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**-FOR UNITY
AND
PROGRESS!**

**Henry
Winston**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

HENRY WINSTON, National Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A. since 1966, was born in Mississippi in 1911. He is only two generations from slavery—his grandfather was a slave. At the age of 19 he joined the Young Communist League and entered the struggles of the unemployed in Kansas City, Missouri. He participated in the National Hunger March to Washington in 1932, aided the defense of the Scottsboro Boys, and took part in the National Negro Congress and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. During World War II he served in the Army Engineers and received an honorable discharge. Over the years he has held a variety of leading posts in the Communist Party. In 1956 he began an 8-year prison sentence under a Smith Act frameup. While in prison he became blind as a result of deliberate neglect of his health by the prison authorities. World-wide protests brought about his release in 1961.

Henry Winston is the author of numerous articles and pamphlets. Among his most recent pamphlets are *Negro-White Unity, Build the Communist Party—The Party of the Working Class*, and *Black Americans and the Middle East Conflict*.

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FIGHT RACISM— FOR UNITY AND PROGRESS!

By Henry Winston

Racism and the Working-Class Movement

My lecture will be concerned with racism, both in the movement as a whole and in the working-class movement in particular.

The giant industrial monopolies, the big banks and insurance companies, the financiers and landowners, all spawn racism and use it as one of their chief class weapons to maintain and defend their regime of exploitation and oppression, of enmity between peoples, of imperialist wars of aggression. It follows that all democratic and anti-monopoly forces, with the working class and the Black liberation movement in the van, can effectively defend the interests of the vast majority of the people only when they actively further the struggle against racism. This is an essential precondition for the development of a fighting alliance which will unite all democratic and anti-monopoly forces in the country.

Marxism-Leninism teaches us, and history has shown and continues to show, that if there is not a day-by-day struggle against racism, in the realms of both ideology and practice, unity will be more apparent than real. And such a formal appearance of unity, which is not based on substance, only weakens the struggle against monopoly and for social progress.

Marx wrote long ago that "Labor in the white skin can never be free so long as labor in the black skin is branded." This profound observation points up the fact that racism is the consciously employed weapon of the white imperialist oppressors who use it to create division in the ranks of the working class. And Marx correctly suggests that white workers must take the lead in the struggle against racism. This is the

path which can lead to unity of Black and white workers in struggle, which can achieve Black equality and a real improvement in the conditions of all workers.

The conclusion which Communists must draw with respect to this most important question is that it is mere chatter to talk about trade union consciousness developing into class consciousness and advancing to socialist consciousness if there does not exist a conscious, unending struggle against racism. No worker can be said to be class conscious who does not recognize the community of interests of all workers as a class. And for white workers this means first of all recognition of the community of their interests with those of Black workers and therefore of the need to fight for the rights of Black workers.

The fight against racism is thus basic to the class struggle in the United States. Chauvinism, or what is more popularly called racism, serves the very opposite of the interests of the working class and the Black people.

If the working class is able to recognize the source of racism, then it will be able to find the cure that will benefit the workers and all oppressed peoples. I am certain that the Marxist-Leninist theory of our Party will help the masses of workers to find the answer to this question. When they do, when they find that it is the capitalist system which breeds racism, they will be led in their day-to-day struggles against the social oppression of the monopolies toward an understanding of the need for socialism.

Racism in the labor movement in any form undermines working-class solidarity and weakens the blows of the rank and file in its struggle for its economic and social demands. On the other hand, it is a truism that the fight for class solidarity advances the level of consciousness whereby the independent position of the working class becomes solidly rooted among the rank and file. This is manifested mainly in a consistent fight for higher wages, shorter hours, an end to speedup, longer vacations with pay, better sanitary and safety

conditions, etc. It is manifested in a fight for trade union democracy which involves the rank and file in the determination of policy, and for an independent class position in the realm of politics.

The fight against racism must also include a battle against opportunism in all its forms. It entails a fight against the reformism and class collaborationism brought into the labor movement by Meany, Lovestone and Company, not only at the top but at every echelon of trade union structure.

Growing Social Crisis

Such an approach is necessary if we are to change the present-day social structure, which has brought our country to the point of crisis in every area of life. The fight against racism and opportunism can release the powerful arms of labor, and guarantees the kinds of popular action that can beat back reaction and fascism at this crucial moment in our history.

We are indeed living in a period of great turmoil and rapid change. On every side we find manifestations of social crisis: unemployment, housing, health, education, welfare, transportation, communications, etc. We suffer from high prices, high rents and high taxes, from serious neglect of our children, and especially of Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian children. The pollution of our environment has reached a critical, dangerous stage. And so, in every phase of life there is a growing social crisis.

The economic problems of the people are being aggravated by the enormous and growing military budgets of the Nixon Administration, which is spending tens upon tens of billions every year to build the largest military machine the world has ever known, for the purpose of imperialist aggression. It is these policies of the Administration which explain the continuing deterioration of the conditions under which the masses live.

The Nixon Administration violates the most elementary

rules of democracy and has created a deepening Constitutional crisis in the country. Reactionary laws are enacted and official violence, brutality and repression are rampant. Racism is being actively promoted, and there is a renewal and intensification of activities on the part of the ultra-Right—of the Birchites, the Ku Klux Klan and a host of other fascist organizations and parties—financed by some of the biggest money in the United States to promote this ultra-reactionary line.

If Nixon's policies in Indochina and the Middle East are not reversed, there is grave danger of further escalating the war and sharply posing before our people the horrors of a thermonuclear war. Need I belabor the meaning of such a criminal course of action and the consequences it would have for all our people—white, Black, Brown, Red and Yellow?

Nixon's policies in Vietnam and the whole of Indochina are the epitome of racism on a world scale. The fight against these policies makes it urgent, therefore, to bring into being a coalition in our country of the peoples of all colors and nationalities in the struggle for peace. The building of such a coalition constitutes a major contribution to achievement of the unity of the three main revolutionary processes in today's world: the struggle for socialism, the national liberation movement and the movements for peace and democracy in all capitalist countries.

The fight against racism is a most important weapon in the struggle to save humanity from the dangers of a third world war and to advance the social interests of the peoples in all countries. The subject we are discussing is concerned not alone with the fate and the very lives of Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian people; but with those of the whole working class and of other social strata in our country.

As you can see, comrades, the responsibility of our Party to bring these concepts to the millions is very great indeed. We must not, we cannot fail in this task.

An analysis of the present moment and the immediate out-

look shows that this state of affairs is one which the masses of our people will not take lying down. In fact, the people's resistance to monopolist reaction has already begun. In the period immediately ahead we shall witness sharp clashes on all fronts. Great struggles will take place: on the one hand struggles of the working class against the giant monopolies, and on the other hand struggles of the Black people against repression and for survival. And the forces of reaction are laboring day and night to create division and confusion within the ranks of the people.

The Meaning of the Angela Davis Frameup

Let us remember that the political frameup of Angela Davis, a Black woman Communist, is symbolic of a total policy of reaction—that is, of racism and anti-Communism. It is particularly important to note as well that it is a Black *woman* who has been singled out for persecution. And it is hardly necessary for me to argue the significance of the role Black women are playing in the total fight for freedom.

We must understand that this piece of savagery is but a continuation of that displayed in the frameups of Bobby Seale, Ericka Huggins and Ruchell Magee, in the attacks on the Black Panther Party and the murders of many of its militant fighters. It would be a serious mistake not to draw the proper lessons as to the meaning of what is taking place. What is happening here is the unfolding of an offensive against an entire people—the Black people in the United States, who are the Achilles' heel of U.S. imperialism.

This is a conscious attempt to prevent Black people from protesting against the special conditions of brutal oppression in which they are compelled to live. It is a deliberate attempt to undermine their fight for unity, their efforts to win allies in the fight to bring about a change in their condition. At the same time it is expressive of a program associated with a high policy decision to inject confusion into the movement by the

instigation of false schemes dressed up in "revolutionary" rhetoric, by deliberate efforts at bribery and co-optation into the program of the Establishment, by token concessions aimed at disrupting and defeating the movement, and by all kinds of demagoguery. And all this is backed up by the actions of the courts, whose decisions are more often than not racist-based, and by the racist bestiality of the police in the ghettos.

The fate of the other oppressed peoples in the United States is essentially the same. Thus, racism is applied as a divisive weapon to prevent 25 million Black people and an added 15 million Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian people from uniting with the labor and people's movements, and thereby to make secure the rule of the monopolies.

In this context the fight which Angela Davis leads is historic and has meaning not alone for the present but for the future as well.

Six Questions

In relation to the fight against racism, six questions must be asked. Question Number One: Must the Black people's movement wage a struggle against racism? The answer is yes, such a struggle must be conducted. Question Number Two: Can the Black people's movement by itself win the struggle against racism in this country? The answer is no, even though such a struggle is indispensable and will be a major contribution in the fight to put an end to racism. Question Number Three: Does the fight against racism serve only the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian peoples? The answer is no, though obviously these sections of our population will benefit enormously from successes in the struggle against racism.

This leads us to Question Number Four: Does the struggle against racism serve the interests of the working class in general and the organized white workers in particular? The answer is yes. The fact must be put sharply and plainly: the class interests of white workers can be furthered only if they

lead in the fight against racism and strive to put an end to it. This lies at the very heart of the struggle against monopoly capital, which is the source of racism.

Putting the matter in this form suggests Question Number Five: Can unity of the class—that is, of Black and white workers—be achieved without a fight to destroy this weapon of monopoly against labor as a whole and Black workers in particular? The answer is obvious: without it, there can be no unity of the class. This is what I meant when I emphasized (and I am certain you too will emphasize and get others to emphasize) the central fact that the struggle against racism is indispensable for the achievement of unity of the labor movement and the attainment of the objectives of the class and the people.

We come to Question Number Six: Can labor solidarity by itself win the struggle against racism? The answer is no. Labor solidarity is the most important force for winning the fight. It is essential. But to make the fight complete, still another ingredient is necessary, namely, the winning of allies which include all the democratic, anti-fascist and anti-monopolist forces in the country. There is no power which can defeat such unity. The struggle against racism becomes the key to bringing it about, and our Party must keep bringing this central lesson to the people in everything it does.

Racism is a most important part of repression. Among the Black people of our country there is an upsurge of struggle which is growing on all sides. The Angela Davis case is the reply of reaction to this upsurge. Or take the trade unions, where the main feature of today's struggles is their wildcat character. Masses of workers within the rank-and-file movement are rejecting the policies of their opportunist leadership. And this is growing. In all areas you can see the upsurge. And in all areas the ruling class uses racism as an instrument of division and repression.

The answer is unity—unity in struggle, unity in general, but above all, unity of the working class. Moving workers in

the struggle to bring this about is the key which will open the doors to alliance with all the forces fighting for social progress in this country.

We must state clearly the position of our Party in respect to racism and our differences with other approaches to the question. But we must at the same time recognize the need for seeking unity with these different currents in order to win the fight against racism.

As you can see, I place this question quite differently than do social democrats, liberals, moralists, humanitarians and many civil libertarians. They have been handling the question in their fashion for centuries with no real effect. To continue with it as a guiding policy would be to fall victim to gradualism and tokenism. In the face of the grave dangers which threaten, it is impossible to continue to base policies on such approaches.

The Special Role of Black Workers

Comrades have said to me: "Many millions of people are under the whiplash of monopoly capital. How can you say that Black people are the Achilles' heel of U.S. imperialism when Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Indians are even more oppressed? Why the Black people and not the others?"

It is most important to understand this question. We do not deny but on the contrary agree with the statement that the Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian peoples are the victims of the most vicious racism and oppression by monopoly. Even more, a fundamental change must be brought about to liberate these masses from such oppression.

The problem is to understand the relationship of class forces in such a manner as to guarantee a continuing struggle for the kind of unity which will promote equality for all. To accomplish this it is necessary to develop a correct line of struggle against the monopolists.

Before dealing with this question, let me note that in fos-

tering racism the monopolists operate in the following way:

1. They attempt to inculcate in the minds of white workers the idea of their superiority over Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano or Indian workers. They employ the racist falsehood of competition within the working class between the white workers on the one hand and these specially oppressed sections of the class on the other. On the one side they skillfully develop the notion of white superiority and on the other they promote the idea that it is not the monopolies but the white workers who are responsible for discrimination on the job. The conflict which inevitably develops among the workers is very profitable for the monopolies but is devastating to the economic interests of all sections of the working class.

2. The cunning of the monopolists is not limited to this. They also pursue, in ideology and in practice, policies designed to sharpen antagonisms among the different oppressed national minorities within the working class. They foster competition among the victims of racism themselves with respect to kinds of jobs, wage levels, etc. The aim of this, too, is to prevent unity of action against the monopolies.

Now, with regard to the special role of Black workers in the fight for working-class unity, which is basic to the class struggle in this country, it is necessary to understand the relationship of the working class and its various components to the basic economy of the country. What are the main branches of industry which form the basis of monopoly capitalism? They include steel, auto, electrical, transport, chemical, rubber, aerospace and others.

With regard to these industries the Black people, as distinct from all other groupings in the United States, occupy a unique position, apart from their role in southern agriculture. And in these industries the struggles of the workers are decisive for all other sectors.

The significance of this role can be illustrated by a simple example. If the Transport Workers Union calls a strike in the city of New York, the entire economy of the city can be

brought to a halt. This cannot be said about a strike, say, at Columbia University or City College. But if there were unity and coordination between a transport workers' strike and a student strike, is it not clear what this would mean in terms of benefits to the people of New York?

Among the Black and white workers in the trade union movement in this country, in those industries which are part of its basic economy, unity in the fight against racism becomes a means of developing the fight against the total policies of monopoly. This is very important because the Black and white workers are the main forces in those sectors of the economy which are the chief pillars of monopoly. Just imagine what a mighty force would be generated in the fight against Wall Street oppression if the relations within the class and with the class enemy were properly understood. Just imagine what could be achieved by all sections of the population, among whom the beneficiaries would be in the first place the Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian masses.

What we are saying, then, is that the fight against racism demands of us that we properly understand the class forces involved, the relationships among those forces, and especially the relationships between Black and white workers, if we are to develop that kind of fight which alone can guarantee that the rights of all the oppressed are effectively defended. Thus understood, the struggle against racism is at one and the same time the basis for advancement of the class interests of the working class and of the special national rights of the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian peoples.

This is the chart for the ship which can carry us to the shore of freedom. Without it we are as if cast adrift on the sea in a rudderless ship.

Organize the South!

Often we speak of the organized and unorganized workers of the North but neglect to speak about those of the South.

This is a very big mistake and there cannot be any further delay in recognizing it.

The Communist Party has always criticized the labor movement for its failure to develop a program for organizing the South. The basic reasons for this failure are the racism which exists in the top leadership of the AFL-CIO and the opportunism which characterizes that leadership. The result is that not only are the interests of southern workers in general betrayed, but especially those of the oppressed Black workers. And there persists a differential in wages and working conditions not only between Black workers and white workers in the South but also between southern workers as a whole and their working-class brothers in the North.

In its failure to unfold an organizing drive in the South the Executive Board of the AFL-CIO, led by Meany, Lovestone and Company, commits an act which is not only a disservice to the working class in the South but does great harm to the labor movement as a whole. The continuance of a policy of refusing to provide appropriate funds and cadre and to pursue the course of action required to organize the unorganized, at this late date in history, condemns this leadership as lick-spittle agents of the monopolists in the ranks of the labor movement. The building and strengthening of the labor movement, even its very existence, depend upon the approach developed to meet the clearly evident desire of the workers in all industries in the South to be organized.

Many important developments have occurred in the South since 1939. New industries have risen, stimulated largely by southern state policies of granting exemption from taxes, cheap land and other privileges, as well as by low wages and "right-to-work" laws. Many runaway shops have gone from the North to the South for these reasons. The absence of a policy of struggle by the labor movement has helped to make these operations very profitable, while the position of the workers has been anything but improved.

The Communist Party generally, and especially in the

South, will continue to develop the struggle for the right to organize and for the organization of unorganized southern workers, Black and white. Our Party believes that the transformation of the South from the bastion of racism it now is can be brought about if the following conditions in particular are fulfilled:

1. In Birmingham, Alabama, where steel and coal play a highly important part, that kind of unity must be found which will move the state of Alabama in a progressive direction and dislodge from positions of influence George Wallace and those who support his ideas. Birmingham is central in the fight for progressive policies not only in the cities but in the rural areas as well.

2. In Louisiana, and in the first place in New Orleans, the longshore and other unions must be won for progressive policies. If the Party in Louisiana is able to accomplish this, and to unite these unions with other progressive forces in the cities and the rural communities, there can be no doubt what this could mean not only for the state but for the nation.

3. In Texas the maritime workers, oil workers and farm workers, including the migratory workers, must be organized and united with the Chicano, Black and white masses in a fighting alliance. If the Party in Texas is able to bring this about, a powerful struggle can be developed against the oil billionaires and other reactionary and racist forces in the state—a struggle which will advance the interests of the nation as a whole.

Given the fulfillment of these conditions, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and all the other states in the South could make an enormous advance in the fight for equality with the rest of the nation.

It is the Communist Party which must undertake to give leadership to the attainment of these goals. The Communists represent the best interests of the southern masses, and in doing so they represent the best interests of the entire nation.

The organization of the unorganized, above all in the

South, must become the rallying cry of the entire labor movement, of all democrats, all anti-imperialists, all radicals, all militants in the country. What is the key to achieving this? It is the struggle against racism, which alone provides the guarantee for putting an end to that opportunism which is now the official policy of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO.

For the sake of emphasis, let us repeat the central fact: that the struggle against racism in the South is a struggle to build a united trade union movement, North and South. The elimination of regional differences becomes possible only if the struggle against racism in all its manifestations succeeds in uniting Black and white workers in the North, and Black and white workers in the South. This is a precondition for building the kind of unity which can erase wage differentials, abolish discriminatory policies which prevent employment in skilled jobs, and remove all obstacles to the fullest participation of Black workers in the determination of trade union policies; and which can do away with all other forms of economic, social and political differentiation between the North and the South. That is why the trade union movement first of all, but also every progressive institution in the country, must take those measures that can effectively promote organization of the unorganized in the South.

Lessons of the Past

Communists, as we have seen, approach the struggle against racism as a central question of class struggle, without which a basic struggle against monopoly cannot be developed. History has shown that there can be no basic advance of the interests of the working class without a struggle to put an end to the inequality which Black workers suffer in organized and unorganized factories throughout the country.

The initiative of the Communist Party during the 1930s helped to convince millions of the necessity of unity of Black

and white. The result was that industrial unions were built in all the major industries in the country. Workers won the right of collective bargaining in respect to working conditions, vacations with pay, trade union democracy and many other demands. The purchasing power of the masses was increased generally, and in the ghettos in particular.

As we have noted, the position of Black workers in relationship to white workers in those branches of industry which are decisive to the economy as a whole differs from that of other oppressed nationalities. This is emphasized by the unique position of Black workers in such industries as steel, auto, transportation, electrical, meat packing, rubber, mining, chemical and others.

A correct policy within the unions, particularly in these industries, of actively fighting racism and opportunism serves the interests not alone of Black and white workers, not alone of Chicano, Puerto Rican and Indian workers, but of the people as a whole who suffer from monopoly greed. It was precisely this approach by the Communists during the 1930s that helped to unify all the democratic, anti-fascist forces in the country and to align our great democratic majority in support of the Soviet Union and all the other states and peoples which crushed the military machine of Hitler.

The program of the Communist Party laid the foundation for a great advance of our people on every front. The Communist Party urged the necessity of measures to curb the rapacity of the U.S. monopolies, including the nationalization of key industries under democratic control. It spearheaded the fight for world peace. That is why McCarthyite reaction took up the cudgels of the monopolists and unleashed an all-out attack on the Communist Party, designed to undermine its influence among the masses and ultimately to destroy it. Every conceivable means was used to achieve this end, from anti-Communist legislation and the jailing of Communists to all sorts of harassment and intimidation and the hounding of workers off their jobs.

Temporarily reaction succeeded in reducing the size of the Party and the scope of its ability to bring its message to the masses. This was accompanied by a weakening of the labor movement and its capacity to fight back and an undermining of the democratic process as a whole.

But the Communists stubbornly fought back. And the millions began to enter the struggle, fighting to maintain and extend democracy. They demanded a halt to the persecution of Communists and insisted on the right to listen to them. A new trend developed, which is still continuing.

The Meaning of Relevance

The continuing relevance of the Communist Party to the class struggle will insure the further advance of such a trend. The Party has never faltered in its relevance to the class struggle despite the vicious attempts to isolate it. Relevance to the cause of the people has meaning only if it is based on the class struggle. Herein lies the great strength of Marxism-Leninism and of the Communist Party, U.S.A. as a Marxist-Leninist party.

There were many who discounted the working class, and especially its organized sector, who falsely argued that the Communists had no relevance to the struggles taking place, and this at the very moment when the Party was fighting back together with the democratic and anti-imperialist movement in the country. But it was clear that talk of "relevance" which failed to base policies on the working class, on its solidarity and alliance with the people, could at best produce a momentary flash on the screen of history. It would be well for those who held such views to ponder the question: Why is it that the movements they led yesterday are no longer in existence today? Or that those which do remain show sharp signs of disintegration and are often mere skeletons of their former selves?

The Communist Party maintains that the struggle against

racism is incorrectly conceived if it is not seen as a guide to the solution of the central problem of our time: the solidarity of the working class, Black and white and all its other components, and the unity of this class with the Black liberation movement and the people's movement as a whole. The Communist Party asserts that a failure to understand the role of the working class is at the same time a failure to understand how to fight racism and eliminate it from the face of the globe.

Earlier I made some observations about class consciousness. I would restate that proposition in this way: that the degree of consciousness among workers in general, and in the organized labor movement in particular, can be measured by the degree to which the struggle against racism is understood. For what is involved is the extent to which labor understands that this a struggle not just for Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Indian people, but for the interests of white workers as well. What is involved is the understanding that it is a fight for the present and future of the labor movement and of the interests of all oppressed masses in this country.

Because it follows these policies the Communist Party is attacked on all sides. The enemy asserts that we are a party for Black people. They think that by such an attack they can prevent the unity of Black and white in our Party. But they will fail in this effort. Let it be known to these gentlemen that we are extremely proud that we are *a party of Black and white* which defends the interests of Black people. There is no force on earth which can divert us from this struggle for the full equality of Black people.

The fight against racism is fundamental to the struggle against imperialist oppression, a struggle whose success will free our people from capitalist bondage.