



# CHALLENGE

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## France: Auto Parts Workers Seize Plant, Fight for Jobs

**VILLEMUR-SUR-TARN, FRANCE, August 27** — Eleven weeks after holding two bosses hostage for 26 hours, 283 Molex workers occupied the auto parts factory owned by the U.S.-based multi-national for 38 days, fighting to keep their plant open and save their jobs. This was part of a 10-month struggle against the French government and the U.S. company which exploits 32,000 workers in 45 factories in 17 countries. The workers are reacting to the bosses' attempts to shift the burden of the world capitalist crisis onto their backs.

French media portraying Molex as a "rogue employer" and the Sarkozy government as "unpatriotic" create two dangerous illusions: that there are "good employers" and that a "patriotic" government would protect the workers. But both Molex and the Sarkozy government are typical products of capitalism.

"In the past ten months, we've gone through every state of mind," Alain, a 30-year maintenance worker told a newspaper interviewer. "We've had our hearts in our boots, and then we began to hope again when the courts voided the first layoff plan in April, and again when they ordered the factory to reopen in early August. And when...management ignored the courts, our morale plunged even lower than before."

Today, negotiations with the government-appointed mediator are stalled because Molex will only sell the factory to a purchaser that doesn't compete in their market. But the government mediator "is just a media show," declared Alain.

In 2000, SNECMA, then a French government-owned aeronautics company, raided the family-owned factory in southwestern France, bought and restructured it and then sold it to Molex in 2004. Nationalized companies remain capitalist companies.

In 2008, Molex stated that "during fiscal 2005, we decided to close certain operations in the American and European regions in order to reduce operating costs." That year, workers in Detroit, New England, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Slovakia got the axe.

"In 2006, eight executives began photographing our machines and noting...our working techniques," said José, a 30-year veteran worker.



In 2007, Molex announced plans "to move production between facilities, reducing staff levels..."

Before closing the Villemur factory, Molex equipped its Lincoln, Nebraska factory with copies of the molds and tools used in Villemur, built up a stock of parts in the Netherlands, and informed its customers, the French auto companies PSA and Renault, of its plans. "They had us working overtime all summer to build up stocks," said Michelle, a 23-year veteran.

On Oct. 23, 2008, Molex announced it would close the Villemur factory as "unprofitable," although the factory netted 1.2 million euros in profits (US\$1.6 million) that year. On Christmas, the workers guarded the factory to prevent Molex from stripping it of machines and stock during the holidays.

In January, 2009 Molex said the world financial crisis was forcing it to close the Villemur factory. It was when the Villemur workers discovered — on April 20 — that the Lincoln factory was making the same interconnects, that they held two bosses prisoner. One month later, workers' actions prodded the courts into suspending the layoff plan.

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# Obama Echoes Kennedy 'Legacy': War, Racism, Police State

Barack Obama hopes he can serve the dominant, imperialist wing of U.S. capitalists as well as Ted Kennedy, whom he just eulogized as a national hero. The Kennedy Klan — John, Robert and Ted — helped mislead millions of workers into supporting profit-driven attacks on our own class, including genocidal wars. The Kennedys personify the lie that voting for liberal politicians is the answer to the miseries capitalism inflicts on workers, trying to divert them from militant struggle and a revolutionary outlook.

Liberals, like the Vietnam War-boosting Kennedys — now inflicting Obama's murderous imperialist oil wars on masses of people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan — pay lip service to workers' aspirations. They toss out a few crumbs that provide cover for the rulers' anti-working class atrocities.

## Kennedy-Obama Health Scam = Wartime Consolidation

Kennedy's and Obama's "Universal Health Care" is currently the most pressing fraud on the liberal agenda. In humanitarian sheep's clothing, health reform, in fact, represents a major cost-cutting move to shore up corporate profits. First, it gives the pharmaceutical billionaires and the HMO insurance gougers more profits from mandated health insurance for millions of "new customers" from the non-insured. Second, it attempts to relieve large corporations of billions in healthcare costs by lowering benefits in plans already contracted for, enhancing their competitive position relative to foreign rivals. This would free up capital for wider wars, and concentrate control of a huge sector of the economy into government hands.

## OUR FIGHT

★ **Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world.**

★ **Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.**

★ **Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.**

★ **Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.**

★ **Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.**

★ **Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and traditional gender roles created by class society.**

★ **Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.**

★ **Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

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Obama would continue Kennedy's legacy but try to replicate Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal run-up to World War II. It would consolidate banks and industrial giants into fewer and fewer capitalist hands — including government control, in effect nationalizing outfits like GM which can produce for war — and "solve" the bosses' economic crisis as Roosevelt did through arms production and drafting millions into some form of military service.

Obama and his successors need to mobilize the U.S. economically and militarily as the rulers square off for conflict with China, Russia or Europe, or any alliance thereof.

The liberals' ability to deceive makes them particularly dangerous to our class. Only a liberal like Ted Kennedy could support the 1964 Tonkin Resolution (which used a fraudulent naval incident to escalate the Vietnam invasion JFK had expanded) and then later masquerade as "anti-war." By 1968, the U.S. was clearly losing, in a war that would eventually kill three million Vietnamese and 58,000 GIs. Yet Kennedy began showing up at peace rallies!

Only a liberal like Kennedy could champion successively "higher" minimum wages that were actually lower than previous rates because of inflation and call himself "the workers' friend."

## PLP Fought Kennedy Liberals' Building of Racism as 'Integration'

Only liberals like Kennedy could organize racism in the name of school desegregation. They pulled this off in Boston in the 1974-75 busing crisis. Kennedy protégé Judge Arthur Garrity and liberal Mayor Kevin White ordered black children to schools in overwhelmingly white South Boston and Charlestown, where Navy shipyard closings had laid off thousands of mainly white, better-paid workers. The liberals wanted to divert these workers' anger away from the rulers.

To ensure liberal leadership of a racist response, White had appointed James Kelly — leader of a rock-throwing, anti-busing racist gang deceptively called the South Boston Information Center — to an influential graft-ridden city post which dispensed the few jobs reemerging at the former Navy piers. This whole set-up virtually guaranteed a racist outbreak.

Kennedy often spoke in favor of the Garrity-White scheme, which in fact paved the way for budget cuts and furthered deterioration and segregation of Boston's schools. This eventually led to the emergence of the Nazi group ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights) which violently attacked black workers and students. Our Party, on the other hand, in our Boston Summer Project of 1975, attacked the Kennedy liberals and open racists alike, exposing their ties (see box).

More recently, Kennedy perpetuated liberal deception:

- After voting against the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq he voted for every war-funding bill ever since. His only objection was that the initial U.S. force was too small and needed more allies.

- Demanding immigration "reform," Kennedy insisted on 13,000 more fascist inspectors and a shift from enforcement at borders over to work-sites, leading to racist raids on immigrant workers. This enabled capitalists, using the threat of deportation, to increase exploitation at the actual point of production.

- Touting his (and John McCain's) bill, Kennedy said, "employers will have generous access to the legal workers they need," establishing a "guest worker" program that gives the bosses just enough exploited, low-wage workers to guarantee greater profits.

- Kennedy also co-sponsored the Dream Act whose promise of citizenship hides behind its real aim: a "national service" that puts millions of Latino youth who cannot afford college into the U.S. war machine.

- "Community policing," another Kennedy pet project, has a friendly name but actually copies Nazi Germany's networks of neighborhood informers. It uses black ministers and "community leaders" to terrorize black youth with the threat of jail, one minister declaring that "some kids need to go to jail... for their own sake." (Harvard Magazine, Jan./Feb. 2000)

Kennedy's character faults deserve mention only in that they highlight the gross inequalities of a class society and the decadence of the rulers and their privileged lackeys. His serial infidelity, substance abuse and arrogance — persistent family traits — hit a trifecta at Chappaquiddick in 1969. Mary Jo Kopechne, a young Kennedy staffer, drowned when a notoriously tipsy Kennedy drove his car off a bridge while "giving her a lift to the ferry." For the crime, he won sympathy and reelection to the Senate. Workers do serious prison time for far less.

Add to that the cover-up by Kennedy and his cohorts of a family member's rape of a woman on a Florida junket, a crime from which he was acquitted.

Obama, apparently more disciplined, currently leads the liberals' bait-and-switch. His "anti-war," "I'll-fix-the-economy" platform gained him workers' votes and the White House. Today Obama presides over one endless war in Iraq and another in Afghanistan that threatens to engulf nuclear Pakistan.

Meanwhile, worsening racist job and service cuts help fund the widening war effort, corporate profits and bankers' bonuses. Obama's pro-capitalist program, including his continuation of Kennedy's crusade for wartime fascism through the afore-mentioned Dream Act, nationalization, and government control of healthcare in the name of "reform," impels a working-class fight-back even more intense and broader than PLP's Boston '75.

As with the Kennedys and Roosevelt, Democratic officials vigorously spread Obama's ideas through unions, on campuses, in churches and communities. Only by building a mass, revolutionary, communist PLP, drawing from participation in militant class struggles in these arenas, can we ultimately challenge the liberals' deadly deceit and build a movement to destroy the capitalist hell these billionaires represent. ☪

## PLP Routs Racists in Boston '75 Project

In 1975, the racist "school desegregation" scheme (see article above) led by the fascist ROAR and its City Council agent Louise Day Hicks, mounted an all-out assault on black workers and students and anti-racist white workers, an attack that PLP countered with a vengeance.

First, 2,500 PLP-led May Day marchers in Boston routed ROAR's attempt to disrupt our march.

Then, PLP organized our Boston Summer Project '75, sending hundreds of workers, teachers and students to that city to battle ROAR and to desegregate areas like the "white-only" Carson Beach, in which we physically fought the racists.

We went door-to-door in black and white working-class neighborhoods, distributing leaflets and CHALLENGES, championing true anti-racist, working-class unity, not the rulers' token "integration." We forged lasting, communist ties with white and black workers there during this sharp struggle and recruited many new members.

By summer's end, ROAR had been routed and disappeared as a functioning organization.

# Union Hacks Screw Transit Workers Despite Rank-&-File Defiance: Before...

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** — The ruling-class media has created a divisive, lynch-mob mentality against 900 Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station agents and train operators in ATU Local 1555 who stood up against a plan to blatantly rob them and other subway workers of \$100 million over the course of a 4-year contract.

Newspapers called workers spoiled and lazy, while radio talk-show hosts called for workers to be fired and replaced. BART spokesman Linton Johnson suggested that passengers harass and confront workers who rejected by a 2-1 margin a 4-year wage freeze and take-aways of three holidays, work rules, medical and pension benefits. The last BART strike in 1997 lasted six days and caused devastating traffic jams costing the capitalists millions in lost production and profits.

Feeding the fascist frenzy were the union traitors who openly cried about the "grim economy" and tried to convince their members that "everyone must sacrifice" and take this junk. Linda Isler, the president of the mechanics, janitors, and clerks union, SEIU 1021, proudly claimed that a 4-year wage freeze wasn't a wage-cut. The SEIU never taught her about inflation! The SEIU accepted it 3-1. ATU 1555 leaders shackled workers' hopes for a lousy 1% wage increase at the end of the contract to BART's sales tax revenue, ridership totals and pension contributions.

Yet where was the vilification over the \$100 million payout to Citibank trader Ed Hall after working-class taxpayers bailed out Citibank to the tune of \$45 Billion? Apparently the life of one parasitic financier from a bank that helped ruin the lives of tens of thousands of working-class homeowners is more important than the future of over 3,000 transit workers. These transit workers actually provide a valuable service which is more than can be said for a "trader." Such a rotten profit system must be eliminated!

The ATU and SEIU leaders are worse than dead. They are in solidarity with capitalism and complicit in the impoverishment of the working class. They cannot and will not fight for our interests. They don't understand the long-run tendency of the

rate of profit to fall and exploitation of workers to increase. They try to limit workers' opposition only to the rotten BART managers instead of showing how capitalist crisis and their needs for war are the main causes of BART's budget woes. Some of the opposition just wanted a two-year contract in the hopes capitalism will rebound.

We must carry on this fight ourselves with CHALLENGE, class struggle, and base-building. Bus drivers of ATU 192 (AC Transit) were building solidarity among workers by passing a motion not to work any scab overtime if their brothers and sisters at ATU 1555 went on strike. Their contract is up next July. Members of PLP passed out several hundred leaflets and sold CHALLENGES at the rejection vote. We called for no concessions to capitalist crisis and war budgets and for more workers to become communists. Our class must fight the media's divisive attacks with communist class consciousness.

After the vote the BART board voted to impose an even worse contract on the workers and the ATU was forced to call for a strike — initially planned for the next morning. They changed their mind and delayed the strike call two days.

While the bus drivers and CHALLENGE sellers intensified their efforts over the weekend, BART bosses, Democratic party politicians, and union leaders united to thwart the strike. This time they came up with another tentative agreement that restored the three lost holidays and tied the pipe-dream of a measly raise to the savings of a union-sponsored plan to increase the time to qualify for retiree medical benefits from 5 to 15 years. This plan continues the union strategy of dividing the membership and making new workers pay for capitalist crisis.

We are planning more activities' leading up to the contract vote. We are struggling with our co-workers to help us spread our analysis through distributing CHALLENGE and taking more leadership in the fight-back. Class struggle sharpens contradictions and we must engage it, develop it, and strengthen it through collective actions. ☘

## ...and After

Members of ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union) Local 1555 were angry and fired up as they walked into the union hall where voting on the latest tentative agreement took place. For several weeks, they had sustained vicious attacks by the Bay Area ruling class's media. Management's latest contract offer was a rehash of the same contract workers rejected by a 2-1 margin on August 10 (see article above). The strategy of management and their henchmen, the ATU Local 1555 leadership, to wear workers down with scathing attacks and litanies of "shared sacrifice," won the day on August 26.

The victory, however, showed that workers' support of the union's leadership is limited, as the contract was approved by less than 50% (albeit 75% of those who voted) of the union membership. In any case, the role of the union hacks became quite clear. Instead of organizing workers to fight back, they threw the workers under the train by encouraging them to vote in new BART board members at the next election, saying this was the best they could do given the current economic climate. They spewed the empty promise of "we'll get them next time."

This latest attack on the working class of the Bay Area won't be the last. One by one, under leadership of the hacks, unions are bowing to the demands of capital. One worker declared, "The union movement is dead!" At the first contract vote on August 10, a young black BART worker put it best. "You (all) are disgusting! You've sold us out!" as he called out the union misleaders. "You say you're for us, while you sit there idling as we're losing station agents. If one walks, we all walk, that's what you should be organizing." He went on to say that the union needed a PR person to go up against "these vicious dogs," showing that some workers still have illusions in mistakenly thinking that union officials rather than masses of workers

can win our fights.

Teachers at West Contra Costa Unified have been asked to "sacrifice" their medical benefits resulting in a cost of \$900/month to insure their family. UTR (United Teachers of Richmond) members have authorized a strike, but once again, the union's leadership has been passive at best. Instead of organizing teachers to build a strong strike, they're giving management time to solicit scabs and prepare for the eventual strike. The unions push the electoral system, "sacrifice," and wishful thinking as answers to the ongoing attacks.

**A young black BART worker put it best. "You (all) are disgusting! You've sold us out!" as he called out the union misleaders. "You say you're for us, while you sit there idling as we're losing station agents. If one walks, we all walk, that's what you should be organizing."**

PLP members wrote two leaflets and went to talk with BART station agents and operators. Several recognized one of our young teachers commenting, "Hey, you're that teacher and you're going on strike, aren't you? We've got to stick together." Our flyers called on ATU members to vote no and to join us in building a communist movement. The flyers sought to build class consciousness and empower workers with the analysis that we must fight back as a class.

Building solidarity with other transit workers is crucial and the Party members also helped organize a No Overtime (NOT) Pledge amongst AC Transit [bus] Drivers. Through our involvement, our politics influence these struggles. The president of another ATU local kicked out one of her own members for distributing our flyers at the union hall;

# Workers Seize Plant

*continued from p. 1*

In May, the Syndex accounting firm reported that the Villemur factory was economically viable. French Secretary of State Luc Chatel had promised that if this were true, "the government would...facilitate the purchase of the factory [by a "white knight"] in order to maintain interconnect production in France." But the government did nothing, so on June 10 the workers demonstrated in Paris, and then, starting July 7, occupied the factory in a 38-day strike.

When Molex broke off negotiations with a possible "white knight" purchaser, the workers egged the Molex director of development. Two days later, four of us workers "were summoned to court," said shop steward Guy Pavan. "The judicial system works fast against the workers."

"When you respect the law," said a worker, José, "you get screwed. When you stay calm, you get screwed. And when they've got your nose in the shit, you're still supposed to keep your trap shut," he concluded.

On August 6, the workers ended the strike, but Molex closed the factory "for security reasons." Defying an August 11 court order to reopen the factory, Molex has used security guards and guard dogs to keep it shut. They can do this because the company has friends in government. Christine Lagarde, French Minister for the Economy, Industry and Employment, was Molex's judicial advisor in 2004, when she was a director of the Chicago law firm Baker & McKenzie.

Today, these Molex workers are stuck between a rock and a hard place. If Molex prevails, the factory will be shuttered. If Molex is forced to sell to a "white knight," some workers will be laid off while others will continue to work to enrich its capitalist owner.

Communist leadership is needed here and everywhere to provide the revolutionary alternative to capitalism, a society where workers own the factories and share the goods they produce.

[Messages of support and contributions can be sent to: Association Solidarité des Molex, 5 rue St Louis, 31340 Villemur-sur-Tarn, France.] ☘

saying he had no business "interfering with their [ATU Local 1555's] business." We later discovered that our flyer was faxed to all the station agents by one of their own!

We had successful discussions with various workers and distributed a modest number of CHALLENGES. These activities have reinvigorated several young Party members and a weekly CHALLENGE sale is being organized. A young teacher brought a few students (Summer Project attendees) to distribute our flyers. There are signs of growth and development in Party members that bodes well for working-class people in the Bay Area.

This struggle is an example of what the working class is facing nationally and internationally. The current economic crisis will see another nine million families lose their homes by year's end with racist, predatory lending practices leading to black and Latino workers bearing the brunt of these attacks, while banks rake in record profits. With the national debt forecast to reach 20 trillion in 10 years, capitalists will resort to wars to defend their imperial empire in Afghanistan and elsewhere, trying to avoid the bankruptcy of their system.

Workers must rely only on our class and not on politicians, elections or union sellouts. Only when we organize as a class and fight as a class can we accomplish any real change, a change that must ultimately be the creation of a communist world. Our involvement in this struggle has shown us that the opportunity for spreading communist politics and building our Party is out there. CHALLENGE is the best working-class PR there is and we will continue the struggle as the battle shifts from transit workers, to teachers, and eventually all workers in the Bay Area. ☘

# South Africa: Workers, Soldiers Challenge ANC Rulers



In South Africa (SA), the misery of the working class has taken a violent turn. During July and August, the working class there held militant demonstrations against the profit system run by the capitalist African National Congress (ANC) government. Soldiers, municipal and chemical workers, miners and workers in the townships participated. As one worker stated, "The ANC turned their backs on us."

The workers were demanding pay increases and basic services — housing, electricity and water. To maintain their fascist law and order against the workers' anger, the ANC ordered out the police who used rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas. (The Mail Guardian, a SA

daily newspaper.)

As the capitalist crisis hits worldwide, the profit system is becoming more unstable daily. The working class in SA is facing huge cut-backs in their daily living standards. Over 40% of the working class lives below the poverty level. (The Economist, 7/25) One in four is now jobless while the cost of food and fuel have skyrocketed. In the shanty towns around the big cities, people are cold and hungry.

Millions of workers live in leaky shacks without electricity or running water.

The reformist ANC and its allies, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the SA Communist Party have no solutions for the working class. All represent the bosses' profit system.

So now we see that the abolition of the apartheid system in 1994 did not free black workers from capitalist exploitation. That system was a totally divisive capitalist-run society in which a politically dominant white minority ruled to maintain the intensely exploitative profit sys-

tem. Millions of workers worldwide supported the struggle against apartheid. Thousands of black workers were jailed and many were killed. Thus, the end of apartheid gave birth to a black SA leadership.

The ANC represents local and international bosses. The SA economy is important to the capitalist world because it is particularly rich in mineral resources and is one of the world's leading raw material exporters. This includes gold, diamonds, platinum, chromium, manganese, uranium, iron ore and coal.

During the 1960s' U.S. civil rights movement, rebellious black workers rocked every major city. However, this did not end racism and super-exploitation of black workers. The movement eliminated some forms of legal segregation, but clearly did not end racism or segregation. The idea that racism could be defeated without overthrowing the capitalist system ended up giving rise to black bosses and politicians.

Today, these politicians are performing a tremendously valuable service for the capitalist class. They divert black, Latin and white workers into the polling booths instead of fighting back.

The Progressive Labor Party led many militant demonstrations on university campuses and at work-places against the apartheid system and segregation. But PLP also put forward the abolition of capitalism and fought for workers' power and communism.

Today, the world is entering another historic period of economic crisis, war and fascism, all stemming from the internal insoluble contradictions of capitalism. Therefore, building the PLP-led international communist movement is essential for workers' power. ☛

## PL's Ideas Inspire GIs' Exposé of Brass's Corruption

Recently, a company commander in the Middle East held a meeting to tell everyone how good a job they're doing. This has become such a repetitive occurrence that the words coming out of his mouth seem like a memorized speech. You can feel the tension as everyone gathers around him.

The issues on everyone's mind are not about the good job everyone is doing; they're about the long hours that soldiers have to work and about the petty rules the leadership has enforced for the entire company. The silence is noteworthy because everyone takes a look at each other, and everyone knows exactly what is going on.

At this midpoint of the deployment, morale is at its all time low. After all, who can ever make sense of an 18-hour-work-day? Or justify such babysitting rules as evening curfews? Who is able to agree with the multiple article 15's/counseling statements for crimes like talking back, faking illnesses, and missing a doc-

tor's appointment? Or who can make sense of growing Afghani civilian deaths, or a million Iraqi deaths, or thousands of U.S. GI deaths so that U.S. bosses can control the region's oil, oil pipelines, and profits?

The hypocrisy of the commander's praise was clear to everyone. At this little meeting, the smirk on one soldier's face, the readjusting of body positions, and the quiet coughs and comments capture the mood a hundred times better than the commander's useless speech.

A month later soldiers decided to write a leaflet exposing the corrupt and incompetent leadership of this company. The leaflet was posted everywhere on the base. It denounced the leadership for not caring about its soldiers. It pointed out that the leadership took measures simply to make sure they looked good; the shinier the brass, the better the chance of promotion. These deployments are career-makers for officers seeking promotions. And the culture of this Army breeds leaders who take advantage of their power; these leaders work soldiers into the ground just to make themselves look good. This is the culture of capitalism, especially capitalism in crisis pushing soldiers more and more. Ask any maintenance soldier in our unit, and that soldier will express how mechanics are worked like mules.

When this leaflet was discovered, the first sergeant was taken into custody by the military police. No one knows why; perhaps for

his protection. The entire company was called for formation, where the remaining leadership lashed out in fear. This may not be common across the board, but it was something to behold on this day. As one soldier said, it was "great to see how angry they got." The officers were scared!

Rank-and-file soldiers, who had received political literature that is still discussed, created the leaflet. Many agreed with the literature that was distributed to them before they deployed. In fact, many in the unit became close friends in discussing this literature. This literature led to some soldiers sharing CHALLENGE and conversations about anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and communist politics with many friends. Since the leaflet there have been many political discussions. The response of the leadership was retaliation. But that was fine with us. After all, this is the Army. If they give us a hard time, you bet it's worth giving them worse.

In the midst of enormous lay-offs that have sky rocketed unemployment, this rebellious atmosphere is needed everywhere. Racist capitalism haunts us all, and we must organize and fight it all together, to destroy it with communist revolution. More soldiers can join this fight.

*Red Soldier*



# Health Reform Band-aids Will Never Cure Racist Capitalism

The bosses control the media and the “debate” that workers are exposed to on a given topic. In health care, the media outlets have chosen their sides: either favoring “nationalized” health care or supporting private insurance companies. CHALLENGE (9/2) exposed these plans as a move toward fascist control through “nationalization” and business-as-usual exploitation by the insurance and drug companies.

Both options are deadly for workers. PLP offers a third option: fight the racist practices of the for-profit capitalist health system now, while building a movement that will deliver free and accessible health care for all workers — denied by the bosses — once the working class unites to destroy capitalism and create a communist society.

The media and Obama show their hypocrisy, pretending to favor better health for everyone, while continuing the bloodshed in Iraq and expanding the wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan, killing and maiming more U.S. GI's and Afghan and Pakistani workers. At Fort Campbell, Kentucky eleven soldiers have committed suicide already this year, prompting the brass to shut down the base for three days in May so every soldier could receive “suicide prevention counseling.”

More than 20% of the soldiers who make it back to the U.S. suffer from some form of psychological damage (Washington Post, 5/24). This attack on workers' health will only increase as the wars intensify and additional casualties enter a Veterans Affairs medical system already overburdened with too many lives ruined by the capitalists' drive for oil profits.

The bosses' media is also silent about another aspect of this “debate”: access to health care is such a critical issue because capitalism creates horrific levels of disease and disability for workers worldwide. Due to pollution, the lack of clean water, global warming and racist unemployment, workers are unnecessarily dying by the millions. Actually the best way to improve our health is to destroy the system that creates these healthcare nightmares in the first place.

Malnutrition directly kills six million children per year and makes millions more susceptible to respiratory infection, malaria and other life-threatening diseases. A 1996 World Health Organization study reported that unsanitary conditions created due to the lack of clean water account for more than five million deaths per year, while three BILLION more suffer from diarrhea and intestinal diseases. These deaths, mainly black, Latino and Asian workers, are murders! For the sake of profit, bosses starve us, pollute our waters and poison our skies.

The massive unemployment resulting from the financial crisis will generate its own epidemic of bad health for workers. Overall, 6.7 million jobs have disappeared in the U.S. since December 2007, although that number could easily be doubled considering the millions uncounted by government figures. According to the International Labor Organization, 51 million jobs could disappear worldwide this year alone.

A Congressional study in 1971 reported that for every 1.4% rise in unemployment, 30,590 workers died in the next five years from strokes, heart disease, kidney and liver ailments and suicide. (In January, 2009, the British medical journal Lancet, published a study showing that as many as one million working-age men died in capitalist Russia between 1989 and 2002 due to the implosion of the old communist movement and capitalist privatization throughout the economy. (Unemployment increased 56% over that period.) The stress of job loss significantly increases the incidence of diseases like high blood pressure and heart disease (NY Times, 5/9), along with depression and anxiety.

Access to health care is clearly an important issue for the world's workers, but even with “national health” systems, the ruling class will never give us the health care we need. “National health” is synonymous with “government health” and the politicians' constant kow-towing to healthcare industry bosses shows that the government is not a neutral mediator in the battle between workers and bosses. Capitalist governments are always subservient to their capitalist masters, a lesson workers shouldn't

forget when hearing about ‘town-hall meetings.’ These meetings are orchestrated spectacles designed to build a movement that rails against “socialized” medicine in attempts to win workers to fascism. (Its standard-bearer is Sean Hannity, whose recent show entitled “Universal Nightmares” promoted the terror of universal health care.)

However, capitalist government health care is not the answer workers need. In Britain, the National Health Service denied the use of a drug to treat breast cancer because it was “too expensive.” Cancer researchers there also recently reported that as many as 15,000 people past 75 have died prematurely due to slow diagnosis and treatment.

Racist disparities in health care are also just as prevalent in countries with national health care as they are in the U.S. Throughout the European Union (where national health care is common) access to doctors is severely limited for undocumented immigrants. In 2007, Medics du Monde (Doctors of the World) reported that so-called “universal coverage” denied treatment by a health care professional to 10% of undocumented immigrants. In general, immigrants don't receive proper health care because of a “lack of knowledge about where to go for treatment, treatment cost, administrative problems, fear of being reported to the authorities and of discrimination, and linguistic and cultural barriers.” (European survey on undocumented migrants' access to health care, MdM 2007).

No matter what the bosses or their politician-puppets say, and no matter what the proposed healthcare system, they will never voluntarily free workers from the system that creates poor health in the first place, a system that only needs us to be healthy enough to produce profit and to fight their imperialist wars. And they will never free us from a system where millions die needlessly because their deaths are deemed “too expensive” to prevent. Liberation is up to workers, armed with communist consciousness and led by the only party that fights to destroy the real disease: capitalism. Joining PLP and building this movement is the best way to ensure that workers get the health care we deserve. ☘

## Bosses' Labor Day Can't Displace Workers' May Day:

# Stella D'Oro Struggle, Not Labor Fakers, Is Model to Follow

**NEW YORK CITY, September 1** — In a feeble response to workers' anger at the bosses' financial crisis, this city's Central Labor Council (CLC) has this year labeled the hollow ritual of their patriotic Labor Day Parade a “march” for healthcare reform and union rights (meaning Obama's healthcare bill and the Employee Free Choice Act, EFCA). The parade, led by Grand Sellout Lillian Roberts, is also “supposed” to honor the eleven-month strike of the Stella D'Oro workers, now fighting to keep their jobs as the bakery threatens to shut down and move. But following the militant lead of the Stella D'Oro bakers does not mean parading behind the CLC fakers, nor supporting the bosses' attempt to eke out just enough medical care to keep us able to churn out their profits and fight their wars — while making us pay for it.

The Stella workers' unity across racial and gender lines, their solid rank-and-file organization and determination to fight on, their resistance to scabs and cops (“scabs in blue”) and ability to win other workers' support are indeed models to follow. But their union relied on a legal strategy to win the strike. They did achieve a victory in the labor courts — but then what?

The bosses' laws are geared to protect the capitalists' right to do what they want with their property. So they can run away looking for lower-wage workers, or just close down and dump workers in the street. Now Stella workers are up against the essence of capitalism, the bosses' ownership of the means of production.

PLP calls on all workers to back the Stella

D'Oro bakers all the way, with all the strength of our class.

Unknown to many, the U.S. Labor Day holiday originated in Canada, but its original significance was turned on its head by U.S. bosses and their union flunkies. In Canada, workers launched it in the 1870s as part of the fight for the 9-hour day. A U.S. labor “leader” attended it in Toronto in 1882 and brought it back to the U.S. on September 5, 1882.

When the International Workingmen's Association, led by Karl Marx, saluted the U.S. working-class's May 1, 1886 general strike in Chicago for the 8-hour day by establishing May 1st as an international workers' day, marches were held worldwide, including in the U.S.

Then May Day in the U.S. in 1894 erupted in street battles between workers and cops, so two months later the bosses, fearing a militant workers' movement, had the U.S. Congress establish Labor Day as a federal holiday on the first Monday in September that same year as an “answer” to May Day.

The first half of the 20th century saw militant May Days, most led by communists, drawing tens of millions around the world. In 1947, the U.S. Communist Party (CP) organized 250,000 to march in New York City. But soon the CP sold out its prin-



First U.S. Labor Day March, New York, 1882

ciples and abandoned May Day. However, in 1971, PLP picked up the banners of May Day and has organized marches every year since.

Meanwhile, the bosses' Labor Day became a holiday completely bereft of any working-class content, mainly “saluting” the corrupt labor misleaders, servants of the bosses. Despite these fakers, and their counterparts internationally, May Day remains the true celebration of working-class solidarity and anti-racist unity, pointing towards a future of workers' power when the bosses' Labor Day will be tossed into the ashcan of history. ☘

# LETTERS

## PLP and Religion, Deep in the Heart of Texas

When I first began working with PLP several months ago, I wondered how religious people would respond to fighting racism with the understanding that the cause of racism lies with capitalism. I am a volunteer in a religious organization, and from my experiences over the past year, I see that a positive response is possible. My work, coupled with that of PLP, has brought me to a better understanding of economic, political, and social forces, and prepared me to better communicate with ALL workers.

I relocated to Texas temporarily for a year as a volunteer with a religious organization whose mission is social justice. Essentially, the organization aims at engaging the injustices of the world in order to free people from oppression of all kinds. This is similar to what PLP tries to do, but with a religious spin. The program has me living in community with five others, and each of us works with different populations of workers.

My housemates and I come from relatively different social classes and levels of Christian upbringing from all across the United States, so our home is one of ideological struggle. I've learned to overcome my passivity and engage in a different level of struggle that has promoted growth in all of us.

For example, one housemate is a Catholic-convert from a conservative, Protestant background and has asked me about why I believe capitalism is the cause of society's problems and about my understanding of communism. I have engaged her in ways that are sensitive to her religious outlook and world experiences. She admitted that she had been going through the same questioning of God and society that I have, and agreed with a lot of what I had to say. I was nervous at first, but I realized that we were not so completely different after all. At least now she's a little more open to the idea of communism. It's a start.

For many, religious faith is about helping those in need and living in harmony with one another. For the Party, this is communism. However, religious people aren't quite ready to blame capitalism entirely for the world's problems, nor to promote communism. In their eyes, violence is never a solution. They are not willing to acknowledge that sometimes violence is necessary, as can be seen throughout history, like ending slavery. The tension between pacifism and violence divides many religious people from Party members, especially my housemates.

I have struggled with many people. From this, despite what at first appeared to be many setbacks, we have developed a new consciousness of the causes of injustice in society. Let us not fear struggle with the religious-oriented. Only by engaging those who are seemingly different can we learn that we are truly alike. All workers unite in the fight against capitalism and for the promotion of communism!

*Texas comrade*

## Planting the Idea of 'Money Not Needed'

Two neighbors on my block organized a "3rd Annual Plant Swap." The invitation read: 'If your garden is full, bring some plants for others to share... if you're new to gardening, it is a good time to start! Annuals, perennials, veggies and garden accessories/decorations are welcome. If you play a musical instrument bring it and join in.'

Over 100 people came, mostly from the neighborhood, bringing plants, pots, tools and books to swap with other gardeners. Some people brought hundreds of plants. Volunteers labeled the plants — Sun, Part-sun, Shade, Veggies — and then put them on tables. Many people commented when they first arrived, "What a good idea," "Awesome," and "Wow! Look at all this activity, how wonderful."

Some people wanted to buy plants and couldn't believe there was no money involved. The Swap is a popular event; neighbors bringing good cheer, cooperation, and a sense of gardening each according to need. Guitars, flutes and an oboe played together adding to the ambiance of the event.

No one spoke of communism, but everyone acted with a sense of cooperation, without money being involved. Thousands of plants were swapped. At the end, the remaining plants were gathered on

a small table. The next day people came by who could not make the Plant Swap and took them. The organizers were very pleased that people shared their plants and equipment in a cooperative environment, demonstrating that human consciousness has so much more to offer than the crass materialism that inundates present U.S. capitalist culture.

*Red Gardener*

## LA Summer Project Wins 8 Youth to PLP

As young members of PLP we were delighted to be part of L.A.'s Summer Project. We learned about communism and that in order to build a society based on need, we need to abolish race, racism, and sexism. This can only be done through a communist revolution. The Summer Project focused on the working class. We were involved in morning and afternoon sales, distributing CHALLENGE to workers and students. As a result of the Project and our activities with PLP in fighting budget cuts, eight of us joined the Party.

Since the Summer Project, we hold a Study Action group for new members of PLP. We are studying "Road to Revolution 4, A Communist Manifesto." We've learned the meaning of exploitation. We concluded that exploitation means the bosses profit from the workers not getting fully paid for products they make. In order for capitalism to survive, the bosses must exploit all workers and must super-exploit some. Capitalism created racism and the whole concept of "race." There can't be a capitalist society without it. The bosses try to justify racist super-exploitation by saying that some people are "naturally" superior to others.

We also discussed religion and how it only serves the interests of the rulers, to confuse workers so that conditions stay as they are. We discussed how religion tells people that things are the way they are and shouldn't be changed because god made it that way. We also read that we must develop our own Red Army and fight to win power.

The purpose of this Study Action Group is to discuss the importance of communism and to help each other become better communists. As future leaders of this revolution, we should learn about what we're fighting for and how to lead the fight for revolution, and learn from more experienced comrades. We will decide the actions to take, which can take place at schools, factories, neighborhoods, communities and in the military.

*New youth members of PLP*

## Haiti: Mass Demonstrations for Minimum Wage Hike

Thousands of workers and students demonstrated at the Haitian parliament this month, demanding that a law for a 200 gourde (about \$5 U.S.) daily minimum wage be implemented. After parliament originally passed this law, President Rene Préal refused to publish and enforce it.

As of August 16, at least 12 demonstrators have been "detained." The Haitian militant group ASID calls these detentions "illegal, immoral, and arbitrary." Many are demanding their release. Supporters abroad should picket Haitian consulates demanding a 200-gourde minimum wage, and demanding the release of those arrested. Friends of PLP in Haiti are continuing to help organize these demonstrations.

In the global fight for world labor markets, the U.S. is trying to keep some control in Latin America while the European Union and China are taking an increasing share for themselves. The UN has appointed former U.S. president Bill Clinton as Special Envoy to Haiti. Clinton, working for the rich capitalists in the U.S., will be bringing some rich investors to Haiti in October. Préal only wants to raise the minimum wage, currently at 75 gourdes (about \$2 U.S.) per day, to 125 gourdes (about \$3.50). His thinking: the lower the wage, the greater the profit for his capitalist masters, Haitian and foreign.

*CHALLENGE reader in Haiti*

[Editor's comment: Workers in Haiti, and around the world, can't settle for a reformed minimum wage. At any wage, workers are exploited for the bosses' maximum profit. Capitalism in its entirety has to be fought and smashed to free workers from this wage slavery. Only by fighting for communist revolution with PLP can this happen.]

## Freedom School: Students Fight to Learn, Learn to Fight

Our California Freedom School is for students at our college who wanted to learn despite the 2009 budget cuts. We took matters into our own hands when our summer session was cancelled. We students and teachers volunteered to teach each other, to advance our knowledge of politics, philosophy and other social matters. We are learning to be more effective fighters against racism, budget cuts and capitalism.

Our Freedom School was patterned after those of the 1960's civil-rights movement in which over 40 classes were held in churches and homes across the South. They served African-American students who were restricted to a segregated schooling system. These schools were in direct opposition to racist laws and unjust treatment of black workers who vowed to educate themselves.

With the help of some teachers, we too organized non-credit classes, hoping that material learned during summer break would provide a stronger foundation for the upcoming fall semester. At first the college administration opposed our Freedom School. They said it violated school policies; students would not be allowed on campus during the summer; and legal action would be taken. We were ready to move Freedom School to a church, but the team pressed on and eventually the administration agreed that we could stay on campus.

Classes began twice a week, run by the students themselves. They covered topics from creative writing, the Afghan war, budget cuts and math, to capitalism and Marxism, making classes ideal for detailed and in-depth discussions. "It kinda got my mind to start working," one student reflected. "As a group, our critical thinking unfolded," added another.

The topics frequently related to the working class and the oppression we face. The classes ranged from five to twenty-five students who all expressed themselves on micro and macro social policies. About fifty people took part altogether, including some PLP Summer Project volunteers who brought CHALLENGE and the PLP Dialectics pamphlets to class.

One session explained the capitalist crisis and how it was behind the budget cuts. We also read part of the Communist Manifesto. "We take apart capitalism, communism, socialism and what we think is right and wrong to the point of what works," as a student put it. At a later session, a student led a discussion about contradiction and change, sharing what she had learned in a PLP Summer Project study group.

We each brought food when we could and everyone shared. Under communism, all workers would share surplus and shortage alike, instead of an elite group getting more than it needs.

A discussion on "Man's Place in Nature" led to the question: Can people fix the problems that people have created, like racism and war? "As long as we're in this capitalist system, we should try to fix it," was one point of view. "Capitalism can't end racism or exploitation, we need a revolution," was another.

Just like Freedom Schools in the South, ours thrived and flourished. Freedom Summer School was so successful that we now hope to continue it as Freedom After-School throughout the fall semester. We plan to be more responsible about communicating with everybody regularly, letting others know whether or not we're coming and showing up on time. More of us plan to step up and help lead discussions. We'll pair off with someone more experienced to prepare for them.

Some Freedom School students are getting more involved with different campus groups. We will bring our new understanding into the continuing fight against more budget cuts that are sure to come. Several students are thinking seriously about joining PLP and more are reading and distributing CHALLENGE. We are more confident about our ability to understand and to lead. And we've all made some great new friends! Even though we lost the fight to keep the college summer session, these are victories that cannot ever be taken away from us.

*Freedom Schoolers*

# 'District 9' Attacks Racist Apartheid But Offers No Solution

Sometimes in order to get a story about the horrors of racism and capitalism through the gauntlet of financiers and studio execs in Hollywood you have to add... ALIENS. In the movie *District 9* an alien ship stops above Johannesburg, South Africa with nearly a million alien inhabitants in a state of starvation inside. Feeling pressure from the international community the South African government relocates the aliens to a camp on the edge of the city, District 9. The film takes place twenty years after the ship's arrival. The film's location in South Africa is no accident as it is meant to conjure images of the Apartheid system that ruled there for nearly fifty years.

District 9, like the areas most black South Africans lived in under apartheid, is a fenced-in slum with densely-packed shacks housing almost two million aliens living in a constant state of poverty and starvation. The aliens are blamed for the conditions of the slum they are forced to live in despite the fact that the conditions were created by denying them food and other resources. The local population, fully indoctrinated with this racism, vigorously calls for the aliens to be removed to camps outside of the city.

The film is shot in a documentary-style fashion using commentary from people's reactions to living in the city as the story unfolds. The comments about the aliens in the film are from real life interviews the director conducted with people from Johannesburg about the influx of immigrants mainly from Zimbabwe and Nigeria into the city.

The fighting between the humans and aliens reached the point where the government decides to relocate the aliens outside the city, District 10. They contracted out the removal of the aliens to a private enterprise called Multi-National United

(MNU) that uses private and government security forces to control the aliens.

While most of the MNU and security forces are white it is interesting to see black members of the population in the crowd call for the alien deportations. Showing the negative results of life without communist politics, these black residents call for the removal of aliens to concentration camps not unlike those they were subjected to two decades prior under apartheid.

The class and race dimensions of the movie are made clear very early as the aliens' "stupidity" is explained by academics and journalists who state that they must be the workers of the civilization since they are so loathsome. The workers at MNU regularly refer to the aliens as "prawns" which is the racist term devised for them. The aliens are given slave names like Christopher Johnson, names that with their vocal capabilities they can't even pronounce; they are branded and rigorously catalogued.

The film's human protagonist is the weak-minded Wikus who works in the alien and human affairs department of MNU. While engaging in a brutal forced eviction campaign in District 9 he meets an alien Christopher Johnson who questions the legality of the evictions, Wikus raids his house and exposes himself to alien technology that begins slowly turning him into a "prawn." Representing the capitalist class as the human Wikus, his primary characteristics are cowardice and duplicity. He repeatedly makes his situation, and that of the aliens around him, worse by abandoning them in cowardly attempts to save himself. Only as he begins to fully change into an alien can he summon the courage to help the aliens in their fight against MNU.

MNU, who regularly brutalize the alien inhabitants and raid their homes looking for weapons,

know of the Nigerians, gangsters living in the slums, and their illegal activities, but allow them to exist as another method of terrorizing and controlling the population. Just like in the real world, gangsters only exist because of the racism and violence of capitalism and they flourish with the tacit consent of the capitalist class.

The contrast between the Nigerians and MNU in the film is interesting. The gangsters' belief in witchcraft and their leader's desire to consume alien flesh elicit an instant, strong response from the audience. "Who are these monsters?" one wonders. Yet when MNU agents engage in the regular policy of dispatching alien babies with flame throwers (joking that they pop like popcorn), dissect mass numbers of aliens for medical experiments (in a crazed attempt to locate the source of their "power, à la the Nazis), or regularly gun down aliens in the street for fun it elicits a different response since they do it while wearing business suits or crisp white uniforms. The film plays on how we have been taught to abhor the violence of petty gangsters while ignoring state-sanctioned genocide caused by the capitalist class.

By the end of the film you are ready to cheer as alien weaponry turns MNU agents and gangsters into clouds of red dust and goo. The film's strong imagery leaves one feeling both disturbed and unsure about the future. There is no quick, easy victory. The film ends in a state of uncertainty and while the lesson is clear that demonization of the "other" caused by capitalist racism leads to genocidal violence, how do we escape this grim reality? There is one lesson that no Hollywood film is allowed to teach. If we want to end racism and the capitalist violence it excuses, then workers have to smash the whole system through communist revolution. ☺

## RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

### Credit check can cost you a job

**NYT, 8/7** — ...credit checks are now fast, cheap and used for all manner of work....

But... shunning those with poor credit may be unfair and trap the unemployed... in a financial death spiral: the worse their debts, the harder it is to get a job to pay them off.

"How do you get out from under it?" .... You can't re-establish your credit if you can't get a job, and you can't get a job if you've got bad credit."

Others say that the credit check can be used to provide cover for discriminatory practices.

### Marx, Engels 'outlast the ages'

**NYT, 8/19** — ...the horrors he saw.... in Manchester led [Engels] to write "The Condition of the Working Class in England"....

Engels's writing caught the attention of Marx.... They would remain friends for the next four decades, as they together wrote "The Communist Manifesto" ... and fanned the flames of international communism....

And it is surely true, as Mr. Hunt puts it, that Engels's larger critique of capitalism — and his hope for a more dignified kind of humanity — "resonates down the ages."

### Nigeria drained by foreign oil co's

**NYT, 8/11** — For years, fighters demanding a greater share of the region's wealth have been sabotaging [Nigeria's] oil industry, one of the United States' biggest suppliers, with brazen attacks on pipelines, oil depots and kidnappings of industry workers....



"The fundamental issues of equity and democratization... are driving the activity... There are no serious or effective proposals under way to deal with this...."

...80 percent of oil money goes to 1 percent of the Nigerian population.

Meanwhile the Delta remains destitute... with... pervasive "social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor," according to the United Nations....

The combination of wealthy foreign oil companies, entrenched poverty and ideal terrain for guerrilla warfare has produced a state of semi-conflict for much of the decade.

### US plotted to overthrow Allende

**NYT, 8/17** — President Richard M. Nixon discussed with Brazil's president a cooperative effort to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende of Chile, according to recently declassified documents... The United States and Brazil [were] trying to root out leftists in Latin America during the cold war....

Mr. Nixon saw Brazil's military government as a critical partner in the region....

The 1971 memo showed that the two leaders also discussed intervention in Cuba.

### Afghanistan legalizes Shia sexism

**GW, 8/26** — Afghanistan has quietly passed a law permitting Shia men to deny their wives food and sustenance if they refuse to obey their husbands' sexual demands, despite international outrage over an earlier version of the legislation....

The new... legislation also grants guardianship of children exclusively to their fathers and grandfathers, and requires women to get permission from their husbands to work. "It also effectively allows a rapist to avoid prosecution by paying 'blood money' to a girl who was injured when he raped her...."

Although Karzai appeared to back down, activists say the revised version of the law still contains [his] repressive measures.

**MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE:**  
[www.plp.org](http://www.plp.org)

# John Brown's Raid: Guns Against Slavery

On Saturday, October 17, PLP is joining with thousands commemorating the 150th anniversary of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry to celebrate this watershed event in the history of the modern working class. Its lessons — the need for militancy, boldness, multi-racial unity and fearlessness in confronting a powerful but ultimately weak ruling class — are just as important today as we face increasing global imperialist war and racist exploitation.

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

## Two-Day Battle

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

Harriet Tubman — escaped slave and famous as "General" Tubman of the Underground Railroad, organizer of over a dozen trips to the South to aid other slaves in escaping — had helped prepare for the raid. She planned to participate with a contingent of allies, but illness delayed her departure for Virginia. Meanwhile, fearing discovery, John

## Great Violence Needed to End Slavery

Many bourgeois historians claim John Brown's intense hatred of racism and his actions against slavery "prove" he was insane, particularly since he was white and not enslaved. Yet most historians agree with Brown's own evaluation of the need for great violence to end slavery. They also concede that the raid on Harper's Ferry and the following trial and execution swung the abolitionist movement onto the path of destroying slavery by force rather than with "moral persuasion" and piecemeal reforms and escapes. The raid also encouraged a new wave of slave rebelliousness.

Long before 1859, Brown had been advocating violence to destroy slavery. In a struggle in the Kansas territory between advocates of slavery and "free labor," Brown and his sons led numerous armed struggles against pro-slavery terrorists. On May 24, Brown and his followers made a night raid on the homes of some particularly vicious ones, capturing and killing five with broadswords.

Kansas ultimately entered the Union as a free state due in no small measure to the boldness of anti-slavery militias like that of Brown's. Among abolitionists and wider circles of northern working people, John Brown became a symbol of hatred of racism and slavery in defiance of the slave-owners.



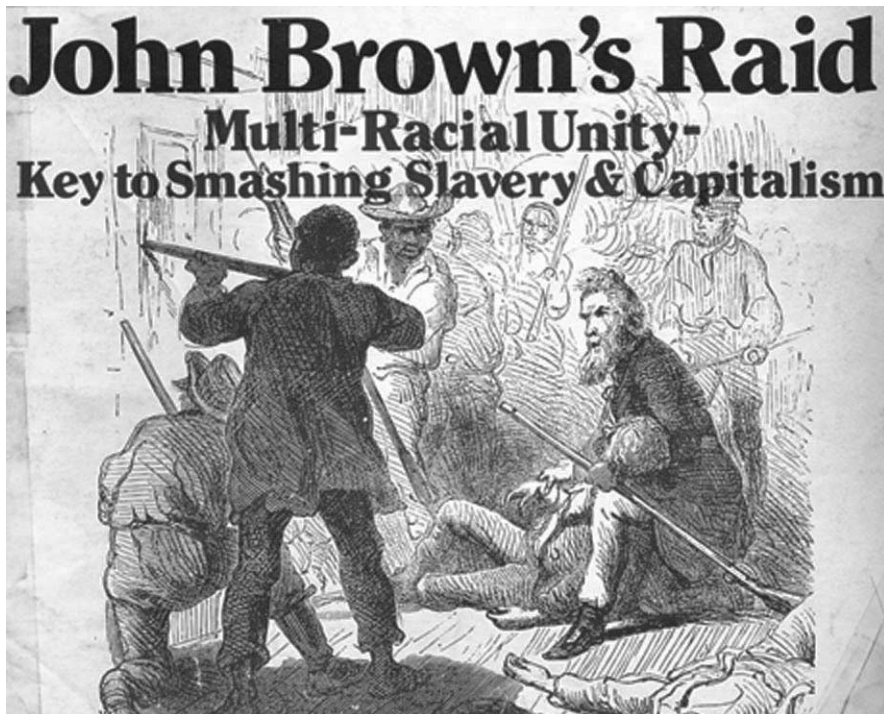
Tubman," we're not extolling some "superhero" contrived by capitalist press agents to reduce us to a passive audience applauding their splendid speeches or exploits. Revolutionary leaders (whose words, actions and thoughts best summarize those of countless others) encourage our strengths, so that we can consciously participate in understanding and changing the world.

## The Inspiration of John Brown

John Brown is with us every time we help one co-worker shake off the mental and physical chains of capitalist enslavement by daring to join with others to fight the enemy. We celebrate this 150th anniversary to help lead our class closer to revolution by learning from John Brown and from the millions to whom he gave leadership.

Brown was a Christian, not a Marxist, and did not attack the capitalist system along with slavery. We now realize that racism cannot finally be destroyed without destroying capitalism. In fact, capitalism grew on the basis of continued racist oppression after the Civil War and continues to be the foundation of modern capitalism worldwide. But we study John Brown to learn from his strengths: multi-racial unity, boldness in seizing the offensive, reliance on the masses to embrace violence to destroy a ruling class.

We in PLP are preparing for another civil war, this time a class war to destroy wage slavery and with it, all oppression. History — the story of working-class struggle — produces the material from which our ideas on how to make a revolution emerge. Join us on October 17, 2009! We must finish the job begun by our anti-slavery ancestors! ☛



Less than two years after John Brown's raid, the Civil War erupted. By 1865, about 1,300,000 Union troops 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 and many white troops opposed slavery and racism. They were an armed expression of multi-racial unity.

History was made by millions of ordinary people fighting

Brown had started the raid two weeks earlier than planned.

Brown and other captured survivors were tried for murder, treason against the state of Virginia and inciting slave rebellions. They were convicted and hanged. Virginia's slave-owners were so afraid of abolitionist attempts to rescue Brown that they guarded the execution with 1,500 state militiamen, federal troops and Virginia Military Institute cadets.

While jailed awaiting death, Brown predicted that 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.

back. Hundreds of supporters directly aided the preparation for the raid; thousands more did so indirectly. When saying "John Brown" or "Harriet

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