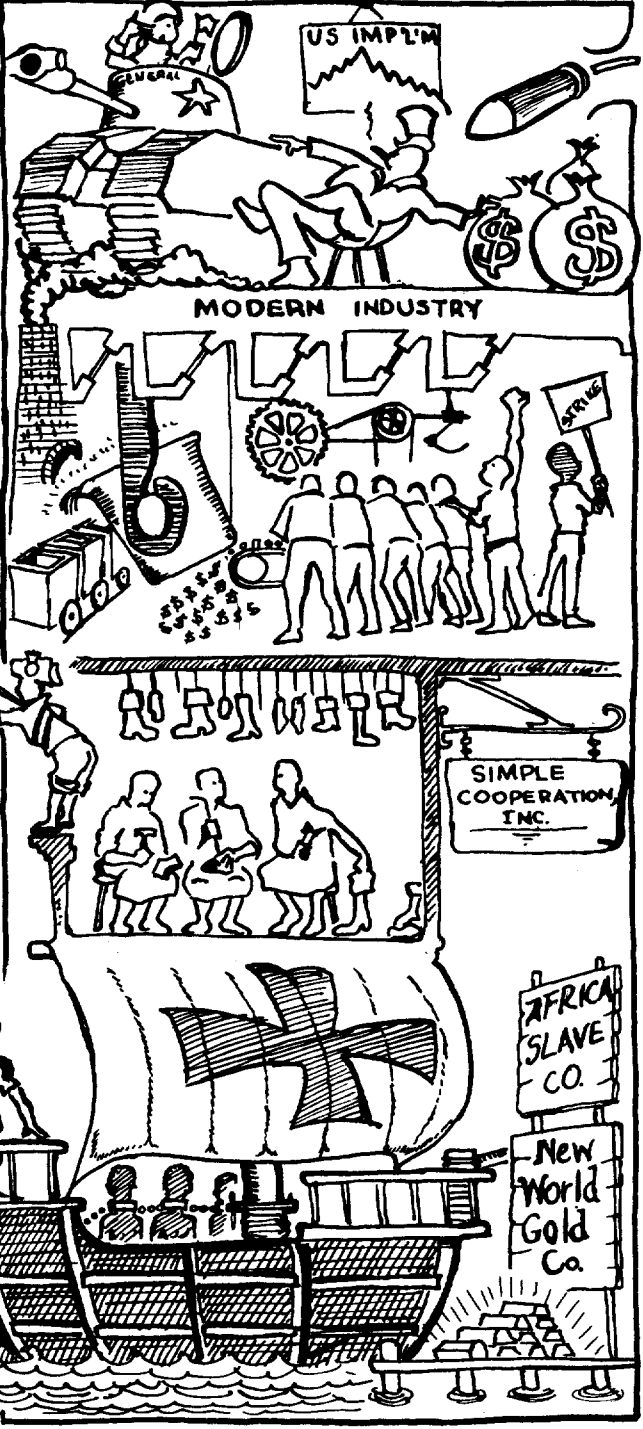
History as a Science

It is only one of the great merits of **Causality and Chance in Modern Physics**, by David Bohm (Harper Torchbook TB536) that it clarifies the meaning of scientific knowledge. Bohm rids us once and for all of the notions of "pure truth," "logical facts," "simple cause-and-

Feudalism



CAPITALISM



SOCIALISM

effect," and the like—criteria often raised to prove that history can't be a science. (How far it can and how far it can't is especially clearly shown in Bohm's treatment of geology, a science whose difficulties parallel some which face the science of history.) And unlike Bronowski, he replaces false criteria by clearly-expressed descriptions of just how scientific investigators improve their partial understanding of an infinite and ever-changing universe. That is, he spells out a modern theory of knowledge.

As I said before, this clarification is but one of the great merits of the book. Chapters 1, 2, and 5 (less than 100 pages) were purposefully and successfully planned by Bohm to stand alone as a physical philosophical treatise completely clear to the non-scientist. (Chapter 3 can also be valuably attempted, and even 4 can be skimmed.) He blithely and with dazzling clarity ticks off such topics as The Laws of Nature, Causal Laws and the Properties of Things, Contingency and Chance, The Philosophy of Mechanism, Qualitative and Quantitative Change (with a most superior presentation of the standard water-to-steam example). In a section entitled A New Point of View: Indeterminate Mechanism, the "modern" cynical philosophy (based on Heisenberg) of ultimate unknowability is paradoxically revealed as a new form of mechanical materialism. And Bohm's final chapter, simply headed A More General Concept of Natural Law, shows us what dialectical materialism means most broadly, in application to the general physical universe.

The words "dialectical materialism," by the way, are never used in the book—and there is no reference to the scientific inquiries of Engels. But Bohm is a dialectical materialist—and better than most.

For those who are beginning or reinforcing a study of dialectics, Bohm serves as an admirable introduction to Mao Tse-tung's **On Practice and On Contradiction**. (I have so used it in classes, so I am not relying only upon a personal reaction in making the recommendation.) I know this sounds like a very hard sell, but this is one of those books that everyone is sorry he or she didn't read sooner.

To resume: What, then, is science; and can there be a science of society, a science of history? As a fresh starting-point for considering some of the common objections raised against social

sciences, let us consider Bohm's opening paragraph:

In nature nothing remains constant. Everything is in a perpetual state of transformation, motion, and change. However, we discover that nothing simply surges up out of nothing without having antecedents that existed before. Likewise, nothing ever disappears without a trace, in the sense that it gives rise to absolutely nothing existing at later times. This general characteristic of the world can be expressed in terms of a principle which summarizes an enormous domain of different kinds of experience and which has never yet been contradicted in any observation or experiment, scientific or otherwise; namely, everything comes from other things and gives rise to other things.

Now here is a scientist—who is by the way in the forefront of modern physics research—introducing a work on science. Yet at the outset he undermines the ideas of many about the supposedly solid foundations which set natural science off from less exact areas of investigation. Objectors to the science of history often cite the fact that society is always changing; you can't get a grip on it for study. But Bohm replies: **everything** is always changing. So the objection becomes at best one of degree—are some aspects of society, like some aspects of nature, just too hard to grasp by present techniques? Quite a different question from the easy categorical dismissal.

"Everything comes from other things and gives rise to other things." "But I thought," exclaims our laymen, "that science was scientific just because it reduced all complexities to the behavior of certain fundamental particles which just are."

"Some scientists think that," says Bohm, "but it won't stand scrutiny." "That," of course, is the philosophy of mechanism, and since the book as a whole is a thorough refutation of deterministic and modern indeterministic mechanism, I will not weaken Bohm's arguments by excerpting. Suffice it to say that he demonstrates that science progresses without having found any absolutely basic things upon which it can take a firm grip and say "that's immutably established; all knowledge builds from there."

So, the frequent objection that society

is too "circular" for a scientific investigation—that there's nowhere to start, because everything depends upon everything else—is seen to apply to the purely physical world no less than to society. The problem becomes one of finding a starting-point which, for practical purposes and within the scope of the intended inquiry, can provisionally be treated as fundamental: sufficiently independent of other relevant factors so as not to significantly skew the results. In the science of history, the most accurate, fruitful and consistent results follow, as Marx and other investigators have found, when the productive process is taken as that starting-point.

The notion that an arbitrary factor of human will makes the science of history impossible also disappears if we accept the word of science that "everything comes from other things." The role of human will can become a subject for study, not an automatic barrier.

My favorite "refutation" of Marxism, by the way, is one which often pops up in discussions of free will: "If socialism is really inevitable, why do you bother fighting for it?" I can imagine the clever fellow who asks that question striking up a dialogue with a biologist: "Is the discovery of a cancer cure virtually inevitable?" (Yes.) "Will it eventually be found whether or not you continue your research?" (Yes.) "Than why do you bother?" (!) The concept that these "inevitable" are inevitable precisely because many men will bother—this is too complex a thought for these bright debaters.

What do we mean by historical inevitability or causality? How do we deduce, for instance, that the contradictions within feudalism cause a transition to capitalism? To pursue Bohm:

To come to causality, the next step is then to note that as we study processes taking place under a wide range of conditions, we discover that inside of all the complexity of change and transformation there are **relationships** that remain effectively constant. Thus, objects released in mid-air under a wide range of conditions quite consistently fall to the ground.... From the extreme generality of this type of behavior, one begins to consider the possibility that in the processes by which one thing comes out of others, the constancy of certain



relationships inside a wide variety of transformations and changes is no coincidence. Rather, we interpret this constancy as signifying that such relationships are **necessary**, in the sense that they could not be otherwise, because they are inherent and essential aspects of what things are. The necessary relationships between objects, events, conditions, or other things at a given time and those at later times are then termed **causal laws**.

Quite a far cry from iron laws and hard facts, is it not? Obviously the passage quoted would fit quite well a

nation-by-nation study of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, or other historical researches. The question again becomes one of degree: how many observations, of how much scope and accuracy, establish how high a probability that our brains have comprehended the essence of a necessary real-world relationship?*

At this point, however, we meet a new problem. For the necessity of a causal law is never absolute. For example, let us consider the law that an object released in mid-air will fall. This in fact is usually what happens. But if the object is a piece of paper, and if "by chance" there is a strong breeze blowing, it may rise. Thus, we see that one must conceive of the law of nature as necessary only if one abstracts from contingencies, representing essentially independent factors... Hence, we conceive of the necessity of a law of nature as conditional, since it applies only to the extent that these contingencies may be neglected. In many cases they are indeed negligible... But in most other applications, contingency is evidently much more important. Even where contingencies are important, however, one may abstractly regard the causal law as something that would apply if the contingencies were not acting.
(p. 2)

Horror upon horror! Broad causal laws don't always tell us exactly what is going to happen in every real case. Natural science is beginning to sound more and more like that non-scientific thing called history which we hear so much about.

Bohm goes on to explain that, of course, finer investigations and extended laws may successfully deal with more and more of the contingencies, but you can't treat them all, because reality is infinite.
... every real causal relation-

*Compare Mao Tse-tung:

... The first step in the process of cognition is contact with the objects of the external world; this belongs to the stage of perception. The second step is to synthesize the data of perception by arranging and reconstructing them; this belongs to the stage of conception, judgement and inference. It is only when the data of perception are very rich (not fragmentary) and correspond to reality (are not illusory) that they can be the basis for forming correct concepts and theories. (*On Practice*, p. 11)

ship, which necessarily operates in a finite context, has been found to be subject to contingencies arising outside the context in question... if, within the degree of approximation with which we are working, all failures of verification can be understood as the results of contingencies that it was not possible to avoid, then the hypothesis in question is accepted as an essentially correct one, which applies at least within the domain of phenomena that have been studied, as well as very probably in many new domains that have not yet been studied.**
(pp. 3-5)

Approximations, contingencies, probabilities—these are just as much the stuff of science as necessities. They are Nature's other face, as the title and content of Bohm's book suggest. They do not bar successful predictions in new domains.

Reality is Our Test

A most common objection levelled against the science of history is the impossibility of reproducible or controlled experiments. Now as a matter of fact socialist societies are actually conducting such large-scale controlled experiments—and, as socialism spreads and endures, more experimental data is emerging. Quite apart from this, Bohm disposes of such objections by a careful consideration of the science of geology:

Even when reproducible and controlled experiments are not possible, and even when the conditions of the problem cannot be defined with precision, it is still often possible to find at least some (and in principle an arbitrarily large number) of the significant causes of a given set of phenomena. This can be done by trying to find out what past processes could have been responsible

** Compare Lenin:

The standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge. And it inevitably leads to materialism, sweeping aside the endless fabrications of professorial scholasticism. Of course, we must not forget that the criterion of practice can never, in the nature of things, either confirm or refute any human idea *completely*. This criterion too is sufficiently "indefinite" not to allow human knowledge to become "absolute"... (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*: Collected Works: Moscow, 1962. pp. 143-143)

for the observed relationships that now exist among these phenomena.

A very well-known example of a science in which reproducible and controlled experiments are impossible (at least with methods available at present), and in which the conditions of the problem cannot be defined very well, is geology "What could have caused these present structures to be what they are?" . . . Although (one) explanation seems very plausible, there is clearly no way to prove it by controlled and reproducible experiments. Moreover . . . the number of geological formations available for study is limited, and . . . each formation has so many individual peculiarities that it is, to some extent, a problem in itself . . . (pp. 10-11)

The parallel with the science of history is obvious—in fact, history would seem to have somewhat the best of the comparison!

Does this mean that there is no way to verify hypotheses concerning the causes of geological formations? Clearly not. First of all, there is the general consistency with which a very wide body of data can be explained . . . Still more support can be obtained if the theories will correctly predict new discoveries . . .

Of course, hypotheses of the type that we have discussed above will, in general, be subject to corrections, modifications and extensions, which may have to be made later when new data become available. In this respect, however, the situation in geology is not basically different from that in fields where reproducible experiments and observations can be done . . . For example, even Newton's laws of motion, which for over two hundred years were regarded as absolutely correct expressions of the most fundamental and universal laws of physics, and which had behind them the support of an enormous number of repro-

ducible and very precise experiments and observations carried out under well-defined conditions, were ultimately found to be only an approximation. (pp. 11-12)

In other words, and this is a point which Bohm develops at length elsewhere, approximate or limited knowledge is not worthless knowledge. We don't have to know everything before we can know—or do—anything. Reality is infinite and ever-changing and never fully knowable.

In the last analysis, then, the problem of finding the causal laws that apply in a given field reduces to finding an answer to the question, "Where do the relationships among the phenomena that we are studying come from?" . . . Whether experiments are available or not, hypotheses can always be verified by seeing the extent to which they explain correctly the relevant facts that are known in the field in question, and the extent to which they permit correct predictions when the theory is applied to new phenomena. And as long as these possibilities exist, progress can always be made in any science towards obtaining progressively better understanding of the causal laws that apply in the field under investigation in the science in question. (p. 12)

I won't try to improve on that statement as a defense of the science of history. Read the book. All the quotes are from the first twelve pages of this rich work; Bohm here has hardly gotten into his subject, which is much broader than the portion I have chosen to dwell upon.

Bohm's closing sentence is:

The essential character of scientific research is, then, that it moves toward the absolute by studying the relative, in its inexhaustable multiplicity and diversity.

Bohm himself has illuminated that diversity and furthered that move by writing this book which, as one of its many accomplishments, reinforces a positive answer to the question: "Can History Be a Science?"



Dialectical Materialism: Outline for Study

The questions below were used at a Progressive Labor Party national cadre school of 100 party members in July 1979, to help in learning dialectical materialism. Together with similar questions, they are being used throughout the Party and its base today to continue this study.

The article on Dialectical Materialism in the October-November 1977 PL Magazine (Vol. 10, No. 6) and the article in this issue, Can History Be A Science? are part of the effort to make dialectical materialism the property of the masses.

When the working class bases its actions on a dialectical materialist world outlook, it can make revolution, build socialism, and prevent that process from being reversed and capitalism restored. Without mass understanding of dialectical materialism, errors philosophical based on an idealist, metaphysical world outlook will eventually grow strong enough to reverse the process of building socialism. Dialectical materialism in the hands of only the party leaders, or even the members, is not suff-

Topic 1. Investigation, objectivity, subjectivity, universality.

What is philosophy?

What is science? Can history be a science?

How do you buy a car, look for an apartment, get a job?

How do you solve a political problem in your club?

Topic 2. Materialism v. idealism.

What is idealism? What is materialism?

If the laws and categories of dialectical materialism are universal, i.e., are demonstrated by physics, chemistry, biology, cooking, children's development and all other processes, why wasn't the philosophy of Dialectical Materialism developed earlier in human history? Why did it arise in conjunction with the working-class movement?

Does "being determine consciousness"?

If it does, why aren't all the workers revolutionaries? Why do we say, "without revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary movement"?

Why do we need the Progressive Labor Party? Why do we need democratic centralism? (remember the question, what is science?)

Why do we need PL Magazine?

Why do we need to sell and write for

Challenge-Desafio?

Why do we need to recruit more people to PLP?

Why do we need to build CAR on your job/

cient. "Theory, when it grips the masses, is a material force." If the masses are not gripped by dialectical materialism, they are in the grip of bourgeois philosophy. There is no middle ground.

We cannot wait until after the revolution to suddenly bring our philosophy to the working class. That would mean building, from now until then, an anti-scientific, pragmatic world view. We have therefore already begun the effort to bring dialectical materialism right into the shops, the military bases, the neighborhoods, the campuses—alongside of and interpenetrating with our class struggles against the bosses.

We use questions because dialectical materialism cannot be grasped merely by memorizing answers. To learn dialectical materialism is to learn how to think—to grasp objective reality, and to influence it qualitatively better than before. It requires struggle, both internally and externally. It requires reading the PL articles and the Marxist classics on philosophy. It requires participation in the class struggle and application of dialectical materialism to the destruction of the enemy.

campus/school/neighborhood? Why does building CAR mean forming functioning chapters in addition to signing up members? (remember—this is related to the difference between materialism and idealism)

Why do we need to build an *international* communist movement?

Topic 3. Internal contradiction is the primary mover of things.

What is a contradiction?

What is a *main* contradiction?

What is the main contradiction in the universe, our solar system, the filament of an electric light bulb, a wood fire in a fire place?

What is the main contradiction in the (political) world? What is politics?

What is the main contradiction in the U.S.A.?

What is the main contradiction in the U.S. ruling class? in the U.S. working class?

What is the main contradiction in the Progressive Labor Party?

What is the main contradiction in you?

What is the main contradiction in the person you hope to recruit next? (How do you know?)

Topic 4. Quantitative change leads to qualitative change leads to quantitative change . . .

Describe a process from the kitchen involving quantitative and qualitative change.

Describe another physical, chemical and/or biological process involving quantity-quality.

How does a baby learn to walk? run? talk?

Why did you join PLP? Describe the process? Was joining PLP a qualitative change for you? For the party?

How have you changed since you joined PLP? How has the Party changed during this period?

What changes are taking place in your base? What are you doing about it?

Are you selling more C-D's? Is there a network? Are we getting ready for changes in the country?

Will fascism be a qualitative change? In what ways?

Topic 5. The Negation of the Negation

What, literally, is a negation of a negation?

What is the direction of history? Will we return to feudalism, or chattel slavery? Does history "repeat itself"?

Will PLP be able to lead a socialist revolution? How fast is history moving? Is change getting faster or slower?

Is it possible to understand much without studying history?

What is human nature? Has it changed? Were the American Indians greedy?

Can being in the Party change people?

When people say, "You can't fight city hall," or "You can't change human nature," are they basing these statements on a study of history? What are these statements based on? Is there *any* material basis to these statements? What *philosophy* are they based on?

Do ideas like these ever come up in your head? Based on what?

Topic 6. Likeness and difference.

What are the similarities between the Russian Revolution, the Paris Commune, the Chinese Revolution? What are the differences? Are they *more the same or more different*?

What are the similarities between you and your boss? What are the differences?

Are you more the same as your boss, or more different?

What are the similarities between you and a friend/fellow-worker who is not in PLP? What are the differences? Are you more the same or more different? Can this change?

What are the likenesses and differences among two or three people in your base? What different approaches to them do you use, taking these differences into account?

If you are a leader of a party club, section, or whatever, what are the likenesses and differences among the people you are giving leadership to? What different methods do you employ to take account of these differences?

When confronted with new people, situations, do you always ask yourself, is this *more the same or different to/from* something you already know about? Do you think this could be a useful tool?

Topic 7. The apparent and the essential.

How do you judge people (what method of judging people does bourgeois society push?)?

Topic 8. Limits.

Can you live to be 300 years old?

If you live on a farm, and you lift up a calf every day, will you still be able to lift him when he is a full grown steer?

What if you started with a baby elephant? (Special for those who have been reading **Capital**). Prices appear to vary somewhat with supply and demand, and not correspond one-to-one with the number of labor hours embodied in the commodity. Under capitalism, what are the limits of this fluctuation? Why can Hershey bars go up to 30 cents, but not to thirty dollars?

As long as the objective situation stays more the same than different, what are the limits of the growth of PLP? How many can your club, section recruit in the next 6 months? How do you know?

Topic 9. The particular and the general.

How did the **Challenge** editorial on the anti-nuclear movement apply this concept? (Reprinted in this issue.)

Can you understand your industry, school, child—or anything else—without knowing of the particular and the general?

A final oldie but goodie—what is the "law of uneven development"? Give three examples.

Suggested Readings

1. ENGELS:

Ludwig Feurbach

Part II—Idealism and Materialism, pp. 20-32

Part IV—Dialectical Materialism, pp. 45-59

Appendix—Marx Theses on Feurbach

2. LENIN:

Selected Works (Vols. 11 and 9)
The Three Sources and Three

Part I, Chap. XII (first 4 and last 3 pages)

Part II, Chap. XIII

3. MAO: On Practice

6. PL Magazine:

Dialectical Materialism, Vol.

10, No. 6, Oct. 1977

Can History Be a Science, Vol.

12, No. 4, Fall 1979

The Dialectics of Disease, Vol.

12, No. 2, Spring 1979

Component Parts of Marxism (Vol. 11, pp. 3-8)

Karl Marx (Vol. 11 pp. 13-18)

On the Significance of Militant

Materialism (Vol. 11, pp. 71-78)

On Dialectics (Vol. 11, pp. 81-85)

Once Again on the Trade Unions,

etc. (Vol. 9, pp. 66-67)

3. MAO: On Contradiction

4. ENGELS:

Anti-Duhring

By W.T.

Reformism in the Countryside

The Bolsheviks and The Peasants

At the time of the Revolution the peasantry made up between 70% and 80% of the population of Russia, and an even greater proportion in the areas of the future U.S.S.R. (formed in 1924) outside Russia. The Bolsheviks believed that the peasantry, though an invaluable ally of the working class during the fight to seize state power, could not be won to fighting for socialism. They would however, support a demand for the confiscation of landed estates and "Land to the Tillers." This was the basis of an alliance with the working class, for no bourgeois regime conceivable at the time would agree to so sweeping a land reform. Yet Lenin and the Bolsheviks were acutely aware that "Land to the Tiller" was a reform; it was capitalist, not socialist, in content.

As is explained in the P.L.P. article "Strengths and Weaknesses in the Line of the International Communist Movement," pp. 54-59,* the Bolsheviks under Lenin had the most left line among all the socialist parties before the Revolution. Basically all other Social-Democrats (the official name for all socialist parties before World War I) believed, with Plekhanov, that the peasantry were a reactionary force only. Plekhanov tried to justify his views with a one-sided interpretation of certain passages in Marx and Engels:**

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, **the peasant**, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. **They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back**



A typical rural village in Russia at the turn of the century. The Bolsheviks won the allegiance of many of these peasants with promises of land, but the party believed they could not be won to socialism.

the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat. They thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat. ("Manifesto of the Communist Party," Part 1. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*. I, 44; emphasis added.)

We believe that Marx and Engels were correct in 1848 to describe the peasantry of that time as a reactionary force in the main. In fact the feudalist reactionaries of Europe had relied upon the peasantry since the French Revolution. Also in 1848 there was only one country in the world—England—where capitalism had fully developed. Marx and Engels were therefore describing the peasantry before this class had yet been faced with the consequences of full-blown capitalism.

During the next 30 years, however, France, Germany, and the United States

each began to rapidly develop into full-fledged capitalist economies and joined England in imperialist expansion. Capitalist relations of production began to develop rapidly in the countryside as well. This meant that a minority of peasants became relatively large, wealthy producers, while the majority became impoverished, unable to compete, became indebted, or were simply robbed of their land by the capitalists who ran the state. The same process took place in non-industrial countries. Imperialist expansion by the great capitalist powers, which soon included Japan and Belgium as well as England, Germany, France and the U.S.A., murderously forced capitalist exploitation in its most brutal forms throughout the entire world.

So by the late 19th century the world was very different from what it had been in 1848. In particular, the peasantry everywhere was beginning to fragment, to break into different groups. **The bulk of the peasants were becoming proletarianized—robbed of the means of production (and, implements, animals) and**

* Published in the "Road to Revolution, III" Special Issue of *PL Magazine*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (November, 1971).

** Marx and Engels may have been correct concerning the peasantry of Europe in 1848. But by the early 20th century capitalism and imperialism had penetrated virtually every area of the world. Commodity produc-

tion characterized even peasant farming, leading to a sharp differentiation of the peasantry in every country into a small well-to-do group and a large majority who were increasingly impoverished, forced to sell their labor (in cities or to richer peasants or landlords).

PEASANTS

left with nothing but their labor power to sell. This became, and remains today, the objective, material basis for an alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

In the later years Marx speculated that Russia might be able to have a socialist revolution without a long prior stage of capitalist development. This suggests that Marx had begun to realize that not every country would have to go through the same processes of development that England, the first capitalist country in the world, did, and that Marx entertained the idea that the peasantry could change and become a revolutionary force.

In *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (July 1905) Lenin recognized that the peasantry

could be an invaluable ally of the working class, but only in the "democratic revolution." He does not speak of the peasantry being won to socialism, like the working class.

...to avoid finding itself with its hands tied in the struggle against the inconsistent bourgeois democracy the proletariat must be class-conscious and strong enough to rouse the peasantry to revolutionary consciousness, guide its assault, and thereby independently pursue the line of consistent proletarian democratism.

Beyond the bounds of democratism there can be no question of the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie having a single will. Class struggle between them is

Who Are The Peasants?

In much of Africa, Asia and Latin America many people earning their living from agriculture are called "peasants." The peasantry was a class in pre-capitalist society. They were the actual producers; feudal lords were the rulers. Peasants were bound to the soil—they could not leave—and had to pay rents in kind or in labor. Unlike workers, they could not be fired and had some control over their working conditions. The growth of capitalism stripped peasants of control over the means of production. Marx said that the peasants became proletarians only when they were "doubly free"—free to sell their labor power and "free" of any other means of making a living.

In the imperialist era, capitalism is worldwide. It created a world market which ended self-sufficient production. The peasants needed cash, and had to sell their land rights for cash. Now, stripped of access to the means of production, they were forced into wage labor. Thus, "land reform"

has often been a cover for accelerating the process of stealing land from the peasantry, changing them into an agricultural proletariat. The so-called "peasants" of today are workers who depend on cash and have no means of making a living except wage labor. For more detail on how the peasantry as a class was eliminated, see the article on Iran in PL, (Summer 1979, Vol.12, No. 3).

The transformation of the peasantry into an agricultural proletariat created the material basis for an alliance with the working class. Peasants could be won to see that their future was bleak—they would be stripped of their land and forced into wage labor—unless they joined up with workers to eliminate capitalism. Unfortunately, as this article points out, the communist movement was not very clear on the need to win peasants to socialism.

We must correct this mistake and conduct vigorous communist agitation, around the program of socialist revolution, among the agricultural workers who come from the now-disappeared peasant class.

Revisionists (phony "communists") of all stripes attack the idea of fighting for socialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They all claim that the agricultural workers in the poor countries—so-called "peasants"—are "not ready" for socialism, unlike the intellectuals. What gross elitism and hatred for the masses! Agricultural workers are often in the forefront of the fight against capitalism, while the revisionists are scurrying to find some "lesser evil" boss to support.

Often the revisionists try to cover their tracks by claiming that they are applying the policies that Marx and Lenin advocated on the peasant question. One of the greatest contributions that Marx and Lenin made was to show that societies change according to definite laws, that there is a science of history. They showed that capitalism breaks down all pre-capitalist societies and transforms the peasantry into a working class. In the present period, there is no longer a peasantry. Our strategy must be to win the worldwide working class to socialism.

inevitable, but it is in a democratic republic that this struggle will be the most thoroughgoing and widespread struggle of the people for socialism. Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future... Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage-worker against the employer, the struggle for socialism. Here singleness of will is impossible. (pp. 495, 509, in **V.I. Lenin: Selected Works in 3 Volumes**, I. See also quotations in P.L.P., "Strengths and Weaknesses...", p. 55).

During the months preceding the October Revolution of 1917 Lenin strongly supported peasant confiscation of landlord's estates, a demand originally raised by the Socialist Revolutionaries but dropped by them as they grew to represent mainly the more well-to-do peasants and were attracted to supporting the bourgeois Provisional Government.

While peasants occasionally joined the Bolshevik Party after they had come to the cities (Mikhail Kalinin, later President of the U.S.S.R., was one of them), **the Bolsheviks never tried to organize in the villages, either before 1905 or afterwards.** The Bolsheviks **did** organize within the army, attaching great importance to this work which was crucial to their success in neutralizing most of the bourgeois armed forces and winning over the St. Petersburg garrison in 1917. Most rank-and-file soldiers were peasants. So during 1917 and the Civil War (1917-1921) many peasant soldiers helped to win some base for the Bolsheviks in the peasant villages, since the soldiers knew the Bolsheviks defended the peasants' demands for peace and land.

During 1917 too election results (e.g. those for the Constituent Assembly, held in late November) showed clearly that, in areas where the Bolshevik program was made known to the peasantry, the peasants usually supported the Bolshevik party strongly.

But the Bolsheviks did not send forces into the countryside to recruit among the peasants. The peasant uprisings in 1905-06 showed that the peasantry would rise up against the landlords and support a party which championed the slogan of

"Land to the Tillers." No organizing was needed to prompt that. Most importantly, the Bolsheviks never fully broke with the idea that the peasants were fundamentally petty bourgeois, and could not be won to supporting socialism, since socialism would mean, not individual peasant ownership of land, but collective ownership of land.

Lenin **did** believe that there was a material basis for an **alliance for socialism** between the **poorest stratum** of peasants and the working class. In **Two Tactics of Social Democracy**, he wrote:

The proletariat must carry through to completion the democratic revolution by uniting to itself the mass of the peasantry, in order to crush by force the opposition of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must

The Bolsheviks did not send forces into the countryside to recruit among the peasants.

complete the socialist revolution by uniting to itself the mass of semi-proletarian elements in the population, in order to break by force the opposition of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and of the petty bourgeoisie.

At the time, Lenin did not discuss exactly what he meant by this. In 1918, in the midst of the Civil War when the support of the peasants was a life-and-death matter, Lenin elaborated:

Yes, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution **so long as we march with the peasantry as a whole... At first** with "all" the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landowners, against medievalism (and, so far, the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). **Then,**

with the poorest peasantry, with the semi-proletariat, with all the exploited **against capitalism**, meaning also against the rich peasants, the **kulaks**, and the speculators; and, so far, the revolution becomes **socialist**.

And Lenin gave as justification for this two-stage theory of revolution, which was a radically more left position than all other Marxist parties took, only the low level of Bolshevik work in the countryside:

To attempt to put up an artificial Chinese wall between one and the other—the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution—to separate one from the other by any other element **except** the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor of the countryside, is the greatest perversion of Marxism, its vulgarization, its replacement by liberalism. (both quotations in Carr, **The Bolshevik Revolution, I, 132.**)

etween June 11 and December 2, 1918 the Bolsheviks had an official policy of organizing “Committees of Poor Peasants” in peasant villages, to side with the working class and help collect grain surpluses from rich peasants or **kulaks**. The **kulaks** were the main producers for the market and were withholding grain from the cities because the cities had little to pay for them. But this was never more than a tactical move, and was quickly abandoned when it did not seem to bring about the greatest possible collection of grain. In other words winning a base among the peasantry was seen as a **tactic**, one way to collect needed grain. It was **not** a fundamental **strategy**, indispensable base-building for socialism in the villages. This was never undertaken. There was no such attitude as the Chinese Communist Party later displayed after 1927, of uniting with the peasantry, becoming one with the poor peasants.

I. New Economic Policy, (NEP).

NEP came into being in 1921, when the Civil War was almost over but the economy of Russia had almost ceased to function. Most importantly, the Bolsheviks still had no base for socialism among the peasantry. The peasants had fundamentally supported the Bolsheviks during the Civil War because the

“Whites” (pro-Tsarist forces, mainly led by ex-officers and funded by the Russian bourgeoisie and the Allied powers) and Interventionist powers obviously stood for re-establishing the landed estates and landlord control, not “Land to the Tiller.” After this danger had passed, however, the peasants were unwilling to provide much cheap grain at low prices to feed the workers of the cities and the army.

The old economic system under the Tsars, based upon ruthless exploitation of the peasantry, had provided large quantities of grain at low prices. Now that the land was parcelled up among individual peasant families, less grain was produced, since this method was less “efficient” (and even less because of the disruption and deaths caused by the World War and the bitter Civil War). Also, much of what was produced was

The majority of Party members in the countryside were intellectuals, not peasants.

now consumed by the peasants themselves; that is, the peasants had a higher standard of living. So less was available for market, and this pushed up the price.

Under NEP the peasants paid only a tax to the State. Otherwise a capitalist economy existed within the countryside (a similar policy of market economy and extensive private ownership was also adopted for the rest of the economy). The Bolsheviks hoped that this would lead to the most rapid possible restoration of production in the war-ravaged economy. At first Lenin was clear about terming NEP a “retreat” from socialism, at one point even referring to it as “a defeat and retreat—for a new attack.” “Such descriptions seemed to encourage the view of NEP as a temporary evil to be overcome as quickly as possible,” (Carr, II, 286).

At the same time however Lenin referred to NEP as a much more long-

range policy. Since the European socialist revolution was not about to take place, and since the Bolsheviks had no base for socialism among the peasantry, NEP was to be a long period of transition from the "state capitalism" of NEP to socialism.

As far as winning a base among the peasantry for socialism is concerned, NEP was a total disaster for the Bolshevik Party. A look at recruitment to the Communist Party (Bolshevik) during this time confirms this. Despite considerable efforts to recruit from the countryside, the Party Census statistics for Jan. 10, 1927—after almost six years of NEP—showed that only about 10% of CP members were either "Hired farm laborers" or "Peasants working own farms." The majority of CP'ers in the countryside were teachers or other professionals and government and party officials, not active peasants. In most villages and even whole regions there was not a single peasant Party cell!

In fact the situation was much worse even than this. A study undertaken on the eve of the collectivization movement in 1929 showed that most of the peasants who had joined the CPSU by that time were **kulak** elements, from among the well-to-do peasants:

... whereas less than one peasant household in six in the RSFSR (the Russian Republic, with the highest per centages of communists) had property worth over 800 roubles, the proportion among **communist** peasants was one in four. A far higher proportion of communist peasants than noncommunists employed hired labor—in the Ukraine the ratio was two to one... peasants joining the party tended to be polarized into those who gave up their farms and were absorbed into the administration and those who farmed efficiently or intensively enough (if necessary employing hired labor) to spare time for their party duties without becoming impoverished. (Rigby, **Communist Party Membership in the USSR**, p. 171.)

Many of these peasants were expelled during the collectivization movement for being pro-**kulak**. During January, 1928, Stalin made a long trip through Siberia. It was prompted by the fact that there were fewer grain deliveries to the market than the year before, although the harvest had increased. There

Stalin discovered that most of the local CP members were related to or involved with the **kulaks**. So even the tiny base that the CPSU believed it had among the peasantry was in fact largely unreliable!

Yet these consequences were an **inevitable** result of the NEP policy. Naturally those peasants who benefited most from the policies of the CPSU were those most likely to want to join the Party. These were the better-off peasants, who would gain most in a capitalist market economy. They also had the most education and were most politically active, as had always been the case with the richer peasants in the Russian villages.

During the seven-plus years of NEP the Bolsheviks had basically made no headway in building a base for socialism among the peasantry. This was because they had never tried to do so. The Bolsheviks continued to believe that the peasantry was fundamentally a bourgeois, anti-revolutionary force. Base-building, insofar as it was done, was done either among the wealthier peasants, who were really won to capitalism, or among the poorest peasants and farm laborers. But these latter had little reason to join a Party which was presiding over their continued impoverishment in the name of building socialism. Nor did the Party help them in struggling against the **kulaks**, the bourgeois forces in the countryside, because the Party supported the richer peasants who alone had substantial surpluses of grain to sell to feed the cities. Finally, these poorer peasants had no leisure time to devote to Party duties.

During the collectivization movement the Party turned back towards its experience of the Civil War, formed new "Committees of Poor Peasants," and stimulated class war in the countryside. But this was all done at the last moment, and under the pressure of a collectivization movement which was primarily a "revolution from above", not initiated by the peasant masses.

II. Collectivization

The policy of refraining from trying to win the peasantry to socialism was unanimously agreed upon in the Bolshevik Party. **None** of the Oppositions which arose during the 1920's broke with the Party position to the Left and advocated building a base among the peasantry for

socialism.

Lenin stated very clearly what became the official policy in one of his last works:

Under no circumstances must this be understood to mean that we should immediately propagate purely and strictly communist ideas in the countryside. As long as our countryside lacks the material basis for communism, it will be, I should say, harmful, in fact, I should say, fatal, for communism to do so. ("Pages from a Diary.")

Lenin developed a theory, more or less followed by the Soviet government, according to which the countryside and the peasantry would peacefully evolve towards collectivized, socialist agriculture.

All we actually need under NEP is to organize the population of Russia in co-operative societies on a sufficiently large scale, for we have now found that degree of combination of private interest, of private commercial interest, with state supervision and control of this interest....

And given Soviet ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilized co-operators is the system of socialism. ("On Co-Operation, I," 1923.)

Now we are entitled to say that for us the mere growth of co-operation... is identical with the growth of socialism, and at the same time we have to admit that there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism. The radical modification is this: formerly we placed, and had to place, the main emphasis on the political struggle, on revolution, on winning political power, etc. Now the emphasis is changing and shifting to peaceful, organizational, "cultural" work. ("On Co-Operation, II," 1923.)

One anti-communist historian, who strongly agrees with this approach, has stated that "Lenin rehabilitated the concept of reformism," which he expounded until he died (Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, p. 132). This extremely right-wing idea was adopted by the Party, and the chief spokesman for it after Lenin's death came to be Nikolai Bukharin. Even Cohen, Bukharin's chief

admirer among contemporary anti-communist historians, admits that Bukharin was a mechanical, economic determinist in his theories (Cohen, Chapter 4).

According to Yuriy Pyatakov, a prominent Old Bolshevik, Lenin had written these last essays (often erroneously called "Lenin's Testament") "under the pressure of the oppressive, discouraging illness" of his last days. Carr and Davies call these essays "the unrevised jottings of a sick man... devoid of the incisive clarity characteristic of Lenin's writings." But they became the rationale of a gradualist, "evolutionary" concept of approaching socialism in the countryside without class struggle. Although Bukharin was its most outspoken proponent among Party leaders, this gradualist approach was official Party policy until 1948.3

It was Stalin, as chief spokesman for the left wing of the Bolshevik Party, who broke with this gradualism.

...the more we advance, the greater will be the resistance of the capitalist elements and the sharper the class struggle, while the Soviet Government, whose strength will steadily increase, will pursue a policy of isolating these elements, a policy of demoralizing the enemies of the working class, a policy, lastly, of crushing the resistance of the exploiters, thereby creating a basis for the further advance of the working class and the main mass of the peasantry.

It must not be imagined that the socialist forms will develop, squeezing out the enemies of the working class, while our enemies retreat in silence and make way for our advance... until "unexpectedly" all the social groups without exception, both kulaks and poor peasants, both workers and capitalists, find themselves "suddenly" and "imperceptibly," without struggle or commotion, in the lap of a socialist society...

It never has been and never will be the case that a dying class surrenders its positions voluntarily without attempting to organize resistance. It never has been and never will be the case that the working class could advance towards socialism in a class society



Peasant women bringing food to Red Army troops in the trenches during the Civil War. Although hundreds of thousands of peasant soldiers were a mainstay of the Red Army, they were considered less trustworthy than workers.

without struggle or commotion. On the contrary, the advance towards socialism cannot but cause the exploiting elements to resist the advance, and the resistance of the exploiters cannot but lead to the inevitable sharpening of the class struggle. ("Industrialization and the Grain Problem," July 9, 1928, in Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 179-80.)*

Even the more "responsible" (this is a relative term) bourgeois historians admit that "co-operation" was a failure.

... Soviet experience in the relatively liberal NEP period strongly indicates a basic incompatibility between agricultural cooperation and the goals and methods of Marxism-Leninism... (Robert Miller, "Soviet Agricultural Policy in the 'Twenties...," *Soviet Studies*, 27 (1975), p. 243.)

The co-operatives had simply been taken over by the richer peasants.

The CPSU was faced with a dilemma. The policy of the Right, whose major spokesman in the leadership was Bukharin but which enjoyed wide support in the party and in the country as a whole, called for building up consumer-goods industries before heavy industry. Only by expanding consumer-goods production, they argued, could enough inexpensive goods be offered for sale to the peasants to give them the incentive to increase production in order to offer more produce on the market. Gradually, over many years, the huge capital reserves necessary to finance construction of steel, concrete, machine-tool and power industries, the basis for industrialization, could be obtained.

The Left rejected this policy as a surrender to capitalism from within and to the international bourgeoisie from without. Stalin and those who followed him—ultimately, the rank-and-file, especially the workers, in the Party—realized that an imperialist war against

* For Pyatakov, see Valentinov-Vol'sky, in *Novy Zhurnal*, 52 (1958), p. 149; for Carr and Davis, see

Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1969 (Penguin ed.), p. 973.

PEASANTS

the Soviet Union was only a matter of time. In 1931 Stalin stated that the U.S.S.R. must catch up with the industrialized countries in ten years; "either we do it, or we shall go under" (*Works*, Vol. 13, p. 41). This meant a crash program of industrialization. Such a program could only be funded by large increases in the amount of grain which the State received from the peasantry. This grain (and other agricultural necessities) could then be paid as wages to workers and others engaged in building the necessary industries, which would not begin to produce goods and thus to pay for themselves for a number of years.

But the problem was that, as we have seen, the Bolsheviks had among the peasantry little or no reliable base which was loyal to the idea of collectivization of agriculture. They had never tried to build a base around a socialist line in the countryside; now they were largely isolated there.

The solution of the Party leadership was to rouse the poor peasants against the **kulaks**, try to neutralize the large and vague category of "middle peasants," and collectivize agriculture. This was the policy agreed upon by the overwhelming majority of the working-class communists in the Party, as even anti-communist historians admit now (See Cohen, **Bukharin**, pp. 327; 343).

Collectivization had support in the party and among the working class. 25,000 workers were mobilized in 1929 to go to the countryside and help the poor peasants battle with the **kulaks**. The "official line" among anti-communist historians both inside and outside the U.S.S.R. is that there was virtually no support in the countryside itself, among the peasantry, for this collectivization move. This is obviously false. Without considerable support from among the peasantry itself, collectivization would have collapsed. As a more "liberal" Sovietologist recently put it:

The Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917 might be dismissed as an accidental or Jacobin **coup d'état** in a period of war-produced anarchy, but the Bolshevik victory in a long Civil War can not be explained in these terms. Above all, Stalin's success in carrying through his collectivization program cannot be so explained. Bitter experience has demonstrated the difficulty that regimes can face in herding peas-

ants into strategic hamlets or the like, in controlling peasant guerrilla movements, in providing safety for its officials stationed in the villages, in preventing largely peasant armies from dissolving in the face of rebel action. Collectivization did produce guerrilla action, but the fact that it was overcome in a few years indicates clearly the existence of societal forces, even in the countryside, on which Bolshevik policy at least partially rested. (Jerry Hough, *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory*, p. 12.)

Much has been made of the concept "revolution from above," used by anti-communists to characterize the collectivization struggle. In the *History of the C.P.S.U. (b), Short Course*, where the term originated (p. 305), support of millions of peasants "from below" is also mentioned. Hough is in fact admitting the truth of this statement.

Collectivization nonetheless was a protracted, violent, and difficult experience. There were many peasant uprisings from 1929 on against communists who tried to force collectivization upon them or to collect grain for the cities. Many collective farms were formed too rapidly, were poorly planned, and failed. Stalin admitted to Winston Churchill (if Churchill's memoirs* can be believed) that ten million peasants, including most **Kulaks** and their families but also a good many other, "middle" peasants, were arrested, deported, or killed during collectivization, and the "great bulk" of these were "wiped out" during the class struggles.

There was considerable death from starvation in some areas in 1931-2 because non-collectivized peasants had planted just enough grain to feed their families, knowing the rest would probably be confiscated by the State. The State declared such behavior to be sabotage and took the stipulated grain taxes anyway. A bad crop year contributed to the famine, as did an epidemic of typhus. In all, perhaps several million peasants died from these two factors.

Anti-communist writers are given to shedding many tears over the "needless deaths" which Stalin's collectivization

* Churchill, W. *The Second World War*, Vol. 4 (London, 1951), pp. 447-8.

engendered. This is not only hypocritical (for example, the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian peasants killed by the U.S. numbered many more), but misses the point. Any revolution for socialism in the countryside would have taken a toll in lives, just as the poor harvest of 1931-2 would have killed many (mainly poorer) peasants and, of course, workers as well. Stalin was absolutely correct when he forecast violent class struggle against the capitalist elements in the countryside.

No; the **main** tragedy of collectivization is that it **did not, and could not, really succeed**. The peasantry were not basically won to social ownership of the means of production—the land, livestock, implements. At most only the poorest of them were, those who in fact had been reduced to selling their labor power to others most of the time and

Peasants stayed on collective farms because material incentives were mixed with compulsion.

were proletarianized farm laborers rather than peasants.

The collectivization movement ended as a compromise and stalemate. As a result of this incorrect political outlook, collectivization failed to achieve even its economic purposes. It was undertaken in order to guarantee higher grain deliveries to the State, to finance industrialization. Its **main** purpose was not to win millions of peasants to socialism. Because the peasants were not politically won to socialism, they could only be persuaded to remain on the collective farms if material incentives were combined with compulsion. Private plots and privately-owned cows and fowl were permitted, as was time to work them. These were concessions to capitalism; the peasants could sell the produce of the private plots and animals on an open market at much higher prices

than the State would pay, of course these concessions undermined the socialist character of the **kolkhozy**.

In 1937 (a good year for the socialized sector) the private plot produced 52% of the country's potatoes and vegetables, 71% of its meat, 57% of its fruit, 43% of its wool, and 71% of its milk. Except for the production of grain and technical crops such as cotton, collectivization remained only partial throughout the Stalin years. (Hough, pp. 208-9)

III. Peasants Can be Won to Socialism!

The peasantry could have been won to socialist politics and to real collectivization! But the C.P.S.U., still regarding all but the poorest peasants as "bourgeois elements," never really tried to win them. Evidence is abundant that, with the proper political approach, the peasants could have been won:

(1) Many of them were won!

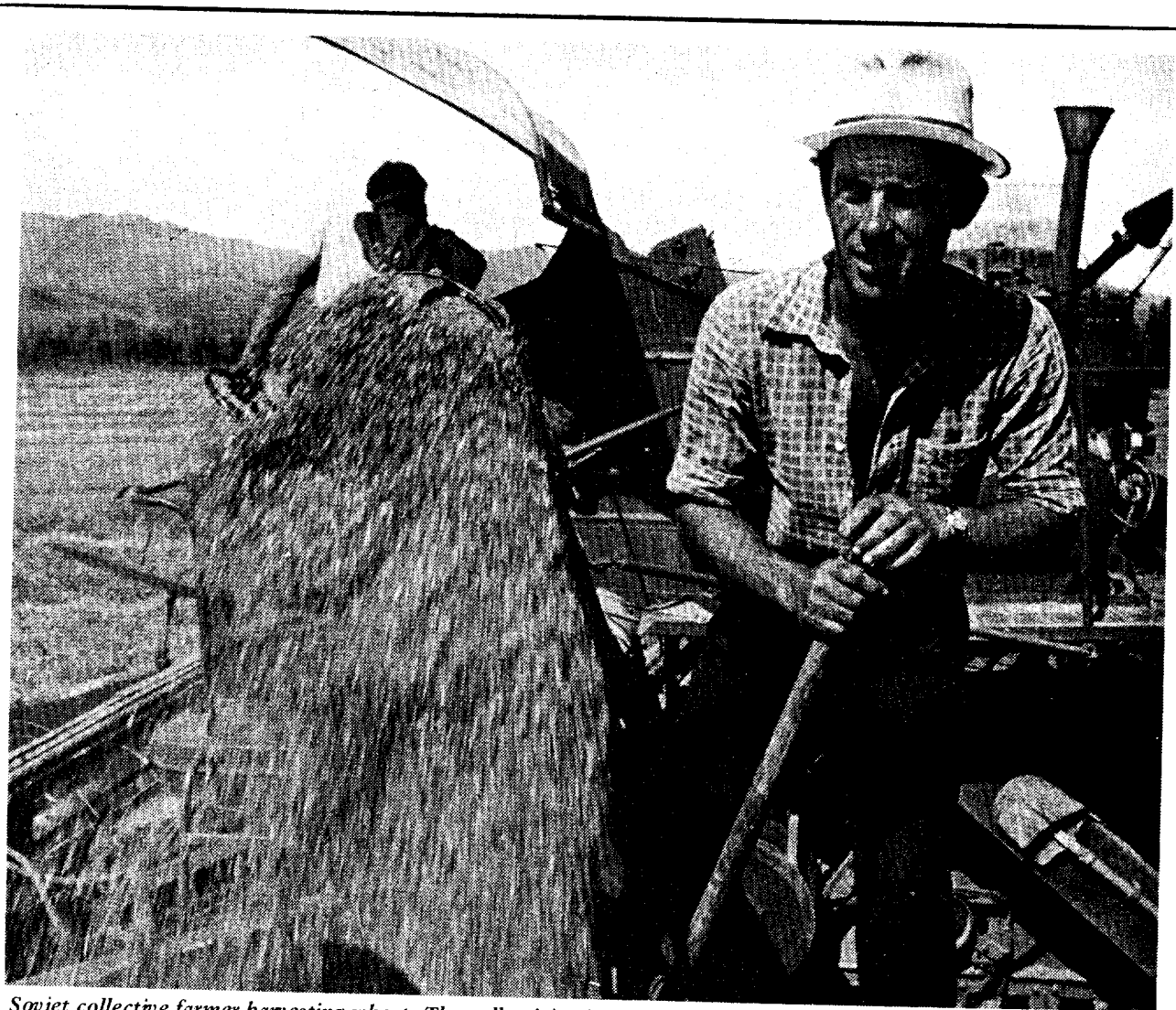
A part (but a small one) of agricultural production was carried out in **sovkhozy** or Soviet farms. On these farms there were no private plots.

(2) During the Second World War the peasants fought the Nazis ferociously. Hitler remarked time and again in amazement about the difference between the Russian peasant soldier of the First World War and the Soviet peasant soldier. This is attested by several biographers: Hitler himself was confused. In the Great War the Russian infantrymen had fought poorly; now they were tigers. Why? (Toland, **Adolf Hitler**, II, 791)

... the Russians fought far more bitterly than had the Poles or Allied troops... (Fest, **Hitler**, p. 679)

Peasants figure prominently in all partisan histories of the war in the Soviet Union. They were particularly strong in such totally agricultural areas as the Bryansk forest. Soviet sources make this clear; for example, see the review of Fyodorov, **The Underground Committee Carries On**, in **PL**, Vol. 11, No. 1, Feb.-Mar., 1978, pp. 35ff.

It is clear from these accounts that the peasantry, as well as the rest of the population, identified the Soviet govern-



Soviet collective farmer harvesting wheat. The collectivization of Soviet agriculture was accomplished with a mixture of material incentives and compulsion, rather than by political struggle.

ment with collectivization and the other C.P.S.U. policies, and knew that, in fighting for one, they were fighting for the other.

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(3) During their occupation of large areas of the Western U.S.S.R. the Nazis developed several lines of propaganda to try to win over the sympathies, or at least the neutrality, of Soviet peasants. The best developed of these was issued by the ex-Soviet general Andrei A. Vlasov, who collaborated with the Nazis. Since the Nazis had total control of what was printed under Vlasov's signature, and since they never intended to hold to any promises made to the peasants, the line they put forward in their propaganda was the one that, by trial and error, they thought would be the most successful, what the peasants wanted to hear.

The Nazis called for an end to collectivization, restoration of the Church, and anti-Semitism. Otherwise they insisted they would not re-establish capi-

talism! Appeals to nationalism had little effect on the peasantry as well, and were largely dropped. It was the estimate of the Nazi Russian experts and the Soviet collaborators who aided them that the peasants really wanted socialism and were not actively hostile to the Soviet regime, although most of them were not won to collectivization.*

(4) Finally, and perhaps the most telling point, the Chinese Communist Party had great success in winning the peasantry to socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, the movement to collectivize agriculture in China was undertaken by the masses, led by rank-and-file, mainly peasant, communists. It began without the authorization or even the knowledge of the Party leadership, a large part of which actively opposed it as "leftism." Mao did jump on the bandwagon and supported it, but his writings in Vol. 5 of the **Selected Works** make it clear that many leading CP'ers were frightened by it. Even Mao held back the movement by insisting that agricultural co-ops only be formed where production could be increased thereby. He did state that there were many peasants who were "politically conscious enough to take the socialist road and... really willing to join," and was clearly puzzled why there were any "middle peasants who are economically better off" at all like this! (Vol. 5, p. 193).

In reality, by the mid-1930's the U.S.S.R. was headed away from socialism, though it would be several decades before this process was completed. Internally, socialism was identified with production of goods. Naturally this meant the recruitment of white-collar technical "experts" into the Party in droves. By the '40's the C.P.S.U. was largely a party of engineers and managers, who occupied all the leading positions beneath the leadership rank of Old Bolsheviks such as Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Kalinin, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Zhdanov, and a few others.

...the evidence for different localities of the Soviet Union indicates that white-collar employees constituted over 70% of all new recruits. On 1 January 1941 the party included 494,800 specialists out of a total of 2,401,000 specialists employed in the national economy. Specialists

still constituted no more than 12.8% of party membership, but the magnitude of the change will be appreciated if it is remembered that since 1928 the number of specialists in the party had increased over 77 times, while the increase in the size of the party as a whole had been less than three-fold and the increase of all specialists in the country less than five-fold. The party now counted 20.6% of all specialists in its ranks as compared with 1.2% in 1928. (A.L. Unger, in **Soviet Studies**, 20 (1969), p. 329-30; emphasis added).

This process was unrecognized by Stalin and the leadership of the Party because they equated socialism with working-class power (achieved in 1917) in an industrialized state. This economic

By the mid-1930's the Soviet Union was headed away from socialism.

determinist concept was what had led all socialists except the Bolsheviks—and even many of them—to state that a socialist revolution could not happen in the under-developed Russia of 1917, and had to occur first in the industrialized West. By 1936 the U.S.S.R. was industrialized, or rapidly becoming so, and the same determinist idea seemed to state that it was now firmly socialist as a result. Surely the new "experts" who were coming to control the party (though as yet not in top positions) would be loyal to the working class. Were not many of them from the working class, educated and promoted to replace the old bourgeois intelligentsia within the past few years? And were not the rest of the "experts" rapidly joining the Communist Party, which had had a pre-dominately working-class membership as recently as 1934?

*This is thoroughly documented in Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*.



DETROIT—On June 3 over 3000 members of UAW Local 3 and their families marched against the plan to close Dodge Main at the end of the 1980 model year. Two hundred workers, many skilled trades and maintenance workers, walked off the job to take part in the march. The turnout puts to rest the lie that perpetually flows from the mouths of the UAW hacks that “the workers won’t get off their asses to do anything.”

It also shows a whole lot more. The workers marched from the local union hall to a ballfield in the middle of Hamtramck (a small city that sits in the middle of Detroit) and were subjected to endless mealy-mouthed dribble by a collection of UAW bigwigs and Hamtramck politicians. The most militant thing that came from the speakers’ platform was when UAW International Vice-President for Chrysler Marc Stepp said that he would make sure that the “workers’ feelings would be transmitted to the highest levels of Chrysler Corporation.” This goose-stepping neo-fascist was the hand-picked representative for the Detroit ruling class and Colblood Young to fly to Washington, D.C. to guarantee the Democratic Party National Committee that there would be “no labor problems in the summer of 1980” so that

they could feel free to have their murderous convention in Detroit.

The purpose of this rally, called for and led by the UAW, was three-pronged: first to channel the workers’ anger into a no-win strategy—relying on the Democratic Party to pass laws against plant closings. The second prong of their strategy is to try to convince Chrysler that this is not “good business.” The third prong on their anti-working class fork is to lobby for special unemployment compensation laws for workers laid off due to the oil crisis. In other words, take the struggle every way but the correct way—which, of course, would be to the bosses’ themselves—via a general strike.

What the rally revealed is that it is utterly useless, in fact suicidal, to think that we can rely on the liberals and social democrats (read social-fascists) who run the unions to fight in our interests. In fact, if we follow their plan to “save” Dodge Main, we’ll all end up in ovens of biting sand in the Sinai. They are truly leading us to war and fascism.

The plan to close Dodge Main is not a hoax or an idle threat. It is not an attempt to give Chrysler a bargaining chip in the contract talks this coming fall. It is for real. Recently there was a big

shakeup in Chrysler which over the past few years has been on the critical list as far as imperialist money-makers go. Lee Iaccoca was named the new president (after he had a falling out with Henry Ford) and immediately set out to make the company more competitive and profitable. Chrysler sold all of its holdings in England. Lynch Road Assembly underwent a \$30 million changeover and retooling last summer. Iaccoca vowed to phase out all facilities which were no longer profitable (his predecessor John Riccardo, had been mistakenly putting more work into Dodge Main and maintained it as the center of Chrysler's assembly operations). Dodge Main was tops in Iaccoca's list for the scrapheap.

Dodge Main was first opened by the notorious Dodge brothers in 1910. The sprawling plant, which is 4 stories high, has not changed much since then. The floors are still made of wood slats and creak under the weight of production. The plan to close Dodge Main was first hatched some 6 months ago, as a central part of Iaccoca's efforts to regain the trust and financial backing of the bankers. After going into some detail in terms of retooling, layoffs, increasing productivity, and all the other atrocities that make these monsters' mouths water, the bankers gave Chrysler the green light to close the plant and promised them clear sailing in terms of getting the much needed capital to retool Jefferson Assembly.

This pattern certainly reflects a company which finds itself and its class in decline. It fits into the overall picture exactly as we have laid out the needs of the ruling class in their mad scramble towards a third world war; increased unemployment, the need to amass huge sums of capital for retooling and modernization, and so on. And the UAW position, although superficially in opposition to Chrysler, does nothing to seriously challenge this murderous plant closing because they either can not, or will not, place this particular attack in its proper strategic setting.

Every step of the way, if we follow their leadership, we must inevitably get more entrenched in this drive towards war. The idea of relying on the politicians ties up to the warmakers themselves. As Doug Fraser crawls out of bed with Jimmy Carter and starts winking at Ted Kennedy, the union leadership continues to try to get us to believe that the government (state) is somehow neutral and can,

in fact, serve our needs if we just go out and find "Mister Right." Also, it takes the focus away from the point of production and directs it away from the bosses' lifeline—their ability to make profits.

To try to convince Chrysler that we are better capitalists than they are borders on the supernatural. Stepp has already been bragging about the plants' productivity—some 4,000 cars a week, (and over 1,600 workers already laid off that still have recall status)—and brags that not only don't we mind this unbearable speedup, but that we can do much better(!) and it would be a mistake for the Chrysler bosses not to take full advantage of this opportunity. Aside from the obvious traitorous aspects of such a position, to even get into this type of discussion wins workers to a political line that says we all have a stake in maintaining the bosses' ability to reap huge profits. Carried to its logical conclusion, it means that we should go and fight for them if their ability is challenged by some other band of imperialist thugs.

Lastly, fighting for special unemployment compensation is totally conceding the struggle before the fight. But more, it is also saying that these layoffs are not due to Chrysler's greed, but rather to the greed of other bosses in other nations, particularly the oil barons in the Mid-East. Therefore, if the government can't stand up to them, let them pay us for their ineptness. This, too, politically wins workers to eventually fighting for these bastards.

All three positions center on building nationalism and class collaboration,





totally obscuring the class struggle and winning workers, under the guise of "fighting back," to bailing out the ruling class. Knowingly or not, the UAW is doing the bosses' bidding and in these times of approaching world war and fascism, it is especially deadly. Nationalism is already taking effect. It shows in the fact that there were not many Arab workers taking part in this demonstration, although the plant has many Arab workers, and they have proven their militancy and class solidarity many times over.

The main lesson of the rally is that workers must break with this leadership and organize under the banners of anti-racism and anti-imperialism. Every factory must become a fortress for our class and every union local must become an anti-racist sledge hammer.

The InCAR (International Committee Against Racism) program speaks to our needs and is the sole antidote for the poison being given to us. Mass violence, anti-racism and international solidarity are its cornerstones. Just because the

workers want to fight does not guarantee that the fight will win. The workers must lead the fight and must be armed with more than pipes and bricks. We must be armed politically, and that's what makes this year's Detroit Summer Project in Auto so essential.

The next time Marc Stepp gets up to speak, we should bury him under the platform. Fight to shut the Big 3 in '79; for 30 for 40 to end these racist layoffs; for the Big 3 to get out of South Africa; and for the fascists to get out of the UAW. Fight for total amnesty for undocumented workers, against all overtime and part-time work schemes as long as one worker is unemployed. Fight to put health and safety standards under rank-and-file control and fight for a 50 percent wage boost. With this type of approach, those same 3,000 workers could have split into teams and set up picket lines at every plant in the city, sparking a general strike. That's what we are after—that's what we will have.

TUPELO, MISS., July 7—Sixty-five anti-racist marchers, organized by the International Committee Against Racism and the Progressive Labor Party, were marching through the streets here chanting "Death to the Klan" when shots rang through the air. As two of the marchers were stunned by the grazing bullets, a disciplined group of people, black and white, rushed out of the line, isolated the racist who wielded the gun, and beat him to the ground. In the fight that ensued with this Klansman, or Klan supporter, the anti-racists broke his neck. While this was happening, the marchers, maintaining a tight discipline that won them the respect of Tupelo's working class, continued the march. The marchers, encouraged by the friendly faces that lined the streets and by the workers that joined the march, were able to withstand the menacing threat of the Tupelo police, who aimed their cocked guns at them.

From the start, it was clear that the racist local rulers wanted to stop this march. A new ordinance was created by the city government banning sound devices (in response to successful INCAR-PLP-led rallies here in the past); the police and their flunkies systematically tore down posters in the housing projects; and permit for the march was not granted until the very last minute.

As the march gathered in front of the courthouse, the bosses' seat of power, a militant rally began, attracting a lot

of attention from workers in the area. A few minutes after the march began, the racist KKKer named Brasil shot into the demo. By the time the anti-racist and anti-fascist fighters got hold of him, they were surrounded by cops who prevented them from finishing him off. The cops then grabbed one of the fighters, Floyd Banks, an InCAR member from Galveston, Texas, leader of the security squad, and arrested him for "attempted murder." The march, meanwhile, regrouped and continued to lead workers in the area who joined the march in chanting "The cops, the courts, the Ku Klux Klan, all a part of the bosses' plan."

Many militant workers in Tupelo have come to see InCAR as the main mass organization that can lead workers in the fight against racism and the resurgence of fascist groups like the Klan. One black woman worker, who was active in CAR here during the Christmas project last year, said, "Before I was scared, but now I'm mad." This represents the feeling of many people here, that there is no longer the luxury to sit back and watch the ruling class and its flunkies hold power, that they have to get active and build a movement that has as its goal the destruction of the ruling class' ideas of racism and fascism, and in the final analysis, the ruling class itself.

The political climate is changing rapidly in the South, and only groups

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like InCAR and PLP are prepared to respond to the changes, to give leadership and organize the multi-racial, anti-racial, anti-racist fightback that is necessary to move workers to the left. The United League, a black reformist group, recently cancelled a march scheduled for Okalona (a town not far from Tupelo) today, because its leader, Skip Robinson, essentially chickened out of the struggle. More and more people are realizing that the leadership of the UL cannot stand up to the rigors of the class struggle.

Respect for InCAR and PLP is growing here. Two residents of Tupelo put up their houses as collateral so that Floyd Banks could be bailed out of jail. When the two marchers who had been wounded (superficially) were treated in the hospital, they were warmly received and treated by white doctors and other hospital workers. After the march stopped to rally, hundreds of black workers surrounded the marchers to protect them from the cops (who would have been only too glad to be "trigger-happy").

This is the first time that a racist has been beaten by an anti-racist march in Tupelo. The leadership of the UL always guaranteed the safety of the KKK and the cops by holding back the anger and hatred of the black workers who wanted to liberate themselves from the

racism they face every day. The bosses think that they can destroy this movement by getting its leaders, but little do they know that leaders always spring up in the midst of struggle, and that there are many, many people right here in Tupelo, and other cities North and South, who can develop as working class leaders in the fight against racism and fascism, and they are being trained right now by InCAR and PLP.

This was readily proven by the response not only of the marchers, in their determination to continue the march, not to be intimidated by the cops' harassment, but also by the tremendous support of local people. Over 200 copies of the InCAR Arrow and Challenge-Desafio were sold, and 4 people joined InCAR on the spot. Another demonstration is being organized for August 4, to mobilize more workers in the fight against racism. In order to continue to build InCAR and to prepare for the defense of Floyd Banks, InCAR is asking people to give their support by (1) coming to Tupelo for the summer project and (2) sending money to pay for legal defense, etc. This is a good opportunity for the members and friends of InCAR and PLP to raise the issue among their co-workers, neighbors and friends and to build InCAR in the cities where they live.





NEW YORK CITY, August 2—The International Committee Against Racism (InCAR) launched a campaign in the N.Y.C. Garment Center on July 13 to decertify the ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union) and to form an anti-racist union led by InCAR and rank-and-file garment workers. On that same day, a member of InCAR and the PLP put the line into practice by organizing a work stoppage for a forbidden 10-minute coffee break in his garment shop.

We had previously estimated that 4 of the 25 workers would join the action; but we underestimated the workers' readiness to fight the bosses when the Party and InCAR provide militant leadership. Fourteen workers stopped for the break, and did so for 3 days running.

The boss, two-bit worm Richard Daro (of Sharon O'Kelley, 315 W. 36th St.) was so terrified when confronted with workers' unity that he called a supervisor back from vacation to try to put down the work stoppage! On the third day of the action, the boss waited anxiously to see who would take a break first. When our member took his break, he was told to punch out and to take his break with the communists (PLP and InCAR hold rallies in the Garment Center three times each week). Our member said he would take his break upstairs, while he talked to other workers. Three other

workers (who have been meeting regularly with InCAR/PLP) then told the boss that if one were fired, they would all leave too!

This action was a victory for the working class, for CAR and for PLP: a good political struggle was waged with our friends in this shop to confront the boss and challenge his iron-fisted rule; all the workers there saw that, united, they had the power to stop production; even though some were fired or walked out, they left behind others who have participated with us in the class struggle. But the most telling victory is that two of the most advanced workers, who walked out when our comrade was fired, have joined PLP, and 4 others have joined InCAR.

In the course of this particular struggle and in the two-and-a-half weeks since we launched our garment campaign, we have constantly exposed the collusion between the bosses and the racist sell-out ILGWU. At Sharon O'Kelley, the boss, 2 foremen and two of the boss' rats were the only members of the union. Many workers have come up to us with stories of shops where they pay \$8/month to the ILGWU and don't even get the minimum wage!

We accuse the ILGWU of not being a union, but rather the "best boss" in the garment industry, who makes it possible for all the small bosses to continue to

reap super-profits from the workers' labor. The ILGWU, by consciously not organizing and by not fighting for the workers, is helping fascism and racism grow in the Garment Center: allowing immigration raids to go unchallenged and allowing racist slave labor conditions to exist in the sweatshops, union and non-union.

To date, 32 garment workers have signed up to be in the new anti-racist union; nearly 100 have signed the petition to decertify the ILGWU; we have had three union organizing committee meetings and 6 garment workers have joined InCAR. Our weaknesses have been that we haven't visited enough during the evenings and struggled with these workers to organize and take the lead in new union. Although one woman worker circulated the petition on her job and got

several names, we haven't won her or other women workers to come to our meetings and become active organizers (80 percent of the workforce here are women, and they are the most exploited workers in the industry). Also, during the Sharon O'Kelley struggle, we lacked a certain amount of confidence that workers would respond to our ideas and we did not circulate the union cards in the shop in the midst of the struggle.

Garment is the largest industry in N.Y.C. and the mostly black, Latin and Asian workers are the lowest paid and most exploited. A mass anti-racist union, led by InCAR and PLP and garment workers themselves will become the leading force of the working class here for socialist revolution, which will smash the murdering bosses and their collaborators in the ILGWU once and for all!



LOS ANGELES, July 22—The struggle in the L.A. Garment Center to build the anti-racist garment workers' union has intensified in the past week. In each factory where the Committee Against Racism and members of PLP have been agitating for the past month, a change is taking place and workers are showing greater enthusiasm and willingness to join our campaign.

Trio-Winston, A women's garment manufacturer, with 300 workers, saw the emergence of a strong, militant force when workers, led by CAR members there, organized a 2-hour strike to smash the piece-rate. The boss was refusing to give out the work, claiming there was none, until the workers confronted him, demanding a decent rate. Faced with this strong showing, the boss was forced to cave in. However, this victory must be consolidated now, with workers joining CAR and forming the organizing committee for the new anti-racist union.

In Beltline, the purse factory where many of the 600 workers have been responding readily to the efforts of the new union drive, a campaign is being launched to decertify the Amalgamated Leather, Luggage and Handbag Workers' Union (in a recent letter to C-D, we incorrectly identified the union as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers). After a month of CAR and PLP agitation, in which workers passed out our literature inside the shop, the union hacks were forced to put out a flyer saying that they had met with the bosses, and were prepared to promise: a lunchroom (there is none), more fans; and cleaner bathrooms!

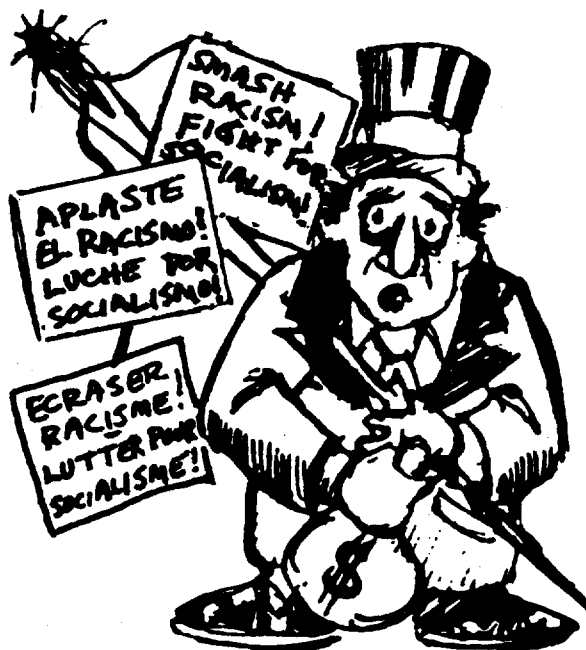
This is how the bosses and their union flunkies think they can water down the workers' anti-racist movement that is building here. But most workers are not fooled by these "concession." In the four years the union has been here, it has done nothing. Most workers don't even know who the union is. The salary at Beltline is only \$3.20/hr. (30 cents more than the minimum). In the last contract, the union agreed to 5 cents more every 3 months. Even this rotten increase has never been given!

At Fashion Times, with 100 workers, many workers signed cards to join the Anti-Racist Garment Union last week, and steps are being taken to form a union organizing committee. This has resulted in more vigilance by the garment bosses, who have always had TV cameras and a guard at the door. In response to the

leadership given by CAR, the bosses have put a new guard at the door to keep watch on the shop. These guards cannot and will not stop more and more workers from reading and discussing our leaflets and newsletter and from joining the campaign to organize a union here!

These three examples show clearly the potential strength of the anti-racist forces in the garment industry here in L.A. The Anti-Racist Union, led by garment workers and InCAR, can spread quickly from the 1,000 workers in these three shops to the other 60,000-workers here, mostly minority, immigrant and women workers.

The working class, led by communists and anti-racists, is building its own organizations to smash the bosses' attempts to crush our class in its spiraling descent in the realm of world dominance. The anti-fascist struggle in Nicaragua has inspired many workers here. Clearly workers will fight fascism! To win, they must join and build the party of revolution in the U.S.—the Progressive Labor Party. Garment workers must join the campaign to make the CAR-led Anti-Racist Garment Union the leading force in the struggle against the bosses' fascism here in garment, a force which will spread among workers all over the city, and the country. A conference is currently being organized for Aug. 25 to plan the campaign further, to sign up more members of the union and to win more workers to take the lead in fighting the bosses.



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March With Us on Oct 27

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