

# political affairs

**Henry Winston**  
National Chairman, CPUSA  
1911-1986

JOURNAL OF MARXIST THOUGHT  
February 1987 \$1

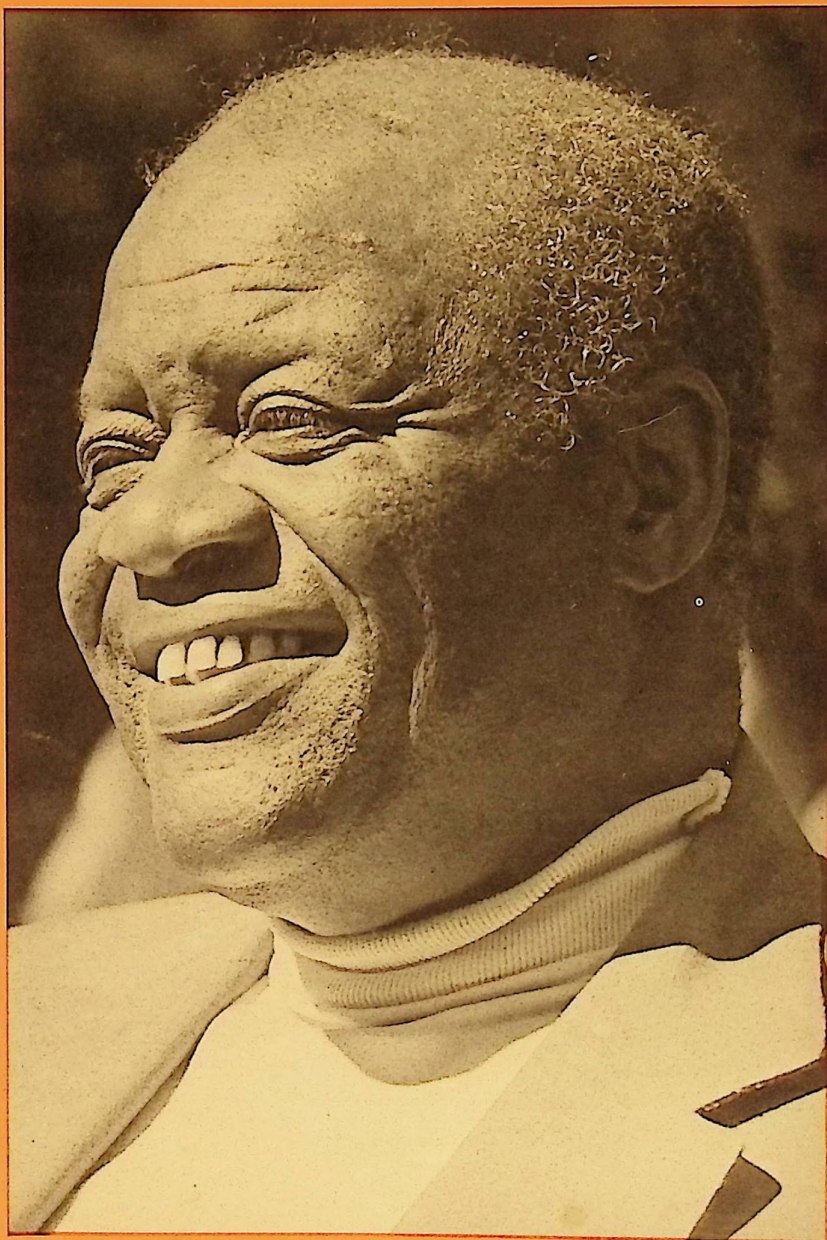
*RACISM*

**HIS VISION ENDURES**  
*Gus Hall*

**THE HERITAGE OF  
HENRY WINSTON**  
*Selected writings*

**REFLECTIONS ON  
MARTIN LUTHER KING  
DAY**  
*James Steele*

**THE MEANING OF  
HOWARD BEACH**  
*Jarvis Tyner*



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# political affairs

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of the Communist Party, USA**

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*Political Affairs* (ISSN 0032 3128) is published monthly by Political Affairs Publishers, Inc., 235 W. 23 Street, New York, NY 10011, ☎ (212) 989-4994, to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

**Manuscripts** are invited. If a return is requested, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

**Subscription rates:** \$10 for one year (individuals); \$15 for one year (institutions); foreign subscriptions, including Canada, \$11 for one year; single issues, \$1. Second class postage paid at the post office in New York, NY. Postmaster: Send changes of address to: Political Affairs, 235 W. 23 St., NY, NY 10011.



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# Reaganspeak on Racism

EDITORIAL COMMENT

In Alice's *Wonderland*, words could "mean what I say they mean, neither more nor less." But even her journey *Through the Looking Glass* would not have prepared Alice for the about-face between word and deed of the Reagan White House.

Consider what they mean by "democracy."

This Administration, early in Reagan's first term, formulated a secret plan to overthrow elected governments, conduct mercenary wars and sponsor counterrevolutionary terrorists, spread disinformation and achieve other unsavory dreams of fanatical ultra-Rightists. This plan was to be executed by unauthorized, clandestine committees hidden in the recesses of the CIA, NSA and other branches of the national security state. The purpose of the conspiratorial methods was to hurdle legal and constitutional obstacles, to carry out policies which the American public and the United States Congress rejected.

The code name: Project Democracy.

It's all very clear once one has the Rosetta Stone to translate from Reaganspeak into English. Project Democracy is to assassinate democracy.

Consider what the Reaganites mean by "interpretation."

The 1972 Antibalistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, negotiated by a previous Administration (in fact, a Republican one) and duly ratified by the Senate of the United States, states: "Each Party undertakes not to develop, test or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based." This language seems clear, unambiguous and not subject to misinterpretation. It says: No new ABM systems.

Now Secretary of Defense Weinberger and other Star Warriors of the Administration are pressing relentlessly towards what they dub "a broad interpretation" of this treaty.

Under this "broad interpretation," the treaty imposes no limits whatsoever on what antimissile systems the Pentagon may develop.

To test and even deploy Star Wars weapons in space is just fine.

Translation of "interpret": repudiate.

Now consider what President Reagan means by being "intolerant of racism." In a television address to high school students on the occasion of Martin Luther King Day, the President urged his youthful audience not only to be intolerant of racism, but to be "totally" intolerant of it, "anywhere around you."

It means a Department of Justice which prosecutes registrars of Black voters in Alabama under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

It means a President who opposed, to the bitter end, enactment of a law making Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday, and then used the occasion of its enactment to slander the person the law honors.

It means telling apocryphal tales—on national television—about "welfare queens" driving Cadillacs and poor people who use food stamps to buy vodka.

It means a Civil Rights Commission which opposes affirmative action—if fact, any action—to achieve equality for Afro-Americans as being unfair to whites.

It means, in the words of the latest National Urban League report on *The State of Black America*, an Administration whose policies are "economically unfair" and "morally unjust" and whose policies have widened the economic and social gap between Black and white.

Translation of being "intolerant of racism" from Reaganese: be a purveyor of the most vulgar racist stereotypes, pursue policies which undermine the quality and shorten the lives of Black Americans, attempt to roll democratic rights back to pre-Civil Rights days. But be sure to wink and smile while you do it.

In place of all other rights, this Administration substitutes defense of a single right: The right to exploit.

To defend democracy, to further the cause of Afro-American equality, to safeguard life on earth, these representatives of multinational capital must be defeated. □

# Henry Winston: The Vision Endures

GUS HALL

Comrade Fern Winston, Mrs. Lucille Watson, Judith—all members of Winnie's family. We share in your deep sorrow over the loss of a dear friend, a beloved comrade and a wonderful, model coworker.

It must be said: Henry Winston did not die of natural causes. The real cause of his untimely death was racism and McCarthyism.

Though delayed, the cause of Henry Winston's death was directly related to a foul act of racism, a crime committed by the federal prison authorities who refused to release Winston in time for a critical operation which could have saved his eyesight then, and would have extended his life now.

It must also be said: Henry Winston was not tried, convicted and sentenced for his real thoughts. He was tried and imprisoned on trumped up, frameup charges. Henry Winston was a victim of McCarthyism, a victim of the anti-working-class, racist courts.

Thus, to have real meaning this memorial gathering, and all remembrances and tributes to Comrade Winston in the future, must include the element of protest—protest against the racism that continues to pollute our land and against class oppression and exploitation.

Comrade Henry Winston spent much of his time, energy and creative resources in the struggle to preserve all living and growing things on our precious planet, to prevent a nuclear holocaust. Thus, for our memorial tribute to Comrade Winston to be meaningful, we must pledge to redouble our efforts in the struggle against the Reagan war policies, which must be reversed or they will inevitably lead to a nuclear winter.

Henry Winston was a worker and a working-class leader. Thus, to have meaning our tributes must include a defense of all workers—in the shops, in the mines, on the land, and the

homeless and hungry in the streets of our cities.

Comrade Winston's lifetime goals, his vision, his dreams, must become our own vision, dreams and goals.

Henry Winston's American dream was a vision of his country as "America the beautiful, from sea to shining sea; the home of the brave and land of the free."

He envisioned a United States at peace with the world, a land of plowshares, without swords; an America without slums, without poverty, hunger and homelessness; an America in which all who labor share in the enjoyment of the products created in the factories and farms of our land.

Henry Winston was a great American hero because he was motivated always by a deep love of the people of the United States.

Henry Winston's brilliant, analytical and probing mind very early in life led him to the fundamental conclusion that if human society is to continue its progressive march it must at some point, as he often said, "cross the River Jordan." Mankind at some point will have to unburden itself and throw off the fetters and evil grasp of greed and exploitation.

Winston became a formidable foe of capitalism and an inspiring, far-sighted advocate of socialism.

In socialism, Winnie saw the social framework in which human ingenuity and inherent human goodness could at long last reach for its full potential. In socialism he saw the full realization of his noble vision.

After sixty years of contributions to the struggles for a better life for all, the name of Henry Winston now takes its rightful place on the honor roll of illustrious heroes and heroines of American labor.

Henry Winston now takes his rightful, hard-earned position on top of the honor roll of working-class leaders who had the foresight and courage to set forth advanced ideas; men and women who held fast to the vision of a

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Address delivered by Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA at the memorial meeting for Henry Winston, late chairman of the CPUSA, January 11, 1987.

world and nation without oppression; a world and land at peace; leaders with unflinching confidence that someday humanity will shed the caveman mentality of bigotry, race hatred and greed.

**C**omrade Winnie was loved and respected throughout the world because he was a great American. He was honored throughout the world because he fought hard and steadfastly for a better America, for an America worthy of the love and respect of peoples of all lands.

But the horizons of Henry Winston's thoughts, interests and concerns did not stop or pause at the water's edge. Winnie was always a counterweight to the "ugly American."

He knew the best interests of the American and Nicaraguan people can be served only by putting an end to U.S. policies of aggression.

He knew the common interests of the American and South African peoples could only be served by putting an end to the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

He saw the best interests of the world served only through peaceful competition, not nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Henry Winston was an American patriot whose love of country embraced the interests of the great majority of the American people, a patriotism with a deep, special concern for the victims of oppression and exploitation.

Henry Winston was an advocate and fighter for unity, unity in struggle.

He clearly saw the connection and relationship between the struggles of the Afro-American people for equality, dignity and justice and the striving for democracy by all Americans.

With crystal clarity, he saw the need for Black-white unity, for working class unity, for the unity of the Afro-American and labor movements.

Henry Winston unselfishly dedicated his whole life, every fiber of his being, to breathe life into this noble vision. To Henry Winston, these high ideals were not meaningless dreams,

flights of fancy or wishful thinking. To him, they were realizable goals. They were achievable rewards to be won only through masses in struggle.

Henry Winston was a man of deep and sensitive feelings about his fellow human beings. He was motivated by the highest moral and ethical standards. His was a life of self-denial, of sacrifice, of constant struggle.

Winnie was willing to go to prison for his unwavering conviction that man's inhumanity to man is a relic of the past, that it must have no place in a modern society, that every one of us must be each other's keeper.

Winston's unalterable convictions were firmly rooted in his deep and clear insight into the laws of human society.

His unflinching confidence in the certainty of victory and the correctness of his cause was based on his deep insight into the hearts and minds of his brothers and sisters.

Henry Winston was an organizer, a teacher, a writer, a theoretician, a scientist, a wise tactician. He was always a little ahead of his times. He had a deep understanding of developments because he understood and creatively applied the liberating science of Marxism-Leninism.

**T**his memorial gathering must be for us a moment to pay homage. But it must be more, much more.

It must be a moment of rededication and recommitment, a solemn pledge to redouble our efforts to join with all progressive men and women to cleanse the world of oppression and wars, to cleanse the world of racism.

Henry Winston was on the right side of history. Though his life could not, his vision spanned the transition from capitalism to socialism. His vision is the approaching reality of today. His dreams are the blueprint for a fair tomorrow.

It was in keeping with his illustrious and dedicated life; it was in keeping with his lifetime of struggle against inequality and injustice; it was in keeping with his dreams of new world; it

was in keeping with his sensitivity and concern for his fellow human beings, in keeping with his 60 years of service against the evils of capitalism, that he was elected and reelected as National Chairman of the Communist Party, USA.

Comrade Winnie's legacy includes a united Communist Party. Winnie was a consistent, innovative and principled molder of Party unity. It has been an inspiring learning experience to work on Winnie's team.

Only those of us who worked with Comrade Winston on a daily basis know the full scope of his contribution to the process of molding a Party united ideologically and politically. Only we know his full contributions to ideas, to theory and practice.

For Comrade Winston, the struggle for a more just and more peaceful world was a lifetime commitment. Winston was not a part-time warrior. Personal comforts were always secondary and they had to fit into his main objective in life. He never indulged in self-pity. Thoughts about doing something else, anything else, that would have made his life easier never entered

his mind. His was a total, lifetime commitment.

**T**he most meaningful monument to Comrade Winston is to tip our banners and then continue the good fight he gave his life to.

The most meaningful living monument is to emulate his lifestyle. To be as consistent day in and day out in the trenches of the class struggle; to be principled and, yes, stubborn in the fight for peace, equality and socialism; to never give up, never waver, never hesitate, never give an inch to the enemy; to never give up the fight; to overcome whatever the handicaps, difficulties or setbacks.

Comrade Winston lived a good life, a very rich life. He enjoyed the good fight. He was a good human being. We are all better for having lived and worked side by side with him.

A bright star in the big sky of the human race has expired. But the light it shed will continue to light up the path of all fighters for social progress, today and for all the tomorrows. □

# The Heritage of Henry Winston

## Selected Writings

*The published writings of Comrade Henry Winston span more than five decades. But this half century only begins to suggest their scope. They address all the major problems on the stage of U.S. and world politics in this period.*

*The following brief excerpts, therefore, of necessity can not be and are not intended to be inclusive. Many major areas treated by Winston's versatile mind are not represented. We have selected here items which are characteristic of the sharply polemical, humane and lively Winston style, and which represent many of his major works, including reports to national conventions of the CPUSA, mass pamphlets and books.*

*We hope these writings will whet the reader's appetite to investigate this trove of Marxist-Leninist writings at greater length.*

### LIFE BEGINS WITH FREEDOM

Let us listen to the story of a young Negro whom we shall call George. George does not tell a "hard-luck" story—his life is *typical* of the obstacles faced by the *more fortunate Negro*.

George came from a family with eight children. His father worked in a Mississippi sawmill, earning \$9.75 a week. This was not enough to keep the family of ten, and George's mother, in addition to keeping the house clean and neat, washing, ironing, cleaning and cooking for the family, also took in washing from the rich white people to supplement the family income.

George's parents never had a chance to go beyond the second grade in school. They had no great hope in life for themselves—only the hope that their children could live a better life than they had lived. For them, this revolved around the question of getting a better education. Knowledge, they taught George and his brothers and sisters, was power—the power to live a better life.

George was determined to justify the confidence of his parents. His mother wanted him to become a doctor. His father thought he should be a preacher. George's aspirations ran higher; he wanted to become a senator—perhaps even President. Why not? Hadn't he been taught in school that every American had an equal opportunity—that his chance was as good as the next fellow's—that if he worked hard and studied hard, he could not fail?

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1937

*"The subject of this pamphlet is the plight of Negro youth in America" the author tells us. At the time Henry Winston, then 26, was already National Administrative Secretary of the Young Communist League.*

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George soon learned the meaning of work and the meaning of sacrifice. He had to get up every morning before it was light—before the rich white folks had gone to bed—to bring his father's dinner to the sawmill. His father had to leave home at three o'clock in the morning in order to get to work on time. Every morning, George's father would say a few words of encouragement to him—keeping up his courage to work hard for the education that would bring liberation.

George's mother gave him warm words of encouragement, too. Nickels were scarce and children were many—but George's mother managed to find pennies so that the children could have a piece of candy or an apple with their lunch.

George could see that his family were denying themselves everything so that he could have a chance. He wanted to help. He knew that even fifty cents—even a quarter a week—would have meant more greens on the table, more meals, more blackeyed peas, or perhaps



even molasses for the table. It would mean more money for pencils and paper for school work. Perhaps he could even go along with the other kids when they bought bread and sardines for their favorite sardine loaf.

George hunted around for a job. Finally, he landed one with a fish market. He was supposed to deliver orders on a bicycle, after school and all day Saturday. He could not ride a bike—he had to drag it up and down the hills—he was slow making his deliveries, and after a few days he was fired.

He was not discouraged. By sheer luck, he got a job as a caddy, when a grouchy old man selected him out of a long line of boys ahead of him. George managed to please him; at the end of nine holes, he gave him a quarter and a dime tip. Proudly, he took it home to his mother—the first thirty five cents he had ever earned. She was as proud as George.

To get work as a caddy, you had to be at the links by four o'clock. The links were three and a half miles away from school. George used to trot home from school, drop his books, pick up a piece of bread, and continue on the run for the golf course. On Saturdays, he would caddy all day. The fellows used to average fifty cents a day; after work, they would get a ride to town, and all stop off at a bakery, where they'd squander a dime on some delicious pastry. Once in a great while, they would even go to a Wild West Show, the most popular thing in town and a special treat.

Miss Smith, who ran the grocery store, took an interest in George, because of his ambition. She decided to make a businessman out of him. George would help her by selling coal oil, candy, and other provisions; she would give George the candy that had melted and become too soft to sell, and smoked sausages and other meats for the family table.

The year that George finished grade school, his uncle came to visit. He persuaded the family to move North, where they'd have a better chance. George's father got a job in a steel mill. Wages were better—but the cost of living was higher. The family was growing up, and their needs were increasing. George's sister had a fine voice—everybody had great hopes for her.

But lack of money, making it hard to get books and clothing, let alone singing lessons, put an end to this ambition. She never gave up her secret ambition—but she had to go to work; soon she got married, and all her attention was turned towards her husband and home. It was then that all the hopes of the family were turned towards George.

He got a job running errands for a drug store, earning five dollars a week. Half he kept, half he gave to the family. But the store was forced out of business, and George was out of a job again. He determined not to quit school, even for a short period. Once out, always out—that had been the experience of too many of his friends. Finally, he picked up a job as a dishwasher during the summer, earning twelve dollars a week.

All summer long, George saved his money. He bought his own clothes for the coming school term, and arranged with his boss to continue working on the night shift. The night shift was from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.—and school hours were from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon. George had to drop typing and shorthand, to get an extra hour's sleep in the morning.

Things worked out all right for a while. George was taking no part in the cultural or social life of the school but he was getting the education he wanted. But lack of sleep began to tell. George's grades began to go down. The boss began kicking about George's work—he said that lack of sleep was preventing him from doing a decent job.

The question was placed bluntly before George. Which would it be—school or job?

George's family needed the money he was bringing in each week. If he were to quit his job, it would be taking bread out of their mouths, food from the table. While George was wrestling with this question, there came the crash of 1929. George's father lost his job in the steel mill, and the whole responsibility of the family upkeep rested on his shoulders.

He quit school. He has never been able to go back. Gone are the dreams of being a senator or president. Gone are the hopes that education would enable George to obtain a decent job.

George's story, modified in one way or another, is the story of the Negro youth of America. George was fighting against the same combination of forces that all young Negroes have to fight against.

George's problems are *your* problems.

What do we young Negroes want from life? What do we have a right to expect?

First, we want the right to become useful citizens. That means the right to have a steady job, with regular pay—a job that gives us a chance to utilize our best talents and ambitions.

Second, we want a chance to enjoy the good things that life provides. We want to have enough money to have a home that is bright, cheerful, and attractive. We want to have enough money to enable us to entertain our friends and be entertained by them. We want to be able to afford a radio in our homes to bring us music. We want to be able to afford to go to the movies, to plays, perhaps to concerts and operas. We want to have books in our home to read. We want to have money in the bank, to take care of the doctor bills in case we become sick.

Third, we want a chance to have a family life of our own. We want the chance to find the person we want to marry, to move into a home of our own, to settle down, to raise a family, to see that our family has a chance to grow up healthy and happy. . . .

In the beginning of this pamphlet I told you a story of George. That is a brief story of my own life. I joined the Young Communist League in January 1932. I found that it is an organization of and for young Negro people. You may have whatever belief you want but if you believe in one thing—that we as a people are rightfully entitled to equality—you must join our organization.

### **EDUCATION IN THE SPIRIT OF SOCIALISM**

What are the problems before us in making the YCL a real mass educational organization? We must see education in our organization as something not limited to classes and schools, but as something which runs like a red thread through

everything that we do.

Let us take a small thing such as a dance. Through it we can educate our membership and youth at large in the practice of good comradeship, fellowship and internationalism. Through a dance many outsiders are provoked to real thought and admiration for the natural behavior of young people in our organization. Through our dances we help young people to meet each other, to meet young people of other national groups, to meet Negro youth and thereby help to destroy race prejudice.

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1939

*From report to the Ninth  
National Convention of the  
YCL. This work was  
considered a definitive guide  
to Communist work among the  
youth. Henry Winston was then  
also a member of the CPUSA's  
National Committee.*

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Many of our comrades run dances and see only the dollars and cents that will come out of them, not their educational value. And is it not true that those of us who run dances learn how to plan, how to keep records and books, and how to organize? Today a modest dance, tomorrow a great mass meeting. And through even such small matters, we have trained hundreds of active functionaries for trade unions, fraternal organizations and cultural groups. But we do not view dances as bait to catch fish. That is the approach of Tammany Hall, of Bruce Barton, Herbert Hoover and others of their like. Ours is a social purpose, to help win the youth for progressive action.

The failure to grasp this point is due to the fact that many of us look upon education as a departmental task and not the very heart and soul of our organization. This is expressed concretely in the fact that our leadership gets tied up in technical and routine functions and forgets why it is doing these things. Our comrades forget that the sale of literature, the collection of dues, the raising of finances, the conduct of various campaigns are not things in themselves,

but a part of something larger, the thing which ties them all together, Marxist-Leninist education.

What is our first educational job? It is giving attention to the training of the individuals within the organization. There are 22,000 of us. While having much in common, we are nevertheless different. We have our likes and dislikes, our hobbies and interests vary, our experiences and family background are different. The training and education of the individual member require that we look upon our membership as people and not as numbers.

Who are some of these individuals? There are the Negro youth who live in a world where their people are kept at the bottom of the social ladder by race prejudice and bigotry. Their people are denied the rights enjoyed by others. They are faced with discrimination on the job, in the schools of higher learning, in the cafes, the theaters, and on the beaches. They are caricatured in the press, over the radio and in the movies. It is natural, therefore, that many questions arise in the minds of these youth about the YCL. Many of them come to us with a certain distrust; they demand that we prove our sincerity. The solution of this problem will be determined by the extent to which the League as a whole, and particularly our white membership, will assist us in helping to solve it.

There are the Italian, Polish, Jewish, Catholic and other young people with different national backgrounds, with their own special problems. There are the working youth who, seeing a large army of unemployed and continual layoffs, are worried about maintaining their jobs. They seek assistance from the YCL. They want education that will enable them to become better trade union members and leaders.

There are the unemployed who seek help in securing relief and job. There are many of our own members who are confronted with personal problems in the family and the home. . . .

Let me conclude with the thought that we are engaged in the greatest adventure of all time: the adventure of reshaping the world of today, preparing for that great new world of tomorrow in which men and women of all peoples, nations and creeds will have passed out of

the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.

We shall encounter obstacles: difficulties of all kinds lie in our path. But the truth, the living truth, the people's truth marches by our side. In the words that are engraved on the Town Hall building just across the street:

Ye shall know the truth  
And the truth shall make you free.

### **FOR A PARTY ROOTED AMONG INDUSTRIAL WORKERS**

The attacks on our Party have not ceased. Having failed so far, the enemy now resorts to new plots in its frenzy to outlaw the Communist Party. The "Special Grand Jury" which labored nearly a year and a half to prove a nonexistent "foreign agent conspiracy" gave birth to the present monstrous frameup indictments of the twelve members of the outgoing National Board. This is the most serious attempt yet to outlaw the Communist Party.

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1948

*Shortly after returning from service in the U.S. Army during World War II, Henry Winston was elected National Organizational Secretary of the CPUSA. This is from his report to the Party's 14th National Convention.*

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Should the enemy succeed in this frameup, it will mean more than the imprisonment of the members of the National Board. For involved in this indictment is the democratic right to membership in, and the legal existence of, the Communist Party. With every ounce of energy we must guarantee that the monopolists shall not have their way.

In the coming days we shall witness an increase in the enemy attacks against our Party, but we shall also witness an ascending wave of mass struggles. Our Party must take all the necessary steps to strengthen itself speedily in or-

der to be able to help lead these struggles. We should therefore, while taking a realistic view of the situation, act with the firm conviction that we can win this fight.

Some comrades conclude that under conditions of monopoly's offensive and the defensive battles of the working class "we must retrench" and "wait for more favorable times" for Party building, or that "we need to limit the Party membership to the most militant activists within the vanguard Party." In the light of the tasks facing us as Communists, can we accept this "theory"? Obviously not! Those who advance this "theory" fail to see that the "more favorable times" of tomorrow are being determined, and can be determined, only by what we do in today's struggles. In a period of reactionary offensive, favorable opportunities can not be created by a "wait and see" policy, by "retrenchment" or by "limiting the Party membership to the most militant activists."

The concept of "retrenchment" is not a line of struggle; it is a retreat. This concept flows from a onesided estimate of the situation in the country. Comrades who defend such concepts fail to see the emerging struggles and the militant cadres they will bring to the fore. The place of many of these cadres should be in the Communist Party. Our day-to-day struggles must be designed to reach and win them and the Leftward moving masses.

Their onesided estimate of the situation leads these comrades to overestimate the strength of the enemy and underestimate the fighting moods of the masses, as well as the ability of our Party to influence the course of the developing struggles. This "theory" denies the vanguard role of our Party and is in essence a form of liquidationism. The present offensive of monopoly is not an argument against, but an argument for building the Communist Party. We must reject all counsels of retreat and retrenchment.

Other comrades conclude that the best way to meet reaction's offensive is by submerging the Party in the mass movement. In practice this concept would lead to a state of affairs in which the Party becomes identical with the trade union or mass organization. These comrades see

the need for work among the masses, but they do not clearly see the need for the vanguard Party of the working class. In reverse form they express a certain timidity and a fear of the masses. Moreover, their conception tends to create a tailist policy, and not a policy of leadership which aims to instill class consciousness, pride in, and direction to the working-class and people's movement. Instead of following a conscious and consistent policy of leadership, these comrades tend to rely on spontaneity. Here again we have an overestimation of the strength of the enemy and an underestimation of the ability of the masses to fight back effectively under the leadership of the Party. This conception likewise denies the vanguard role of the Party.

Nor is the problem resolved by establishing two types of Communists—one doing "mass" work and submerging the Party among the masses, and the other doing "Communist" work and moving independently of the masses. This division is fundamentally wrong and solves nothing. This combination of Left-sectarianism and Right opportunism stands in opposition to the Marxist-Leninist principle of Party organization. Comrades given to such thinking fail to see that the starting point of all Communist work is mass work, that the Party can be built only through such activity.

Our task is to grasp all opportunities to help build the united front of struggle in the shops, in the working-class neighborhoods, to build the Progressive Party and every democratic movement, and thus to fight to build our Party as *the indispensable instrument* for beating back the offensive of reaction, fascism and war. □

## **GEAR THE PARTY FOR ITS GREAT TASKS**

Our 1948 Convention met just a few days after the infamous Smith Act indictment of the 12 members of our National Committee. Two and a half years ago we stood on the threshold of a period that has been marked by political trials, unprecedented in their mass scope and historic significance.

Our vanguard Party, its leaders and its

members, have been on trial not only in Foley Square, but before the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. We have been tried also by grand juries, by Congressional committees and Congress as a whole, by the Immigration Department, state and city bodies, government and university "loyalty" boards, and a host of other official and unofficial inquisitions.

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**1951**  
***From a report to the 15th***  
***National Convention, held***  
***prior to the Supreme Court***  
***decision ordering Winston and***  
***11 other National Board***  
***members to surrender for***  
***imprisonment under the***  
***antidemocratic Smith Act.***

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Our trials set the pattern for the trials of others—in the first place, the progressive organizations and progressive currents in the labor movement. The CIO trials and expulsions are the most dramatic example of this fact—but there are many other examples in various states, local unions and shops.

The Negro people's movement for national liberation and against all forms of discrimination and segregation was also put on trial. Paul Robeson, that great leader and symbol of the Negro people's national liberation struggle, was tried by a petty official in the Passport Division, and by the monopoly-controlled czars of radio and the concert business. In thousands of police courts, in scores of frameup cases, Negro men and women have been put on trial for claiming their rights, for defending their human dignity and honor, for attempting to cast a vote.

The peace movement has been put on trial. It was on trial in Foley Square, in Congress when the McCarran Act was passed, in the Passport Division of the State Department, and particularly during the Stockholm Peace Pledge campaign.

The movement in defense of civil rights also has been on trial and the movement for American-Soviet friendship, for aid to the victims of the butcher Franco. Progressives in the

arts, sciences and professions have been put on trial.

This, comrades, is what we must see as the political content of the various so-called contempt, perjury, conspiracy and deportation cases, and of the widespread witchhunt investigations.

Now let us get down to the false and sinister charges made against our Party, which are at the root of all these trials and attacks.

Profascist reaction says that our Party is a "criminal conspiracy." The law defines a conspiracy as an agreement to act together—in other words, to organize for joint action. That we believe in and practice organized action we do not deny. Our Party is the organized detachment, the most advanced section of the working class. The big lesson of the Foley Square trial is that U.S. imperialism seeks to behold the working class by destroying its organized vanguard—the Communist Party.

In the eyes of the Wall Street monopolists, it is a "crime" for workers, and especially for the advanced workers, to organize at all.

But in this period, when the central issue is war or peace, the imperialists regard the organization of an effective people's peace movement as the most dangerous of all "crimes."

The core of the charges brought against our Party is, therefore, actually this: that, being ourselves an organization of a new type, we are in a position to bring into being and lead a broad, organized and powerful mass movement to curb and defeat the war drive of the Wall Street bipartisans.

What of the false and slanderous charge that we Communists are "foreign agents"?

Dedicated to the cause of peace, it is only natural that we should stand for friendship with all nations and peoples on earth, and in the first place for American-Soviet friendship. Dedicated to the cause of national and class emancipation, we naturally hail the advances made by the working class of other lands, and the victories of oppressed peoples over their imperialist oppressors. Confident that the barbarous capitalist system must eventually and everywhere make way for the higher system of socialism, of communism—we, of course, rejoice when we see

that confidence justified by the glorious achievements of the Soviet Union and of 800,000,000 people now bringing into being a new world of lasting peace and boundless opportunity for mankind's social and economic advance.

But in all this, we Communists are "agents" only of the American working class and people, whose immediate and fundamental interests we serve. Our internationalism is working-class internationalism, the internationalism that unites in common cause peoples of all lands, creeds and colors, who yearn and work for world peace. It has nothing in common with the cosmopolitanism of the trusts and cartels, whose foreign agents are scurrying all over the globe, committing crimes of espionage and sabotage, and openly striving to organize putsches and counterrevolutionary uprisings.

What is behind the fantastic fairy tale that the Communist Party is a training school and apparatus for "sabotage"?

This medieval yarn was recently dished up with some rotten sardines, in a series of articles published by the *New York Herald Tribune* and widely syndicated. It, like the "conspiracy" and "foreign agent" fables, has been written into the sinister McCarran Act.

The employers are not afraid that we Communists will put sand in the gears of their machinery. They are afraid we will put ideas in the heads of the workers in the basic industries.

The government is not afraid that we Communists are going to blow up its vast system of war industry. It is afraid we are going to explode the myth that the developing war economy can bring anything but more hardship, worse misery, to the masses of the American people.

The bipartisan atom maniacs are not really afraid that we Communists are going to steal their death-dealing A-bombs, or give away their secrets of biological warfare. What they really fear is that we are going to master the know-how of organizing the workers in the basic industries, of winning them to the struggle for peace, to the rallying slogan: Outlaw the monstrous atom bomb!

That is why we find ourselves up against all

these new efforts to drive our Party out of industry, out of the shops, out of the trade unions. That is why our industrial concentration policy is now the center of such vicious employer and government distortion, in their desperate attempt to convince the people that our concentration policy has some "sinister" objectives. □

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A COMMUNIST

I should like to give this convention the physiognomy of a bureaucrat.

When you try to tell the bureaucrat something he listens carefully for about fifteen seconds. Then he proceeds to tell *you*. Sometimes, he appears to hear you through with the closest attention. But his mind is really off on more important matters. And when you finish, the bureaucrat neatly puts you in your place by saying of your views: "That's obvious."

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1951  
*Originally delivered as a report  
to the 15th National  
Convention of the CPUSA, this  
work was widely distributed as  
a pamphlet under the title,  
"What It Means To Be a  
Communist."*

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The bureaucrat really believes that collective discussions are a waste of time because, since he already knows all the answers anyway, he could really spend his time better in other ways. Sometimes he welcomes discussions—not so much to develop a collective opinion, as to develop a collective audience for his own views. Or, when he listens to others in a discussion, it is not so that he may learn from others, but so that he may tell others what is wrong with them. Often, the bureaucrat considers informal discussion an intrusion on his private thoughts and brushes them aside with the proposal that: "We must have a formal discussion of that." To the bureaucrat, collective work is

restricted to formal discussion. One thing that escapes him entirely is that the basis of all collective work is the collection of the views of the masses, is collective work with the masses.

Nothing is easier for the bureaucrat than to figure out what the workers should be struggling for. If they don't struggle, when and how he believes they should, he comes to the conclusion either that there is something wrong with the workers, or there is something wrong with those who are supposed to carry out his directives among the workers, or there is just something wrong with everybody except himself.

He doesn't understand that the fundamental thing is to know what disturbs the workers—to know around what issues the workers are ready to struggle, and that his job is to help them in their struggle, to help them find the channel for expressing their needs and desires. He fails to realize that his job is to learn from the workers not only about the issues, but even the organizational forms that are appropriate. To help infuse that struggle with a Marxist content, not to impose his preconceived concept of the struggle upon them. And through all of these to bring leadership and to win leadership.

The bureaucrat believes that the use of book terminology marks him as a veteran. He does not worry whether anybody understands him when he talks. He is afraid that if he talks to a new member in terms that the new member will understand, he himself might be mistaken for an equal of that new member. It never occurs to him that a new member may know much more than he does about the masses from whom he has long been isolated. And, of course, it never occurs to him that he himself has as much to learn from the masses.

When the bureaucrat speaks or writes for an audience, he is less concerned with how his messages may help them, than with how his words may impress his audience with his own worth. The bureaucrat resents having his work criticized; if he ever makes mistakes, they are usually minor ones, of little importance. His main mistake, he usually believes, is in not having caught the mistakes of others quickly enough. He believes he is too tolerant of the weaknesses of others and that others are too in-

tolerant of his own weaknesses.

The bureaucrat either ignores organizational problems entirely, or believes the answer to every problem is solely organizational.

Since his problem never gets solved, he will continue to revise his previous organizational answers, ignoring the fact that the political answers must come first, and that these dictate the proper organizational forms.

When the bureaucrat finds himself catapulted among the masses by force of circumstances, he believes he will be instantly recognized as God's gift to the working man. The more insulated he has been from the masses in the past, the more the masses will appreciate the fact that he is coming among them *now*, and the more readily will they greet every word of wisdom issuing from his lips.

Among the masses, the bureaucrat exhibits the same traits as he does in the Party organization. In moments of crisis or emergency, he feels that collective work can only hold up getting things done. In a strike, for example, he feels that meetings of a strike committee, or a Party club, interfere with all the work that has to be done. The time for collective discussion is after the emergency is over, when there is the leisure to discuss collectively how to have avoided the mistakes that collective work at the time might have prevented.

The bureaucrat in the union sees no grievances among the workers, either because he has none himself, or because the settling of grievances can have an unsettling effect upon his own comfortable routine. He views himself as someone who services the union, like a doctor, instead of a leader of struggle.

Of course, the perfect bureaucrat whom I have here sketched does not exist. In fact, he could not exist because he would burst from his own selfimportance and evaporate into thin air. But little pieces of him, of varying size, do exist in almost every one of us. And to the extent that they do, they act as a barrier to the realization of the mass line this convention is formulating. □

## THE CHALLENGE OF NEOCOLONIALISM

A distinction must be drawn between the appetite of U.S. imperialism and the practical possibilities for satisfying it. Theoretically, U.S. imperialism would have nothing against building a new empire of its own on the ruins of the old empires. Practically, however, this is doomed to remain a pipedream, thanks to the irreversible changes in the world balance of forces in favor socialism, democracy and peace. "We can not," said President Kennedy, "always impose our will on the other 94 per cent of mankind." Not, mark you, "we do not want to," but "we can not."

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1964

*This work, demonstrating the combination of the Big Stick and of neocolonialism in the tactics of U.S. Imperialism, was written by Comrade Winston after serving six years in a federal penitentiary under the thought-control Smith Act.*

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What is it that made such a qualification necessary? The President took into account the existing world realities. Basic here is the fact that the Russian Revolution of 1917 had ushered in the first socialist state. This was the beginning of a great turn in the tide of history. The socialist state withstood every test. It played a decisive role in the defeat of Hitler's Wehrmacht. This made possible the emergence of other socialist states, the rapid development of the national liberation movement, the broadening of the fight for democracy and peace in capitalist countries. President Kennedy took all this into account when he said that "we can not always impose our will on the other 94 per cent of mankind."

The goal of world domination has not been renounced, for the striving towards this goal is inherent in imperialism. But it has been pushed somewhat into the background pending the achievement of other, more immediate, goals.

One of these goals, which has a direct bear-

ing on our subject, is to retain the Asian, African and Latin American countries within the orbit of world capitalism and thereby ensure their continued exploitation by international, and in the first place U.S., financiers and industrialists.

It is proposed to attain this goal through aid, trade, recommendations for agrarian reforms with a view to promoting capitalism in agriculture, and the creation of conditions favoring the development of capitalist enterprises. But it would be an illusion to think that the big stick has been discarded. Under certain circumstances, U.S. imperialism does not hesitate to send out the Marines in a modern variant of gunboat diplomacy. At the same time new or relatively new methods are used more and more often. Together with some old methods that have not yet become completely bankrupt they add up to what is often called the policy of neocolonialism.

The United States is the only country with a worldwide network of military bases. This uniqueness shows up the hollowness of the sophisms about the "defensive" nature of these bases. U.S. imperialism is using them to preserve and expand its invisible colonial empire. They are the badges by which the peoples recognize the selfappointed world policemen.

I remember seeing several years ago in the *Chicago Tribune* a full page map of U.S. bases. Most of the bases form a gigantic ring running through West Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. And farther, from Alaska it passes through Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Britain, Norway, Denmark and back to West Germany, where it closes. Inside it are the socialist countries.

That is one side of the story. The other side is that, the earth being round, the so-called free world is itself inside the ring of bases. These bases may be used for various purposes. They are very well suited for operations against the peoples of individual countries. Military observer Hanson Baldwin said that "the greatest military value of bases . . . is for limited war." Another expert on military strategy, William R. Kintner, in his book *National Security* (1953),



put it even more bluntly: "Bases are absolutely essential in stopping local 'wars of national liberation.'"

This Pentagon term—local war—is used as a screen for U.S. military intervention in the affairs of other countries. What it implies is imperialist aggression, a bid to crush the national liberation movement of one or another nation.

After the bases come military blocs like SEATO. Their official objective, that of "containing Communism," does not prevent them from being used for the suppression of the national liberation movement. Small wonder that the newly independent states shun these blocs.

The USA does not stop at colonial wars either. It has taken over from French imperialism in Vietnam. The USA paid 15 per cent of the cost of the dirty war in 1950-51, 35 per cent in 1952, 45 per cent in 1953, and 80 per cent in 1954, up to the fall of Dien Bien Phu. Today U.S. imperialism has undertaken to cover the entire cost of the war against the patriots of South Vietnam, which runs about \$2,000,000 a day.

Instances of military adventurism by the U.S. imperialists are known everywhere. For reasons of convenience, the dirtiest work is frequently done by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The people of Latin America have not forgotten the overthrow of the legal, democratically elected government of Guatemala in 1954. The whole continent was outraged by the shooting of Panamanians by U.S. troops in 1964. Ten years separate the two events, but the neocolonialist leopard has not changed its spots or pulled in its claws. The events in Guatemala and Panama show how much official U.S. protestations of fidelity to democracy and freedom are worth, what a discrepancy there is between U.S. words and U.S. deeds. It is obvious, then, that coercion is part of the arsenal of neocolonialism. Besides the new means and methods, this arsenal contains all the devices of the old colonialism which have not completely lost their value. □

## NEGRO-WHITE UNITY KEY TO FULL EQUALITY

The other night, I was listening to the Susskind television program. On that program there appeared the mayor of Waukegan, Illinois, and a small businessman from Northwest Chicago. I shall not speak at this moment about the mayor of Waukegan. We read about him in the press. We know him. But I will speak about the small businessman from the Northwest Side of Chicago.

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1966

*Henry Winston was elected National Chairman of the CPUSA at its 18th National Convention, June 1966. This is from his first report to the National Committee after that convention.*

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From the conventional white Anglo-Saxon point of view, this man would be considered a handsome man, with blonde hair, hale and hearty. But one could arrive at such a conclusion only if one did not hear this person speak. Once he opened his mouth, one could see his ugliness. For this man spewed only hatred, showed only vile racism toward the Negro people of Chicago and the entire country.

Why was this so? Because in his warped mind, he could only think of the Negro people as dirty. In his white supremacist view he blamed the Negro people and not the city authorities for failure to remove garbage from ghetto streets. In his twisted vision, Negroes had highly polished Cadillacs but preferred to live in dirty, squalid homes. This was the speech of a beast, a man devoid of all human feeling.

But this young businessman had held the same views in 1964 as he did in 1966. Why was it that only now he had suddenly appeared on a national hookup? For one thing, it is an expression of the intensified activity and increased arrogance of the ultra-Right in its efforts to build a grassroots racist movement. Another thing it indicates is a fear that the growing movement for

democratic rights and for the equality of the Negro people may endanger his lily-white sanctum. And he was also emboldened by the reactionary, racist war policy.

It is interesting to note that this man is a businessman and that 95 per cent of his business comes from Negroes. But the profit made from the ghetto is siphoned off to help erect higher jim crow walls around the lily-white neighborhood in which this man lives. I am certain that the Negro people of Chicago will soon learn how to apply the technique of boycott to change this shameful situation.

This Chicago businessman is not alone. There are also members of the Johnson Administration, supporters of his war policy, who likewise act in the interest of those who are opposed to the rapid advance of the struggle for Negro equality. What are they after? They are afraid that the struggle against tokenism, against a gradual policy, will "go out of bounds," will develop and be transformed into a struggle all along the line for radical and fundamental changes relating to the position of Negroes in America.

Consequently we find an all-out attack against the growing movement to bring about change. This attack is not only of the Eastland type. It also comes from the so-called "liberals."

What explains the new-found arrogance of the ultraracists as exemplified in the performance of the white businessman from Chicago of whom I have spoken? How was it possible for him to be invited to spew out this venom in front of a national television audience? Is there a relationship between this and the sudden zeal of certain white liberals to "reform" the Congress of the United States by attempting to expel from its ranks Adam Clayton Powell? In my opinion there is such a relationship.

We must face up to the truth that, since 1964, a certain change has taken place in the national climate on the issue of Negro freedom. A section of the capitalist class which though it could pacify the civil rights movement by embracing it and offering it minor concessions is now frightened at its inability to contain and control this struggle.

This section of capital recognizes that the

war in Vietnam means less funds to combat poverty and ghetto blight, at a time when repeated ghetto outbursts speak eloquently of the urgent need for massive funds and radical reforms to change meaningfully the lot of the ghetto and slum poor.

It is this which explains the growing fear of a militant civil rights movement. It is this which explains the way in which the slogan "Black power" has been consciously distorted by the capitalist press in order to split the Negro people's movement and to frighten white masses. And it is this which explains the Johnson Administration's betrayal of the open occupancy bill, the aboutface of the Supreme Court in the recent decision against mass picketing, and the disgraceful fashion in which the Rockefeller and O'Connor leaderships of both major parties in New York helped scuttle the Civilian Review Board.

It is this new dangerous trend, accelerated by the war in Vietnam, which has given new encouragement and a new lease on life to the ultrareactionaries and ultraracists. This explains both the arrogance of the businessman from Chicago and the actions of the so-called liberal congressman from Florida, Sam Gibbons, who last October first voiced the call for Adam Clayton Powell's removal from the chairmanship of the House Education and Labor Committee. □

## **BUILD THE PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS**

We Communists are among the first to look at our work self-critically, and we are guided by that single law which determines the Party's growth—the law of criticism and self-criticism.

If we say that our basic line was correct, how then can we explain a situation in which at the [last] convention, we put such a question as doubling the membership of the Party by the time of the present convention? Did we double our membership in this period? Of course not. We failed in that objective. Did we increase our membership in this period? Yes, but only slightly. The basic question we must put and discuss is whether the goals set at the 18th Con-

vention were realistic goals.

In an objective sense, in terms of the situation in the country, one may say of course they were. But when one considers the status of the Party at the moment when this projection was made, the answer is that such goals were not realistic. And why weren't they realistic? The reason was an underestimation of the depth of the crisis in which our Party found itself at the time of the 18th Convention.

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1969

*From a report to the 19th  
National Convention of the  
CPUSA, May Day, 1969.  
Attention to strengthening  
Party organization  
characterized every period of  
Henry Winston's political  
activity.*

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Let me speak frankly. The organizational status of our Party at that time was nearly nonexistent in basic industry throughout the country. The Party organization was practically nonexistent in the South. A youth organization and a youth cadre were almost completely lacking. The Party as an organization within the communities was extremely weak. There was a complete breakdown in Party structure, an atomization of Party organization. There did not exist in those days a daily newspaper. Therefore, the mammoth task outlined was undertaken, in the main, not through an organized system of Party structures but through individuals.

What was it that had brought our Party to this state? It stemmed from two main facts. The first was the tremendous wave of anti-Communism within the country. Tremendous pressures were exerted from the Right and from the Left, pressures which served only one master and one aim—the ruling circles of our country which were hell-bent on curbing our role in relation to the masses. Secondly, it was also the result of the wreckage produced by revisionism, which undertook to destroy the Party from within.

What happened between the 18th and 19th

Conventions? While the membership of the Party was not doubled, there was some increase and this came about because of the struggle for the Party. There was a struggle in which comrades understood very well that the future of our class and our people depends upon building this Party. There was a restoration of club organizations as a form, as part of a system of Party organization. These club forms existed not only in the communities but, most important, there was building of shop and industrial clubs in the basic industry of the country. We can now speak of hundreds of clubs from one end of the country to the other.

Secondly, because of these developments, a system of leadership was established in which the effort was made to guarantee the continuing involvement of the leadership in the solution of problems within the districts. Of this we shall speak later.

Furthermore, what was only a dream at the 18th Convention became a living reality in the period under review. Namely, after twelve years of nonexistence, there came into being a daily Marxist-Leninist newspaper. This is an achievement of no mean proportions, because this is an organ which can speak to masses when we are not there. This is an organ which people can take into their homes in the evenings. This is an organ which workers can take into the shops, the unions, the ghettos, the projects in which they live.

In periods of storm many things develop—among some, steadfastness, courage, steeliness in battle. They are guided singlemindedly by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, seeking a way out of the present situation. But there are others who become faint-hearted, who waver, who have doubts when the struggle gets hard, when the pressure becomes stronger and stronger. But that is why we need a Party all the more.

We are, comrades, not going into a period of ease. That is not what is before us. We are entering into a period of sharp class battles in which the clash between the classes, of the people against monopoly, will reveal itself more and more. The storm signals are presently with us.

What to do under such circumstances when our Party is small? The task is certainly not to be a fire brigade, running here and running there. That will not help the mass movement, nor will it help the Party.

What then is the task? It is to find the link in the chain without which it is inconceivable that a lasting, fighting movement against Wall Street, against monopoly capital, against the Nixon Administration, can be developed in this country. The task of building the Party among the decisive sections of the working class. □

### **FIGHT RACISM FOR UNITY AND PROGRESS**

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 among peoples, of imperialist wars of aggression. It follows that all democratic and antimonopoly forces, with the working class and Black liberation movement in the van, can effectively defend the interests of the vast majority of 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 antimonopoly forces in the country.

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1971

*From a lecture to a seminar of  
Communist Party organizers.  
In dozens of works, Comrade  
Winston drove home the  
necessity for the working  
class, Black and white, to  
strive for Afro-American  
equality.*

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Marx wrote long ago that "labor in a 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 imperi-

alist 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 interest 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.

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 the 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 the 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 interest of the working class in general and the organized white workers in particular? The answer is yes. The fact must be sharply put 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 sure 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, antifascist, antimonopoly 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. □

### THE CRISIS OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

What are the causes of the crisis of the Black Panther Party? How could an organization which portrayed itself as the revolutionary vanguard become so quickly isolated from the people? Why were the hopes of so many militant and courageous Black youths, who were attracted by the Party, turned into frustration and even tragedy?

No answer to these questions can be given without taking into account the attacks and frameups launched by the enemy against the party. Yet even these brutal and murderous attacks, conducted both from within and without the organization, can not alone explain the crisis of the Black Panther Party.

Huey P. Newton, writing in the *Black Pan-*

*ther* of April 17, attempts to provide an explanation for this crisis, which led to the party's split into factions, one headed by himself, the other by Eldridge Cleaver.

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1971

*First appearing in Political Affairs in August 1971, "The Crisis of the Black Panther Party" was also published as a chapter of the book Strategy for a Black Agenda.*

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According to Newton, the Black Panther Party had its origin as a response to what he interprets as the people's rejection of nonviolent action. When the Black Panthers first picked up the gun, he states in the April 17, article

we were acting (in 1966) at a time when the people had given up on the philosophy of nonviolent direct action and were beginning to deal with sterner stuff. We wanted them to see the virtues of disciplined and organized armed self-defense, rather than the spontaneous and disorganized outbreaks and riots.

In this estimate of what was needed as the next step in the Black liberation struggle can be found the source of the Black Panther's subsequent difficulties. By offering the alternative of armed self-defense, the Panthers present the upsurge of the Black urban youth with a false voice, diverting from mass unity and struggle.

As Congressman Ronald Dellums recently stated:

The average Black person, if you go back to that experience in the ghetto, doesn't wake up in the morning orientated to the bullet or the bomb. He's oriented to hope, and that's when you can move him. . . . It is time now to translate Black is Beautiful into hard political reality.

In 1966 that "hard political reality" called—as it does today—for more militant forms of organized and disciplined mass struggle. The people, including the youth, in their fight to create a movement to end poverty and racism, will respond to such an alternative to the blind alley of spontaneity or the equally hopeless concept of

“picking up the gun.”

It is clear that the people want to challenge the oppressor on the grounds *they* choose, not on those chosen by their enemy. They want to engage the enemy where he is most vulnerable—and this ruling class, the most massively armed oppressor in history, is the most vulnerable of all oppressors when the oppressed and exploited move in solidarity into the arena of mass struggle. The guns of the racist monopolists will be of no avail when the Blacks and all the oppressed and exploited exercise their strength through self-organization and unity. That is why the people do not relate to the idea that power to change things comes out of the barrel of a gun.

When Newton advocated guns and a defensive strategy as the solution for Black people, he was wrong on both counts: Not only did the people refuse to relate to the gun, they also rejected the concept of a defensive strategy. Black people—who have been warding off attacks for 400 years—want and need to build a great popular movement to end racist oppression.

In his concept of self-defense, Newton endeavored to respond to the oppression of his people. However, this concept excluded the people from their own liberation struggle. It involved the idea of an elite few acting for the masses—in fact, supplanting them.

Then, even before Cleaver joined the Black Panther Party, Newton had substituted elitism for mass struggle. Cleaver's influence brought the elitist concept to new levels of anarchist, adventurist confusion and provocation—but his ideology was inherent in the original concepts on which the Black Panther Party was founded.

At one point, however, it appeared to some that the Black Panthers might be turning away from these original concepts, that they might supplant “The Little Red Book” [of sayings of Mao Tse Tung—Ed.] and Cleaver's anarchism with Marx and Lenin. This was the summer of 1969, when the Black Panther Party called for studying the historic report on the united front by Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Communist leader who transformed himself from the accused into the accuser in a Nazi court.

But instead of linking [united front] theory

with practice, the actions taken by the Black Panther Party turned the concept of the united front into a sectarian caricature of the Marxist-Leninist principles on which it is based. The party's policies and actions continued to be inconsistent with the interests of the class struggle and the Black liberation movement. It became increasingly clear that the Black Panther Party had adopted some of the phraseology of Marxism-Leninism, but not the ideology.

Against this background, internal strife in the Black Panther Party deteriorated into faction-

alism and—with neither faction guided by scientific theory—into an inevitable split. □

### FROM THE ANTISLAVERY TO THE ANTIMONOPOLY STRATEGY

The crisis of poverty and unemployment Black Americans now face is, save for the almost genocidal elimination of American Indians, without precedent.

“The unemployment rate among Black workers in the ghetto now exceeds the general rate of unemployment of the entire nation during the depression of the 1930s,” reported Herbert Hill, NAACP labor secretary, at the organization's 1971 national convention.

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1972

*This article of Henry Winston illustrates his profound sense of politics as history-in-process. First published in Political Affairs in Jan. 1972.*

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“The rate of unemployment of Black workers in 25 major centers of urban non-white population concentration is now between 25 per cent and 40 per cent, and the unemployment rate for Black youth will be in excess of 50 per cent by the middle of this summer.”

Yet, stark as this statistical report is, it can not possibly convey the disaster of racism, poverty and oppression affecting every aspect of the lives of Black Americans today. The end of the decade of civil rights struggles left the Black

masses with the feeling of vast frustration; not only had their condition failed to improve, it had worsened.

This frustration was simultaneously experienced by many militant young fighters, Black and white, whose despair turned to disillusion with the preceding years of struggle; they were unable to differentiate the gains of the Civil Rights Decade—in terms of unity, militant mass action and consciousness—from the deepening crisis. They did not realize that under capitalism the most important fruit of struggle is the people's advance in unity and consciousness. In their frustration, they attacked the Civil Rights struggle itself, instead of seeing that it created a bridge to the period ahead.

Thus, even before the hunger and frustration of Black masses led to the spontaneous outbursts in Watts, Detroit and Newark, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. encountered attacks not only from reaction but from segments of militant youth under the influence of sectarianism and pseudorevolutionism.

While the open attacks from the latter were a relatively new development, King had long experienced pressure from the establishment liberals, the NAACP, the Urban League and others to limit mass struggle and to rely on the courts and "friends" within the two major parties. In this period—as the war in Vietnam continued and domestic conditions worsened—this pressure from the Right continued and domestic conditions worsened—this pressure from the Right increased and was particularly aimed at preventing King from linking the Black liberation movement with the antiwar struggle.

At the same time, the frustrations of radical youth were intensified by the escalation of the Vietnam War in 1965—immediately after the new Civil Rights Act was passed. Many Black and white radicals, including Carmichael, Cleaver, Newton, Forman and Hayden, began to step up their attacks on the Civil Rights struggle. *They placed themselves in opposition to King, who was determined not to abandon—but to strengthen—the forces of the Civil Rights Decade, to deepen and broaden them into a realignment that would carry the struggle against poverty and racist oppression to a new level.*

If King was not without error in coping with pressure from the Right, and later with that of the pseudoradicals, his overall record was one of firm adherence to militant nonviolent mass struggle. The maturing of his leadership, his recognition of the decisive role of the working class, his evolvment toward an anti-imperialist position—all of his steady and remarkable growth reflected his rejection of both the opportunist pressures to limit mass struggle and the "superrevolutionary" pressures to substitute the rhetoric of violence for the power of mass struggle.

King has been dead for more than three years, but the attacks on his strategy and objectives continue from the Right and pseudo-Left. In fact, while Nixon is bent on destroying the advances of the Civil Rights Decade, it is ironic that the new "revolutionists" are so certain there is nothing worth saving from it! But Nixon recognizes—and fears—what the super-militants refuse to see: The Civil Rights Decade created the preconditions for the much higher level of struggle in the period ahead.

When King was assassinated in the spring of 1968, he was leading the strike of the predominantly Black sanitation workers of Memphis. His commitment to this courageous working-class struggle was a vibrant indication that, in pressing for a new beginning in the strategy against racist oppression, poverty and war, he had come to a *full* realization of the meaning of his first major battle, the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. This landmark battle was sparked by Mrs. Rosa Lee Parks, a Black *working-class* woman, and carried on with courage and tenacity by, primarily, Black working-class men and women. In the course of a decade of liberation struggles, King came to understand that it was workers, more than any other stratum, who possess these qualities.

King recognized that since these special qualities of workers had brought about the historic turning point in Montgomery, leading to the nationwide involvement of many other sections of the population, the new stage—the struggle for jobs, for an end to poverty, racism and war, demanded a new strategy based on the working class, Black and white.

Although King's views were not identical with the Marxist conception of the role of the working class—which sees this class not only as the main social force but as the leader in the antimonopoly struggle—he had come steadily closer to this outlook. □

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY NOW MORE THAN EVER

The science of Marxism-Leninism is expressed by Communist and Workers' Parties throughout the world. This applies to struggles under capitalist conditions, the aim of which is to put an end to the rule of capitalism. This science also guides a victorious working class which has achieved state power and is building socialism and communism in lands uniting one billion people. This historic fact is but a concrete expression of the main tendency in the world, a weather vane of things to come for the remaining two billion men, women and children on the face of the globe. This is the trend in history. This is an irreversible trend. This is the inevitable future.

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1975

*"The science of Marxism-Leninism," was a favorite expression of Henry Winston, as well as a lifetime guide and inspiration. Excerpted from his report to the 21st Convention of the CPUSA.*

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The victory of the Russian Revolution in October 1917 was decisive in inaugurating this new hope and new perspective for all the exploited and oppressed. It proved the possibilities of ending capitalist exploitation, national oppression and foreign domination.

The working class in all capitalist countries, fighting against the same evils, was able to understand better their own class tasks by studying the experience of their class brothers in Russia, who solved similar problems.

What has transpired since this great histori-

cal event is truly breathtaking for the people of the Soviet Union. The world has witnessed the transformation after the victory of the backward, agrarian country into the second most advanced industrially developed country of the world. The Soviet Union has outstripped the United States in some branches of industry and is continuing to advance so rapidly that industrially it will become the first in the world.

The Soviet Union has no equal anywhere in the world when it comes to the question of the quality of life. The working people are actively engaged in communist construction. The various republics, which long ago achieved equality, are together molding the new Soviet man and woman.

This magnificent achievement was and is possible only because of the science of Marxism-Leninism. It is this science which united the peoples against the march of the 14 armies of Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenich.

It united the people against the imperialists and helped to build the proletarian dictatorship, socialism and the new advances in communist construction. The role of this mighty state in defense of peace, national liberation and socialism is a decisive weapon in today's struggle against thermonuclear war. Still earlier, when the Soviet Union united with all democratic states and peoples against the danger of "1,000 years of Nazi tyranny," history records the decisive role of the Soviet Union in the destruction of the military machine of Italian and German fascism.

It is understandable that the forces of the Pentagon and all forces of reaction and fascism are stepping up their campaign of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. It is precisely because of the peaceful and liberating role played by the Soviet Union that imperialism is directing its main fire against it and enlists the willing support of Right-wing Social Democracy, Maoism and Trotskyism.

Why is this so? Because once again, the Soviet Union is decisively acting to save humanity from the danger of a thermonuclear war. Can any democrat, nonfascist, antifascist, nonimperialist, anti-imperialist or any peace-loving forces fail to comprehend the reality that the Soviet Union is part of a trinity of the three main



revolutionary forces for the salvation of humanity from catastrophic war? In today's world socialism grows stronger day by the day. It has been able through its policies during the past 30 years to help prevent the outbreak of a third world war, the danger of which comes from U.S. imperialism in particular. □

## **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION THE ROAD TO GENUINE UNITY**

The Bakke case now before the U.S. Supreme Court is a *cause celebre* of the racists.

What is the Bakke case? Can it be said that the issue is simply that a white engineer, whose application for admission was rejected by the UCLA Medical School at Davis, is seeking relief from this alleged discrimination?

Yes, it can be said. This is what every racist in the land is saying about this case. But is it true? The answer is a decided no.

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1978

*Deceit, sophistry and  
hypocrisy, the weapons of  
reaction, were frequent targets  
of Henry Winston's sharp  
polemical sword. This article  
was published in Political  
Affairs, February 1978.*

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Nor would it be correct to interpret the Bakke case as one whose import is limited only to professional schools. Its import is pervasive and nationwide.

The Bakke case exposes the racist fangs of the most reactionary sections of state monopoly capitalism.

The main immediate aim of their onslaught is to block advances in the struggle for and the achievement of equality, social and political as well as economic. Reaching such a goal of genuine equality is dependent upon the level of unity achieved by the people, Black and white, in the democratic and antimonopoly battle. Knowing this, the racists regard this offensive against equality as but the beginning phase of

an attack against working-class solidarity in general and against the growing Left-Center unity in the organized labor movement. With this campaign they hope to disrupt the efforts to organize the unorganized. It is also aimed at undermining developments leading towards a democratic and antimonopoly alliance.

The racists wish to defeat efforts to achieve genuine equality. That is the reason why their offensive is proceeding under the banners of "affirmative discrimination," "reverse discrimination" and "preferential treatment." They consciously and deliberately stand logic on its head, and with unrestrained demagoguery monstrously distort and twist facts as they maneuver. Their weapons are deceit and confusion.

This writer, for instance, dislikes, in this particular, the use of the words "preferential treatment." I think it is harmful, first of all because it is a conscious effort to reduce the struggle for equal rights to something called "preferential treatment." Those whose position can not be supported by logic sometimes resort to the following method of argument: They set up a straw man and then proceed to knock it down. Then they yell—what a victory over the proponents of affirmative action!

What is the straw man? That affirmative actions means giving preference to Blacks over whites. This, they add, is "reverse discrimination," and, in this case, discrimination of the Black minority against the white majority. But why do racists resort to appeals of any sort against discrimination? Because they well know that there are tens of millions who stand for equal rights, but who would oppose measures they regard as being discriminatory and/or penalizing, so to speak.

They are in such a hurry that they are unable to see what an admission is being made by equating affirmative action to "reverse discrimination." They are saying that there has been, in the past, and there is now, "preferential treatment" for the white majority. *Otherwise no affirmative action would be needed to achieve equality.* In arguing thus, they also are saying that the status quo should not only be not abolished, but should remain undisturbed.

The simple fact is that the struggle for equal

rights can never succeed if it is posed as a question of Black against white. The racists know this very well. This is why their think tanks are so busy trying to distort all struggles for equality into just such a confrontation.

The "trump card" which they have devised is this: Whether in the admission programs in the field of education, or in hiring, or in promotion to skilled jobs or in busing for school integration, they charge that white students, workers and even young children are penalized. They become lyrical in declaring that there should be no "virtues and vices" in regard to race. They assert that the Constitution must be "color blind." They also argue that criteria in such questions should be based on merit and that this is solely individual.

They put it another way: "Nothing is better designed to promote racism among children than for disadvantaged white children to be told by their parents that they are locked out of opportunity because of their race."

It is interesting that defenders of the so-called "affirmative discrimination" thesis put matters this way. This is the essence of *their* position. It is the capitalist system of exploitation and privilege which has fostered racial discrimination and locked masses of white children into "disadvantaged" circumstances. Yet they attempt to make it appear to be the position of those supporting affirmative action. Note should be taken of the subterfuge: These racists "forget" about those whites far above the poverty line, the children of the rich, those who have benefitted from discrimination, and they all of a sudden become champions of the "disadvantaged."

Parents who tell their children that they are "locked out of opportunity because of their race" fail to tell their children the real truth. What is evident here is the fact that these conditions and this struggle exist and can only exist because they are determined by the relationship between classes under conditions of capitalism.

The truth may be unknown to them precisely because the mass media project this matter as one of "race against race," "merit" and "talented individuals." Ways must be found to educate the children—and not only the chil-

dren—in an understanding of the capitalist class, its policies and practices. □

## THE BIG LIE ROAD TO NUCLEAR DISASTER

We are happy to note that there is a great peace movement in the U.S. today that represents the majority will. We saw this expressed in the many state referenda calling for a nuclear freeze, and in the mighty outpouring on June 12, 1982. We have confidence that this movement, as it continues to grow and develop, will succeed in its humane goal of ending the threat of nuclear disaster. But if that danger is to be ended, it is necessary to consciously combat the main ideological weapon used by the Reagan Administration and the ultra-Right to divide and confuse our people. I refer to the ideological weapon of anti-Communism.

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1983

*Henry Winston vigorously combatted all ideas which lead toward nuclear devastation, and threaten mankind's very existence. Excerpted from report to 23rd National Convention, CPUSA.*

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This weapon is used to frighten the U.S. people into giving up hard won gains, won in decades of militant struggle, in the name of spending tens of billions more each year for the Pentagon and war. The people pay dearly for anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism with a steadily declining standard of living and constantly shrinking expenditures for human needs.

Anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism are used to blind the eyes of people to the true nature of the Soviet Union and the other socialist states. The U.S. ruling class does not want the working people of this country to know that under socialism there is no unemployment, no one goes barefoot or hungry, there is no need for soup kitchens or bread lines. In the Soviet Un-

ion there are no armament profiteers or merchants of death. Production is for human need, not for private profit. Thus, there is neither a class of ultrarich nor a class of downtrodden poor, and the standard of living rises for all from year to year.

The Soviet Union does not want war and has done all in its power to maintain cordial and friendly relations with the United States despite the differences in their social systems. Every escalation in the arms race was initiated by the Pentagon, not by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has declared that it will never use nuclear weapons first and has asked this country to make a similar pledge. It has called for an agreement to ban nuclear weapons from outer space, but this has been turned down by the Reagan Administration which, instead, is making preparations for "space wars."

Thus, anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism offer nothing of benefit to the masses—economically, politically or socially. They offer only the prospect of nuclear war, which can snuff out the lives of billions of people all over there world and possibly all life on earth.

Anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism are not new weapons. They have a long, sad and sorry history, a tragic history. Yet they reappear again and again, each time dressed up a bit differently, but always with the aim of perpetuating the Big Lie in the interests of those who profit from imperialism, exploitation and war.

So widespread are anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism in the U.S. today that their perpetrators judge patriotism not by love of this country and its people but by hatred of another country and another people—the Soviet Union and its people. This has nothing in common with true patriotism. It is blatant chauvinism, racism and jingoism.

Nor is this hatred limited to the Soviet Union. All peoples who stand up against oppression and exploitation, who seek to break the chains of imperialism, are also hated. This is the imperialist attitude toward Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam and to the Black people fighting so courageously against the racist, fascist-like, apartheid regime of South Africa. Thus, anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism are imperialist,

racist ideologies which place the U.S. on the side of oppression everywhere.

Has the world so soon forgotten Adolph Hitler? In the name of anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism, Hitler armed Germany to the teeth, and did so with the acquiescence of the bourgeois democracies. In the name of anti-Communism, Hitler and Mussolini intervened to crush the young Spanish Republic, and, in its name, Hitler's armies marched into Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Yet, once the war was over, anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism raised their heads again. They found expression in the cold war and the scourge of McCarthyism that swept our land. As insane as it now seems, many people were led to believe that the Soviet Red Army stood poised to attack the United States. How crazy this was can be seen by the simple fact that when the cold war began the United States was the only possessor of nuclear bombs.

The consequences are well known: Communist Party leaders were thrown into prison; thousands of workers were fired from their jobs; many prominent people were hauled before the star-chamber proceedings of the House Un-American Committee to answer the question, "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" By means of this witch-hunt, the progressive reform era brought into being by the militant struggles of the 1930s was violently brought to an end.

The great, militant, industrial union movement that had come into being in the '30s was split, and the most democratic and progressive unions were expelled from the CIO ranks. The labor movement today is still paying a terrible price for this loss of its most militant and most conscientious builders.

We therefore can not make the mistake of believing that anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism have now been beaten. In clarifying the public against them, we Communists have a special responsibility. There is a slogan that we used at times, "If you want to know about Communism, ask the Communists!" After all, the Communists, better than anyone else, know what their program and activities are and what their Party and its struggle are all about. □

# Reflections on Martin Luther King Day

JAMES STEELE

As one should expect, the commemoration of Martin Luther King Day has precipitated a vigorous debate over the meaning of the Dream. Interpretation of the legacy of this "drum major for justice" has become an integral feature of the ideological struggle.

It is not surprising that a concerted effort is under way to portray Martin Luther King, Jr. as a passive, hat-in-hand do-gooder, not only incapable but unwilling to take militant action. This campaign belittles coalition tactics and mass mobilization, belittles the struggle for democracy and the significance of the direction of King's political understanding; it dismisses his critique of the relationship between racism and poverty and militarism.

The campaign to obscure Dr. King's contribution makes it all the more necessary to uphold his ideals, to defend his place in the pantheon of people's heroes and to place him in proper historical context. More shouldn't be made of him than he actually was—nor should less be made of him than he actually was.

The views of family, friends and fellow activists are of course important and give a personal touch to an understanding of the man and his message. But history passes final judgement on the role of any personality. And the history of our country, if it is anything, is the movement of masses seeking to shape a better life for themselves and a brighter tomorrow for their children, with the class struggle being the chief dynamic of all forward development.

The people have firmly established Martin Luther King, Jr.'s contribution to the making of this stage of history. They continue to draw inspiration from Dr. King's example and his programmatic ideas. The King legacy is a force for completion of the nation's "unfinished agenda." In his speech, "I Have A Dream," King gave poignant and popular voice to the un-

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James Steele is secretary of the Political Action and Legislative Department of the CPUSA. This is an address delivered at Unity Center, New York City on January 18, 1987.

nished tasks of the struggle for democracy:

[We] have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. . . .

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check—a check that will give us, upon demand, the riches of freedom, and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce necessity . . . Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy.

To Dr. King's overriding concerns—the oppression of the Afro-American people, the threat of nuclear annihilation, imperialist aggression in Vietnam, have since been added a host of crises that place the preservation of democracy in serious question. Dr. King is gone, but tens of millions of all races and nationalities and movements march under his banner because the system against which he fought still exists. Only now it is further decayed, more parasitic and dangerous.

This new context infuses the struggle for Dr. King's dream with new content. The struggle for equality, democracy and peace is necessarily a struggle against the rapacious transnational monopoly corporations, against the militarists and the ultra-Right forces grouped around the Reagan Administration. It is necessarily a struggle against the foreign and domestic policy of this Administration.

Our nation celebrates its newest federal holiday, Martin Luther King Day, amid turbu-

lent times. Crisis stalks the land. World peace is threatened. Democracy is imperiled.

**T**he existence of a secret government staffed by Pentagon and CIA brutes, operating within the regular government structure, is being exposed in daily revelations of the Iran Connection and Conragate. Crisis stalks the land as light is thrown on this anti-constitutional conspiracy of the Reagan Administration's inner circles. In its essence this is a drive by the most extreme militarist circles toward dictatorial rule. As such, Iran-Conragate is the gravest threat to democracy in the history of our country. Its purpose is, in the name of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, to stifle all opposition.

Crisis stalks the land because this Administration robs food from the mouths of babes to feed the militarists' war drive. Nearly every week, word comes of new plant closings and massive layoffs, disproving claims that the military buildup creates jobs and that Reaganomics has America "on the mend."

What is left for workers who are laid off? For those who escape permanent unemployment there is underemployment in service industry jobs paying, on the average, only 60 per cent of those in unionized industry.

Crisis stalks the land, hounding millions of our people into hunger, homelessness and hopelessness. To this the Reagan Administration responds with new cuts in programs that would provide some measure of relief.

Crisis stalks the land as the military buildup continues, Star Wars and all, at the expense of peace and social justice on earth.

Crisis indeed stalks the land as gangs of white youth, infected with racism like wolves gripped by rabies, hunt down Black people lost and alone in the "wrong neighborhood."

This diehard racist violence crawls over the web of political intrigue and economic turmoil. Howard Beach was not a singular incident—it was preceded and succeeded by similar ones. Only yesterday in Cumming, Georgia, Klan-led thugs attacked a march that sought to reaffirm

the right of every citizen to live anywhere and go anywhere.

In the face of these incidents not even President Reagan can hold to the line that racism is a thing of the past. Even Reagan felt compelled by the force of events and the power of the King legacy to appeal, in his Martin Luther King Day speech to high school students, for a struggle against every manifestation of racism. Would he but heed his own advice!

Perhaps William Bradford Reynolds, the assistant attorney general in charge of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, will be instructed to read the President's speech. On National Public Radio earlier this week, Mr. Reynolds attributed the increase in acts of racist violence from 8 in 1979 to 246 in 1985 to better reporting!

Of course, all but the simple-minded recognize Bradford's and Reagan's statements as demagogic attempts to deflect responsibility for perpetuating racism. That Reagan and his top officials feel compelled to maneuver in this way is a tribute to the growing stature of Martin Luther King's dream and to the power of the united reaction of wide sections of the public—including the majority of whites.

Likewise, it is a commentary on the emerging antiracist trends in contemporary U.S. life that not even President Reagan dared sink as low as New York Mayor Ed Koch. The mayor has become a specialist in attempting to muddy the water with "white racism/black racism."

History makes clear that racism—both as ideology and practice—is used to subject specific sections of the population to special discrimination on the basis of the color of their skin. Both as an ideology and a practice of systematic discrimination, racism is a function of capitalist class exploitation. It is related to dividing the working class through the imposition of additional oppression on one or more of its racial, national or ethnic components so as to increase the exploitation of the whole working class.

Afro-Americans may express nationalism—some in exceptionally narrow-minded and separatist varieties hostile toward all whites—and

reject the notion of Black-white unity. We have had ample displays of this in recent weeks in New York City. But this is a response to racism and to insufficient struggle against racism on the part of their white brothers and sisters. Such a reaction is not uncommon among oppressed peoples.

But that does not make Afro-Americans racists. As a people, they do not subject other peoples, nationalities or ethnic groups to special oppression or exploitation. As a people, Afro-Americans derive no direct or indirect economic or other benefit from class exploitation—not even that carried out by the bourgeois sector among them.

Nothing but hard times accrue to the Afro-American people as a function of skin color: the hottest, heaviest, hardest, lowest paying jobs, the highest rates of employment, poor housing, inadequate health care, inferior education.

**T**hroughout our nation's history white working people have had and still have it hard—very hard. But on balance not as hard as Black people who, by the way, are overwhelmingly working class. Every index of the quality of life verifies this: unemployment, income, infant mortality, life expectancy, incidence of crippling diseases, educational achievement, housing, nutrition, victimization by crime, experience in the criminal justice system, delivery of social services.

Our Party is not among those who argue that white workers benefit from racism. They may escape carrying the heaviest burden of capitalist oppression and exploitation, but that is not to say the load of white workers is light. They remain under the yoke of capitalist exploitation. This yoke is borne, albeit unevenly, by the entire working class, by all working people.

The insidiousness of racist ideology is that it convinces sections of white workers that no matter how bad they have it, at least they are better off than their Black class sisters and brothers, and that any gains of Afro-Americans would threaten their already tenuous positions. This is one of the main tenets of racism. From

this many racist concepts and stereotypes follow: if Blacks move into the neighborhood it will lower property values; Blacks are not after a job but "your" job; since most criminals are Black, Black people, no matter their station in life, must be "up to something."

But the profound fact remains, the yoke of exploitation imposed by the monopoly bourgeoisie can not be removed from one section of the working class while left intact on another. It can be removed from one only by removing it from all. Karl Marx said it best: "Labor in the white skin can not be free so long as labor in the black is branded."

This historic truth is the fountainhead of social progress and democracy in our country. It was incorporated into the very essence of Dr. King's leadership and legacy. "Black and white—one class, one fight," as the late national chairman of our Party, Henry Winston, so often put it, is what the Reagans and the Koches want to avoid at all cost. Monopoly capital uses racism because it is profitable and helps preserve capitalist rule. Black-white unity threatens monopoly profits and ultimately the capitalist system itself.

This explains why Big Business' paid politicians resort to demagogic terms like "reverse discrimination" and "white racism/black racism." Public pressure—especially from whites, who in their majority take nonracist positions that are evolving in the direction of antiracism—forces these political hacks to acknowledge Dr. King's dream. But the truth is they come to bury it, not to praise it. How else, for example, explain Mayor Koch's militant objection to a boycott of white-owned businesses, which he calls "black racism."

There is, of course, ample historical precedent for the use of boycott. The Montgomery bus boycott was led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Trade unions have often resorted to product boycotts and are now struggling to force Congress to restore the right to use a secondary boycott. The essence of the call for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against apartheid is a total political, economic, military and diplomatic boycott of the fascist South African regime.

One can not say that a boycott of white-owned businesses is directed against all white people, since the overwhelming majority of whites do not own businesses. Whether this tactic applies to the situation obtaining in New York in 1987 is another question. While boycotts, together with marches, sit-ins, legislative action and voter mobilization were all in Dr. King's arsenal of peaceful protest, his genius lay in artful selection of the right tactic or combination of tactics at precisely the right moment. In each instance, Dr. King sought to employ tactics that would win over masses within and beyond the Afro-American community, focusing the full force of the people, Black and white, against a single agency or institution of oppression and discrimination.

Dr. King's tactics—tactics, it should be added, historically embraced by the Afro-American people—were based on winning over the majority of the American people to his cause. This is, after all, the point of tactics—to win. The whole experience of the movement led by Martin Luther King convincingly shows that political and legislative victories are possible only as a result of winning over the majority within the Afro-American community and among the American people as a whole.

One must say, in conditions of racial polarization fostered by Big Business, on the one hand, and growing multiracial, multinational unity sparked by the all people's front against Reaganism, on the other—the very term "white-owned businesses" does not invite participation by white people who are outraged by the Howard Beach beatings and murder. Nor does it inspire initiative on the part of Afro-Americans to reach out for unity with the labor movement, democratic-minded whites and other progressives forces.

Sober-minded leaders in the Afro-American community have sought to transform the call for a boycott of all white-owned businesses into a selective boycott that would target real estate interests, banks and specific mass media.

From the standpoint of drawing lessons from Dr. King's leadership, the tactics of most of New York's Black elected officials, trade un-

ion movement, clergy, civil rights and civil liberties forces is especially relevant. Their emphasis is on appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate this and other incidents, and enactment of state and city legislation making racist and anti-Semitic acts of violence subject to stiff fines and prison sentences.

**W**e should remind ourselves that more than once Dr. King sought to bring the struggle against local injustice to a head through passage of federal legislation. In the current case, state and city action could establish a legal framework for dealing with racially-motivated violence not only by private citizens and groups but by public officials and institutions as well. This could be a route to challenge the all too pervasive racially-motivated police brutality.

It is interesting that the very mention of a boycott of business ruffles mayor Koch's feathers. He becomes really touchy when a selective boycott of sectors of Big Business is projected. "White-owned businesses aren't responsible for Howard Beach," he says. But he does not explain why they are not.

The mentality that led a gang of white teenagers to beat three Black workers the night of December 20, 1986, flows from racially-segregated neighborhoods, from the perception of Black people as criminals, from the contempt public officials—including President Reagan and Mayor Koch—show for Black leadership. Let us ask: Who other than the banks, real estate interests, commercial media, and their paid politicians, are responsible for redlining, gentrification, discrimination in the delivery of social services, police brutality, destruction of affirmative action programs, and the nonenforcement of civil rights and voting rights laws?

Review the list of Ed Koch's campaign contributors, and his rejection of a business boycott becomes self-explanatory. It is a catalogue of leading profiteers from racism and apartheid. Which prompts us to recall that New York's mayor was none too eager to divest city hold-

ings in companies conducting business in South Africa.

**A** single thread connects brutality against the Afro-American people, suppression of the labor movement, undeclared wars against national liberation movements and newly independent countries of Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Middle East, the quest for military superiority over the Soviet Union by militarizing the heavens. These comprise an all-sided war waged by the ultra-Right against everything progressive and peace.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood this well, and in that sense he was ahead of his time. This explains his continuing, in fact growing, relevance in the 1980s. In "A Time To Break Silence," a speech given at the Riverside Church in New York City one year to the day before his death, King observed:

There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor—both black and white—through the Poverty Program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the build-up in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to oppose the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

That no politician with even the slightest pretense of multiracial credibility dares speak against the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. is a testament to the enormous prestige and strength the struggle for peace and equality have acquired. Dr. King and his message hold a unique place in our country's unfolding history. The federal holiday in his honor is recognition by his supporters and begrudging admission

even by his detractors of the centrality of the struggle for Afro-American equality for unity of our people, for disarmament and democracy.

That the King legacy grows with each passing year remarkably illustrates that when an idea's time has come the forces of oppression and exploitation can kill the dreamer but they can not kill the dream. An idea—in this case, of a society in which each person is "judged by the content of their character rather than by the color of their skin"—can assume the power of a material force when it is taken up by the people. Consider the following:

‡ The achievements of the movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. continue to enhance the level of democracy, morality and material possibilities of every citizen in this nation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Acts of 1965 undid the legal foundations of segregation and opened the way to greater working-class and people's unity. Nearly three-fourths of the public offices won by Afro-Americans can be directly linked to these laws.

‡ Some seven million people signed petitions to make Dr. King's birthday a federal holiday, now officially recognized in all but ten states. This reflects the multiracial, multinational mass base of the Dream. Tens of thousands of activists in this movement continue to contribute to the struggles of the people.

‡ In 1983, twenty years after the historic March on Washington which Dr. King led, more than a quarter-million Americans from all the people's movements and organizations, from all parts of the country, retraced that march's steps. They counterposed Dr. King's dream of a "coalition of conscience," of "peace, jobs, and justice," to the Reagan Administration nightmare of militarism, budget cuts, racism and economic hardship.

‡ Practically every major trade union, peace movement, civil rights movement and civil liberties organization is actively observing the second Martin Luther King Day. More importantly, they are participating in the ongoing movement. Colleges, public and parochial schools, libraries, museums, cultural centers, city administrations, state governments and leg-



islatures, hold commemorative events. Television and radio programs—even commercials—pay tribute to Dr. King's contribution to democracy and world peace.

Tens of millions of people are involved in this holiday. And that is the way it will be for years to come. Generations will be reared on the King legacy, which will be a vital factor shaping young people's outlook, their moral code, their concept of social justice and unity.

Obviously, this is a significant aspect of the living legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. It can be a continuing force uprooting racial prejudice and molding multiracial, multinational unity, and focusing the aspirations of the youth on what they have in common, irrespective of race, nationality or gender—a shared desire to lead a productive life, one of meaning and humanistic purpose—peace, equality, social progress.

**R**eflecting on the significance of Dr. King's contribution nearly two decades after his assassination, taking into account the pressing new tasks that have appeared on today's agenda, we suggest the following propositions may be useful to explain the growing power of Martin Luther King's legacy. And they may assist in selecting appropriate tactics to make the dream come true in the latter 1980s.

- Both in principle and in the daily battle against racism and injustice, Dr. King placed the demands of the Afro-American people in a constitutional framework. He approached the Constitution as an instrument of struggle for equality. This gave enormous breadth to the movement. By linking the struggle for equality to the nation's most fundamental law, by making the demands of the Afro-American people an issue of democracy, King helped converted this into a majority movement.

- In a basic sense, Dr. King's genius lay in his tactics. His were tactics to win over the majority—not just of the Black community but of the U.S. people. He had eternal confidence in the democratic instincts of white Americans, and appealed to them on this basis.

- Dr. King's nonviolent tactics corre-

sponded to the prevailing conditions—to how and for what Black people in the first place were ready to struggle. In a situation in which the majority of whites had yet to be won over, the selection of peaceful forms of protest proved crucial.

In this connection, the civil rights movement's success helped substantiate the broader strategic question of the peaceful path of social change. It demonstrated the urgent necessity of utilizing every democratic liberty—even the most limited right or law, every possibility for mass action.

- The movement Dr. King led proved that nonviolent tactics do not mean nonmilitant tactics. Protest marches, sit-ins and voter registration drives accurately reflected the forms through which the overwhelming majority of the Black community and its allies were willing to wage a militant and unrelenting struggle for equal rights. Dr. King said,

This really means making the movement powerful enough, dramatic enough, morally appealing enough, so that people of good will, the churches, labor, liberals, intellectuals, students, poor people themselves, begin to put pressure on congressmen to the point that they can no longer elude our demands.

These tactics also saved the lives of untold numbers of Black people, who faced an enemy searching for any pretext to institute further repression, including massive physical force.

- Dr. King demonstrated the possibility and vitality of Black-white unity in the struggle against racism. He played a singular role in winning over the majority of white Americans to the civil rights cause precisely because he had full confidence that they could and would be won over. This was deeply rooted in his belief that the white majority firmly supported democracy, and would see the justness of the demands of the Afro-American people to the extent they were projected in the framework of democracy.

- In death as in life, Martin Luther King has been the target of anti-Communist slander and redbaiting. Yet, one of the least recognized but most significant dimensions of his contribution

to the struggle for peace and democracy was his call for "ideological ecumenicalism" within the mass movement. Dr. King implied that it was necessary to give full play to the talents and resources of all forces, irrespective of political view or ideological orientation.

**S**peaking at the W.E.B. DuBois centenary sponsored by *Freedomways* magazine in February 1968, Dr. King said,

One can not talk of Dr. DuBois without recognizing that he was a radical all of his life. Some people would like to ignore the fact that he was a Communist in his later years . . . It is time to cease muting the fact that Dr. DuBois was a genius who chose to be a Communist. Our irrational obsessive anti-Communism has led us into too many quagmires to be retained as if it were a mode of scientific thinking.

Dr. King drew the proper profound conclusion from his experience as a target of FBI/ultra-Right red-baiting and from the use of anti-Communism to justify the dismantling of social programs to finance U.S. imperialist aggression. This is what led him to call for rejecting anti-Communism as an obstacle to the further expansion of the mass movement.

The above reflects the simple yet profound fact that Communism and anti-Communism are not the only choices for political activists. Clearly, anti-Communism is the tool of reaction, of the racists, of the warmongers. Communists, on the other hand, are to be found in the front ranks of the struggle for a better life. What distinguishes Communists as the most advanced fighters for social progress is that they see the need and understand the ways to struggle for a new society—socialism. The real question is how to unite all fighters for peace, jobs, equality and social and economic justice.

This challenge of Dr. King, who though not a Communist, increasingly saw the need for more far-reaching solutions in the struggle for equality, socio-economic justice and peace, remains a compelling necessity. Without taking up his call for the unity of all forces opposed to racism and reaction, of Communists and non-

Communists, it will not be possible to make the breakthrough that is clearly possible in the current period.

Today, in the face of a parade of racist violence, in the face of an unprecedented threat to past gains, in the face of a Reaganite drive toward dictatorial rule, the people's forces draw comfort, inspiration and guidance from the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Though the tasks are different, since the focus has moved from civil rights to economic equality, which Dr. King anticipated in the Poor People's Campaign, the struggle for the Dream remains a powerful factor. It has the force of an action program to unite the Afro-American community, to unite the Afro-American people with the trade union movement, to unite all racial, national, ethnic, political and social contingents of the democratic struggle.

Dr. King's dream is a mighty instrument for welding Black-white unity in particular and for the antiracist education of young people. One should not overlook the impact on the psychology of millions of white youth of being reared on Dr. King's dream, or of identifying with an Afro-American civil rights leader and Nobel peace laureate as a national hero.

Clearly, Dr. King's words and deeds are also a powerful counterbalance against Afro-American youth becoming enraptured by narrow-minded nationalism. For such nationalism rejects the very possibility of Black-white unity, and so doing rejects the path to victory. Black-white unity is needed to satisfy the special needs of the racially and nationally oppressed and the common needs of all working people. The path of isolation was firmly rejected by Dr. King.

The theme of this year's celebration of Martin Luther King Day is "Fulfilling the Dream: Let Freedom Ring!" It correctly implies that the struggle for social justice is ongoing, and unequivocally projects the urgency of today. Conditions in 1987 are far more favorable than those during Dr. King's time, due largely to victories won in that period. Nevertheless, the King legacy remains vital. It has much to do with the new framework of struggle.

Dr. King was a modest and unpretentious man, loath to seek personal gain or individual recognition. Yet one can be sure he would delight in knowing that last November the people retired many senators who opposed making his birthday a federal holiday.

**M**artin Luther King Day is a symbol that annually impresses upon activists, on the people's movements and on the entire nation that we have an unfinished agenda. Now the task is to build a movement on a scale even greater than the one led by Dr. King, to mobilize the people in a legislative and political action offensive that will compel the 100th Congress to carry out their mandate, to fulfill the dream by letting freedom ring.

In his speech honoring Dr. DuBois, Dr. King stressed:

Today we are still challenged to be dissatisfied. Let us be dissatisfied until every man can have food and material necessities for his body, culture and education for his mind, freedom and human dignity for his spirit. Let us be dissatisfied until rat-infested, vermin-filled slums will be a thing of a dark past, and every family will have a decent sanitary house in which to live. Let us be dissatisfied until the empty stomachs of Mississippi are filled and the idle industries of Appalachia are revitalized. Let us be dissatisfied until brotherhood is no longer a meaningless word at the end of a prayer but the first order of business on every legislative agenda. Let us be dissatisfied until our brothers of the Third World—Africa, Asia and Latin America—will be lifted from the long night of poverty, illiteracy and disease. Let us be dissatisfied until this pending cosmic elegy will be transformed into a creative psalm of peace and "justice will roll down like water from a mighty stream."

Let all those who honor Martin Luther King, Jr. and strive to uphold his ideals unite now in launching a people's legislative and political action offensive to make "Fulfilling the Dream" the first order of business on the agenda of the 100th Congress. The new Congress, with its anti-Reagan majorities in both houses, can let freedom ring by:

- cutting the military budget, stopping Star Wars, and imposing a nuclear test ban;
- rescinding contra aid, instituting comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against apartheid, and putting an end to the Administration's undeclared wars;
- enacting legislation providing meaningful employment for everyone willing and able to work rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, public housing, schools and child care facilities, at trade union wages and working conditions; and a decent income for those who can not work;
- passing new civil rights legislation outlawing acts of racist violence, as well as measures establishing affirmative action in all areas of life;
- passing legislation that will halt plant closings, layoffs, farm foreclosures and evictions;
- instituting programs to help the homeless and hungry, youth and senior citizens, all in need of decent health care;
- restoring funds to social programs cut by Reagan.

Some will say that these and other peace and people-helping programs are not possible. But one is reminded of the an anecdote about Dr. King. After a meeting with President Kennedy to pressure for passage of a federal civil rights law, King was speaking with his associates. Kennedy had indicated that while he supported such a bill there just weren't enough votes in Congress. King turned to the others and said, "There are enough votes in Congress, they just have to hear our feet!" Then came the historic 1963 March on Washington. The rest is history.

There are enough votes in the 100th Congress to dismantle Reaganism and institute a turn toward peace and progress. The House and Senate, which are already inclined to move away from Administration policy, just have to hear the people's feet. The April 25 demonstration called by trade unions, religious, civil rights and peace forces provides an immediate opportunity to go forward in the manner of Martin Luther King and make history. □

# The Meaning of Howard Beach

JARVIS TYNER

The events in Howard Beach, as well as those in Cummings, Georgia, have dramatically put racism U.S.-style back in the headlines all over the world.

The Reagan era has produced a dangerous growth of Right-wing violence. The Ku Klux Klan marches openly. There are numerous Right-wing bombings, especially of abortion clinics. Cases of political frameup, like Johny Harris and Leonard Peltier, are more frequent. The Administration seeks to virtually outlaw affirmative action. There is a growth of anti-Arab agitation and a corresponding escalation of violence. One of the most alarming developments is a fascist group known as the Aryan Nation, which has murdered Blacks and Jews and has actually staked out territory which it seeks to control by arms.

Incidents like Howard Beach grow directly out of the atmosphere created by six years of Reaganite attacks on civil rights and, in the case of New York City, nine years of Koch's racial polarization. The destructive policies of Reagan and Koch have given new impetus to segregation and organized racist terror.

In light of these terrible tragedies, millions want to know, what is the meaning of Howard Beach? Why did it take place? What can be done to prevent it from happening again? What program, what path of struggle, should be pursued to defeat the forces of racism in Howard Beach and elsewhere?

The Communist Party, USA has a long and proud history of struggle against racism. Before and since the tragic events of December 20, the New York district of the CPUSA has been very much involved in this struggle. We have been an active force on the picketlines and in the marches, and also have helped to bring clarity in the face of some very difficult ideological and political problems that have emerged.

Before we discuss some of those important

problems, let us look at what happened on that frightful night of December 20.

**F**our Afro-American young men are on their way from Queens to Brooklyn. They lose their way, as often happens to New York motorists. Their car breaks down about two and half miles from the segregated community of Howard Beach, in Queens. They try to get help, first from the highway police, then at a nearby toll booth. In each case they're not helped.

Cedric Sandiford, Michael Griffith and Timothy Grimes, seeking help, decide to walk to the community of Howard Beach. Curtis Sylvester, the driver of the car, who is from out-of-state, stays with his car. On their way, Griffith, 23, Sandiford, 36, and Grimes, 18, pass a Black man outside a local diner who warns them to be careful in this neighborhood. Attendants at two gas stations refuse to help them. A carload of white teenagers shouting racist insults almost runs them down.

By now, they've given up hope of getting help. They're tired and hungry and decide to stop at the New Park Plaza Pizza Shop to get something to eat. Somebody makes a call to the police: "Three suspicious Black men eating pizza in the restaurant." Not long after, the police arrive. After being assured by the proprietor that everything is alright, the police leave without saying a word to the three Black men. Soon after the police leave, Sandiford, Griffith and Grimes decide it's time they were on their way.

It's 12:20 in the morning. No sooner are they out on the street than they are surrounded by a gang of 10 to 15 whites armed with baseball bats, tree limbs and tire irons. "You're in the wrong neighborhood this time, n---s," they threaten. Only Timothy Grimes is able to escape after a blow to his back. Michael Griffith and Cedric Sandiford, who is pleading, "O God, don't kill us," are beaten severely. They manage to escape the terrorists momentarily, only to be repeatedly chased by men in cars, caught, and

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Jarvis Tyner is chair of the New York district of the CPUSA

beaten. Throughout, the attackers are hurling racist epithets.

Sandiford and Griffith, beaten and bloodied, find themselves trapped alongside the Belt Parkway. Sandiford, after feigning unconsciousness, makes a desperate leap through a hole in the fence beside the highway, and proceeds to run alongside the highway seeking safety. It now appears, according to recent evidence, that Michael Griffith, running for his life, ran directly onto the highway, into oncoming traffic. He is hit by a high speed auto, his body hurled 20 feet through the air. He is killed.

The driver of the car, Dominick Blum, a court officer, leaves the scene of the accident. He later returns, claiming he thought he hit an animal. He is released without charges. Sandiford is found by the police, walking along the highway, bloodied and seriously injured. He is picked up and questioned about a robbery in another neighborhood. He is subsequently returned to where Michael Griffith lies dead. After a prolonged wait, Sandiford is finally taken to the hospital for care.

**T**his tragic event has been described by the Communist Party of New York and by many others as a lynching. Millions of New Yorkers of all races, nationalities and religions are outraged and strongly condemn this horrible example of racist terror. This incident, and the attack on Black and white civil rights marchers in Cummings, Georgia, indicate a dangerous growth of organized racism. Opinion poll after opinion poll, however, shows the overwhelming majority of people oppose racism and racist violence.

The Howard Beach incident raises many questions among democratic-minded people. For example, what was the role of the police? Howard Beach is located in the area covered by the notorious 106th Precinct. This is the precinct in which Afro-American youth were tortured with "stun guns" into false confessions. This precinct has also been charged with ties to organized crime.

The local police had to have known of the existence of organized racist gangs. Why didn't they warn the three Black men? Why didn't

they escort them to safety? Why did they respond immediately to a call that three Black men were eating pizza in a restaurant, but not respond to calls that Black men were being beaten on the streets? And that is what happened. Despite the fact that over 20 calls were made to the police, they didn't arrive until Michael Griffith was already dead.

Why was Dominick Blum not held, despite the fact that Cedric Sandiford thought that Blum was a part of the gang? Why wasn't he charged with leaving the scene of the accident? Why wasn't he even given a breath test for alcohol? On the other hand, the police treated Sandiford, the victim, like a criminal.

Howard Beach is known for gang attacks. That same night, the same gang severely attacked a white firefighter with whom they had a conflict at a local gas station. About 10:30 that same night in Richmond Hills, an adjoining neighborhood, two Puerto Rican youth, Rafael Gonzales, 19, and George Torres, 15, were brutally beaten with pipes by another gang. In this case, the police tried to blame the victims, saying they were drunk, and falsely reported that the attackers were Blacks and Latinos, not whites. According to the young men who were beaten, one of the police officers told them: "You s—cs come in here and make us look bad—you're troublemakers." Perhaps more than anything else, that statement reveals the attitude of the police in the segregated neighborhoods of New York City.

**I**t is clear from the police officers' action (and their inaction) in the Griffith/Sandiford and Torres/Gonzales cases that they believed in enforcing the system of segregation. The question naturally arises, were the police involved with the gangs? Black police officers have for years complained of the presence of KKK and Birch Society materials and activities in the precincts. The widely held opinion in the Black and Latino community is that while the NY police commissioner is Black, the department is racist to the core. Demands for a full civilian investigation of the police and civilian control have been raised by many.

**A**ccording to the 1980 census, Howard Beach is a 97 per cent white community in a city that is about 50 per cent Afro-American and Latino. Segregation in housing in New York is widespread and very profitable for the banks and real estate interests. Segregation means markets can be limited and controlled, as a result of which both Blacks and whites end up paying more.

Howard Beach is in the main a working-class neighborhood. About one-quarter of its households live in poverty. An organization of poor people called POOR (People Organized for Our Rights) is based there. The racist attacks did not emanate from this segment of the community. In fact, some of this group joined in the antiracist protest march that took place in Howard Beach shortly after the attack.

Howard Beach is rapidly being gentrified. In 1980 the average home in Howard Beach was valued at \$66,834. Today there is an influx of wealthy people who are paying from \$300,000 to \$400,000 for homes. No doubt part of what attracts them is segregation. Some of the top figures of organized crime have made their home there too. It is from this segment of the population, or those influenced by it, that the racist gangs are recruited. Jon Lester, a South African by birth and one of the white youths accused in the attack, says that his life's ambition is to become a capo (a leading figure) in the ranks of organized crime.

In such neighborhoods—and there are many throughout the five boroughs of New York and across the nation—Blacks and Latinos are not allowed to rent or buy homes, and face racist terror, especially after dark. Even during the day, home care workers, transit workers and other Black or Hispanic service workers have been spat on, assaulted and insulted in broad daylight.

The police support this system, because basically the government supports it. In the reign of Reagan and Koch government policy is not to enforce antidiscrimination laws. In effect segregation in Howard Beach is a government policy.

There are concerted campaigns to hide this

ugly reality of segregation and discrimination behind a welter of excuses and diversions.

Organized racist groups promote the stereotype that Blacks and Latinos are criminals who will destroy any neighborhood they live in. These views are reinforced by the mass media and some elected officials. These are the views of the KKK. In truth, not far from Howard Beach there are integrated neighborhoods and predominately Black and Latino neighborhoods which are stable and relatively safe, with well kept homes.

The landlord, banking and insurance interests that operate in neighborhoods like Howard Beach promote such racist views. Not only do they raise the cost of housing; they also hide the fact that redlining, official neglect and speculators' greed systematically destroy community after community. These are the forces which plundered Harlem, the South Bronx, East New York and Bedford Stuyvesant (areas that are predominantly Black or Latino). Black and Latino people are not the culprits but the victims of such policies.

**R**acism is a class weapon. Racist myths are promoted by the capitalist media. They foster divisions among working people. Because of Reaganomics, the structural crisis of capitalism, the antilabor assault of the corporations, the insecurity of working people is increasing. Unemployment and poverty are growing. But if white workers think their lot is worsened by Black people and not by capitalism; if Black and Latino workers feel that white workers are responsible for their increased insecurity, then the unity needed to stop the assault of the corporations and to improve conditions for all working people is impossible. Therefore monopoly capitalist circles have a stake in promoting racist poison. On the other hand, the fight against racism is not the fight of Black workers alone; it is the fight of the entire working class.

From their reaction to Howard Beach and Cumming, Georgia, it is clear that many white working people understand this. It is important to understand that the racist fanatics are not supported by the majority of white people.

The key to victory is to unite the antiracist majority against the racist minority. This is beginning to happen more and more. The 20,000 who marched in Forsyth County, Georgia, are evidence that people are ready to actively oppose racism. Five thousand people, Black, white, Latino and Asian, marched in Howard Beach within a matter of days after the tragic incident. There have subsequently been a number of rallies, meetings, boycotts, press conferences and marches.

According to a *New York Times*/WCBS poll, 74 per cent of New Yorkers feel that "there was no excuse for what happened," and only 11 per cent "understood the actions of the gang" as based on the crime issue.

The condemnation of the racist attack was so overwhelming that even Mayor Koch, who supported the vigilante Bernhard Goetz and excused every New York policeman accused of racist murder, joined in. The reaction to Howard Beach shows the new times that we are living in. After the defeat of many Reaganites in the last election, the contragate scandal and the deepening corruption scandal in the Koch administration, an offensive spirit is growing among the people. There is a new confidence that reaction can be beaten. In this climate it is possible to build a broad, multiracial, majority movement against racism. It can turn the tragedy of Howard Beach into a major defeat for the ultra-Right, for reaction, for racism. The ruling class is particularly afraid of this possibility and is doing everything it can to spread confusion, to divert from and undermine growing antiracist unity.

**T**he issue is being muddied by all those who wish, in one way or another, to justify this terrorist attack.

For example, the media and the police have combed the records of the victims of Howard Beach looking for criminal records which would "justify" the gang's attack on them.

Some in the media have rationalized the attack by suggesting that the same thing happens to whites who walk through Black communities. But where are such incidents in Harlem

and Bedford Stuyvesant? White people work, attend school and visit predominantly Black communities every day. Some are buying homes in Harlem and Bedford Stuyvesant. Afro-Americans are concerned about gentrification, but those whites who visit and work in Black communities are not meeting with violence.

The media have played up the story that Jon Lester, one of the attackers, once dated an Afro-American girl. Therefore, they imply, he couldn't have been motivated by racism. This coverup attempts to make concern about crime the issue in the Howard Beach tragedy, not racism. Eric Breindel, editorial writer for the conservative *New York Post*, writing on the legal aspect of the Howard Beach case, argues that, of all the unknown facts about Howard Beach, the "most fundamental" is "what four Black men from Brooklyn were doing in Queens that pre-Christmas Saturday evening." Ken Auletta, widely read liberal columnist for the *New York Daily News*, writes that "fear of crime" is "far more pervasive for all New Yorkers, Black and white," than racism.

Then there was Mayor Koch. He described the attack as a lynching. Good. He called for racial peace. Also good. Then he went on to evenhandedly attack "white racism and Black racism." But it only undermines the struggle against racism to equate racist oppression with the reaction of the victims. Racism is not simply bigoted ideas, wrong as they are. It is not simply individual prejudice, widespread as that is. Racism is a system of oppression.

**R**acism is "last hired and first fired." It is double unemployment, double poverty for Afro-Americans and other racially oppressed. It's inferior housing, inferior education and health care, political underrepresentation, an unfair court and prison system. It's higher infant mortality and a shorter life span. These conditions constitute the material foundation for bigotry and insults, humiliation and indignities. The whole system of oppression and exploitation is racism, not just backward ideas.

Can one equate the antipathy some Jewish

people feel toward Germans as a result of the Holocaust with the anti-Semitic practices of Nazi Germany against the Jewish people? By the same token, the nationalistic reaction by some to Howard Beach, wrong as it is, can not be equated with what has happened historically to Afro-Americans.

Can one equate the petty crimes committed by individuals, so-called street crime, with the crimes of a system which cuts short the lives of a whole people? Minorities in the United States suffer 60,000 excess deaths annually because of inadequate health care according to Margaret Hecker, former Secretary for Health and Human Welfare. There is no Black ruling class inflicting special oppression on white Americans because of the color of their skins. The concept of Black racism obscures the system of oppression against Blacks and other minorities.

The nationalism of an oppressed people is in the main a defensive reaction. It is not an effective defense because it equates all white people with the white ruling class and thereby weakens the fight against the real oppressor. Exploited and exploiter, class allies and class enemies, are lumped together. This is not a winning strategy.

Again, one can not comprehend or effectively combat racism without viewing it first of all as class weapon. Its sharpest edge is aimed against Afro-Americans and other racially oppressed people, but it is a weapon against the working class as a whole. Racism degrades working conditions and wages of all workers. It is a rationale for cutbacks in social services and a justification for unjust wars. Racism divides and weakens the fight for progress of the entire working class. It is necessary, and history has proven it possible, to unite the multinational working class and the majority of the people against racism.

**L**et us return briefly to the role of the mayor of New York. It is worth considering his position in some detail because he is the chosen, favorite spokesperson for Big Business interests in New York City. What comes from his mouth is the self-justification of the top circles of monop-

oly capital in the city which is home to Wall Street.

The mayor has not been a bystander when it comes to race relations; he has built his political career on racial polarization. His mass base is in communities like Howard Beach. Koch's sympathy for Bernhard Goetz sent a signal that vigilante violence against Blacks is acceptable. What Goetz did was not motivated by racism, according to this view, but by being "fed up with crime."

Koch also thinks that in Howard Beach the issue isn't just race; it's also fear of crime. In the January 19 issue of the *New York Times* (cynically printed on the day Martin Luther King's birthday was celebrated), writing in reference to Howard Beach, he states, "we will not advance racial understanding unless we also attempt to come to grips with the fear of crime in general and white fear of Black crime in particular." He goes on to say, "We cannot avoid the fact that crime in New York City is disproportionately committed by young men who are black" and that "on any given day approximately 57 percent of the inmates detained by the New York City Department of Correction are black."

After mentioning the "the cruel legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. No group has had such a painful experience in America," Koch writes, "most poor people are law-abiding, and not all impoverished ethnic groups have the same levels of criminality." Notice he doesn't say most poor Black people are law-abiding. And it then turns out that he has acknowledged the existence of racism only to dismiss it, "for the present it's more important that we examine the the effects of black criminality rather than the cause . . . for many whites crime has a black face."

The mayor's "Lessons of Howard Beach" column is an affront to the great legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., and was perfectly timed to give comfort to the perpetrators of the attack in Howard Beach. This is quite in character for the mayor, who has endorsed the thesis of Richard Herrnstein of Harvard that criminal behavior is genetically based. Yes, says Koch, crime is sociologically based among poor people (natu-



rally, he doesn't bring up the subject of the crimes of the rich). But, he continues, not all ethnic groups have the same level of criminality; among Black people it is abnormally high. The reader is left to assume that Black people are criminals by nature. In the name of being against racism, the mayor of the nation's largest city is perpetuating the stereotype that Blacks and criminality go hand and hand.

But crime is not in the genes of people. It is in the "genes" of capitalism. Demoralizing conditions of poverty, drugs and unemployment, conditions forced on Afro-Americans and other oppressed and exploited people under capitalism, produce a criminal response among a minority of them. By contrast, the number of appointees and political cronies of Koch who have engaged in criminal behavior is considerably higher.

After spreading a racist myth, the mayor then cynically calls for tolerance. "Fear of Black crime," he concludes, "has some basis in truth. But none of these fears—among either Blacks or whites—justify stereotyping, discrimination or violence."

**E**very racist movement bases itself on some kind of racist stereotype. The historical oppression and segregation of Afro-Americans, especially in the South, was based on the image of Blacks as stupid, dirty, illiterate, and, yes, rapists and criminals. Today the main racist stereotype is of Black people as criminals. In the warped mind of the racist, the stereotype applies to all members of the group. Man, woman or child, worker or boss, political leader, doctor or trade union leader, cop, minister or nun, the racist still says, "we don't want them in here because they are criminals." Instead of saying flatly this is not true, Ed Koch gives this lie his mayoral seal of approval.

Let's set the record straight. The issue in Howard Beach, in Graves End, where transit worker Willie Tucks was killed, the issue in Richmond Hills, was not crime, it was racism. Michael Griffith, Cedric Sandiford and Timothy Grimes committed no crime. They were attacked because they were Black and "in the

wrong neighborhood."

And the gang that attacked them were no crime fighters. Many had criminal records themselves. The accused ring leader has a serious criminal record, and admits to aspiring to a life in organized crime. This is a strange fighter against crime indeed.

**N**ationalist ideology has been quite prominent among those most visible in the spontaneous upsurge around Howard Beach. This is a coalition effort, and there should be room for all kinds of forces. However, the Black vs. white approach of some is minimizing the possibility of justice being done and the fight against racist violence being advanced.

First there was a proposal to boycott pizza parlors, then a proposal to boycott all non-Black-owned businesses. This proposal was made in the name of "demonstrating Black economic power." As one of the lawyers in the case put the goals, "Blacks represent 35 per cent of the city's population. We are asking for 35 per cent of the economic structure and anything that moves." Some see this movement as a way to create a new Black economic structure.

The slogans sound militant, but on close examination they miss the mark. They are based purely on a color analysis and ignore the class realities of capitalism. How does one win 35 per cent of the capitalist economic structure? Who will receive that 35 per cent? Will it be collectively owned by Black people? I doubt it. This demand comes from the hearts of the petty bourgeoisie. A piece of the capitalist action for a few Black people is not an answer to Howard Beach.

Another slogan which has emerged is the call to "Buy Black." This will not answer the problem either. In fact, the main problem is the deep crisis in earning power of Black people. Afro-American people suffer double unemployment, double the rate of poverty, homelessness and hunger of the nation. We pay taxes at a higher rate than many big corporations, yet we are denied decent public services, good schools and decent health care. Utility costs are outrageous. We pay proportionately more for

such basic necessities as housing, food and clothing because of our confinement in segregated ghettos. Is not the call for buying Black a path to still greater confinement?

Over 90 per cent of Afro-Americans are working class. Will 35 per cent of contracts for Black businesses address the problems of the majority of Black workers? The fundamental flaw of this approach is that it doesn't address exploitation. Is a Black boss going to take a lower rate of profit to advance the cause? What about bad working conditions, denial of union rights and the lack of jobs? These are at the heart of the plight of Black people. These demands don't address discrimination, they don't address the plight of the Afro-American people, and they don't address Howard Beach. How do we achieve antiracist unity with these demands?

The social system in the United States, the soil in which the historical oppression of Black people and the countless acts of violence like that at Howard Beach grew, is capitalism. Capitalism thrives on racism. Racism is capital's class weapon. Any effective program must first speak to the plight of the working-class majority among Black people in order to advance the cause of all strata of Black people. Without this understanding, the struggle will miss the mark.

**C**alls to respond to Howard Beach with violence, which have come from some nationalist circles, should also be condemned as irresponsible and provocative. Such calls only play into the hands of the forces of racism. It is necessary to find the way to unite Black and white, not to split Black and white.

What is needed is a program of action to unite the antiracist majority, to reach and mobilize that overwhelming majority who condemn the attack. What is needed to mobilize the powerful, multiracial labor movement? Many unions have spoken out forthrightly on Howard Beach. What is needed to activate the churches,

the religious community? How can elected officials on the city, state, and federal levels be involved? It is necessary to create a new, broad-based multiracial movement of labor, civil rights forces, Black, Latino, Asian peoples. There are real solutions to the Howard Beach tragedy.

1. Prosecution to the full extent of the law for all the perpetrators of the Howard Beach attacks and other acts of racist violence.

2. New laws to outlaw racist and anti-Semitic violence.

3. Establishment of an independent panel by the City Council to investigate the entire problem of segregated neighborhoods, racist violence and the role of the police in this regard within the five boroughs.

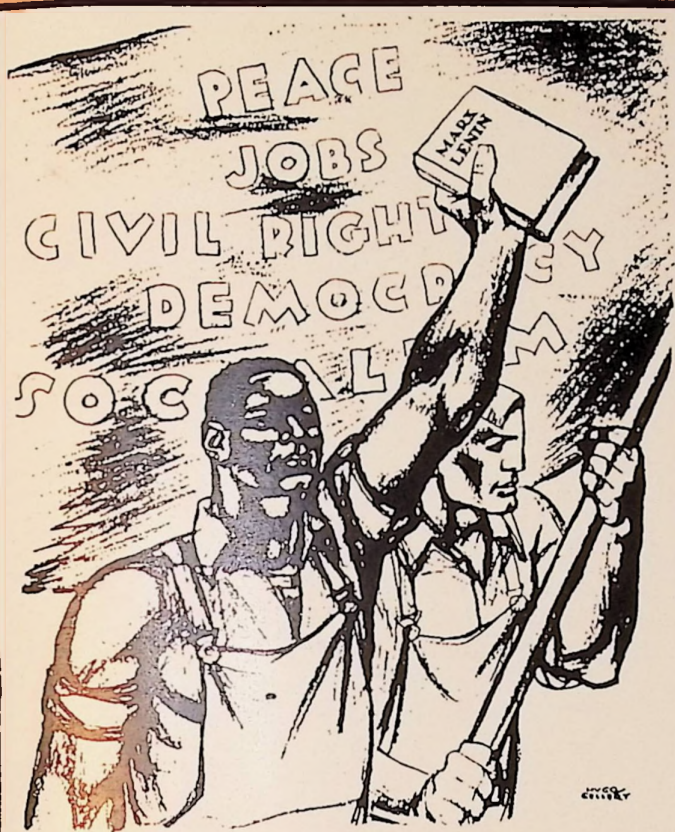
4. Civilian control of the police.

5. Strengthen existing fair housing laws, and launch an aggressive campaign to end widespread housing discrimination.

6. A massive rebuilding program to eliminate slum housing and provide decent housing for all. Such a program could be financed out of the arms budget and could create tens of thousands of jobs in the process.

All of this will contribute to reversing the dangerous escalation of ultra-Right violence in our country, much of it motivated by and cloaked in racist concepts. The tragedy of Howard Beach calls for such a program. A similar program needs to be developed in other areas. If the movement against racist violence develops further and raises the issues of housing, schools, jobs and political representation it can force big progressive changes on the corporate power structure in New York City.

**N**othing can bring back Michael Griffith; nothing can erase the terrible scars left on Cedric Sandiford, Timothy Grimes, Rafael Gonzalez and George Torres. But it is possible at this time of decline and decay of Reaganism to build a powerful antiracist movement that can advance the cause of equality to a new level. □



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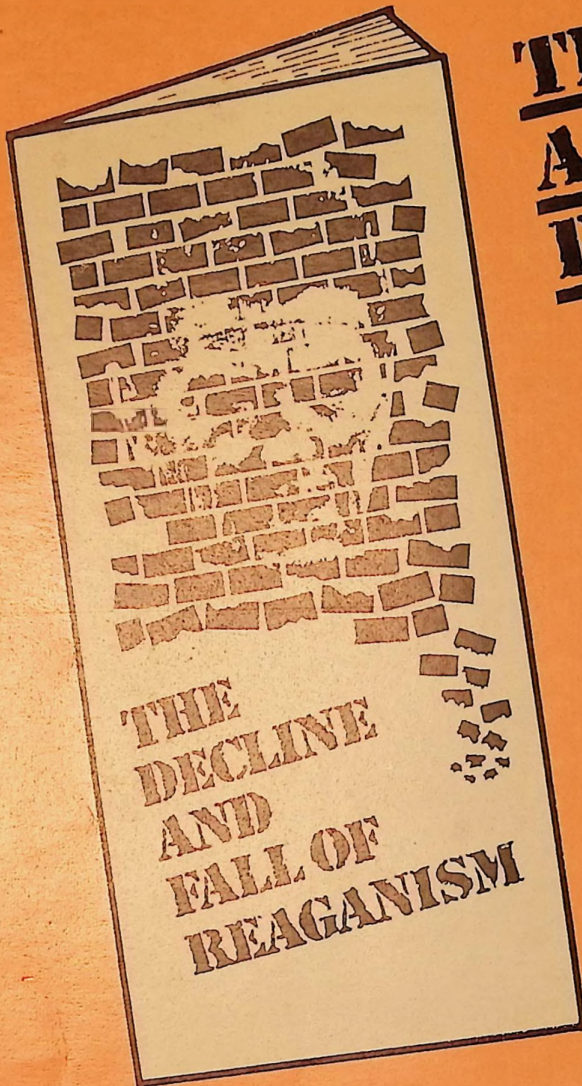
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