David Cossu

# Don't be a sucker!

Why racism hurts workers

## Don't be a sucker!

This summer the bosses and their political stooges in Washington and in local areas are working overtime to promote race wars. If the bosses could accomplish this they could kill a few birds with one stone.

Black and white workers fighting one another would cover up the real enemy: the bosses and the government. Race war would divert white workers from real problems which have forced increased strike actions to defend their living and working conditions. It would also divert growing opposition to the war in Vietnam, a war which is being fought mainly by Black and white working-class youth. Finally, race war would further divide Black and white workers, making it easier for the bosses to beat back action by any section of the workers.

This year LBJ & Co. have broken scores of strikes one way or another. A few examples are:

threatened railroad strikes broken with the special legislation forcing compulsory arbitration;

in Connecticut LBJ broke the Avco strike with a Taft-Hartley injunction;

he bailed out GE when several plants struck the company, again using Taft-Hartley;

West Coast electricians were forced back to work after a 4-month walk-out due to an injunction;

the recent Teamster lock-out by the bosses was backed up not only by the jailing of Hoffa, but by the threatened use of Taft-Hartley by Johnson;

New Jersey teachers were jailed for picketing in a strike for union recognition.

The politicians in Washington are controlled by big monopolies like General Motors, Ford, U.S. Steel, General Electric, DuPont, the banks, utilities and the airlines, railroads and truckers. They need their government in Washington when we fight for our rights. And they need the government in Washington to protect their investments in other countries when workers and poor people in those countries fight for their rights and freedom. Right now, the same strike-breaking, wage-freezing, boss-backed government headed by LBJ is conducting a war of aggression in Vietnam. They are slaughtering thousands of workers and poor people in Vietnam to protect their Asia investments.

They don't care how many of our boys die there so long as they can still make a buck. Killing and strike-breaking is the bosses' best business, because this helps them make more money. And, of course, if we workers do the fighting for them, it's all gravy. They make suckers and corpses out of us to defend their interests—profits.

## Another sucker game

Now they want us to be bigger suckers than ever. They want us to fight our Black brothers at home. Bosses have been making the biggest profits off of the backs of Black workers for over a century. The bosses love this. They want to keep it that way.

For more than a century they have

poisoned our minds against Black people. They want us to hate and fight Black workers instead of hating and fighting the bosses. This way they keep the workers divided and weak—Black against white—while they pile up huge profits.

The American press, radio and TV has launched a relentless campaign of race hatred and vilification against Black people. The mass media is filled with fantastic stories about Black "hate" gangs supposedly out for "white blood." It is obvious from the events of the past few years that these hate stories are designed to stir up anti-black feelings among the white population, and to serve as a screen behind which viscious campaigns of terror are carried out in Black ghettos across America by racist cops and soldiers under direct orders from Johnson and the White House. In effect, the white population is being conditioned to take a direct hand in the mass murder of Black people, who are struggling for their liberation.

The June 1966 issue of Life Magazine featured an article entitled PLOT TO GET 'WHITEY' which is typical of the racist trash which has spewed out of the American press over the past few years. All of the major newspapers and magazines in America are making a desperate effort to misrepresent the Black people's just struggle for liberation as a plot to murder the white man. And true to form, a gallery of Black Uncle Toms and Black police agents are right on the spot, feeding the imperialist press scare-whitey stories which they pawn off as the 'inside dope' in a vain attempt to help make their master's racist hocus pocus believeable. The Uncle Toms have a new product to sell. The master's market is wide open for fantastic stories about how Black hordes are preparing to break out of their ghetto prisons and swallow up the white population in an orgy of blood and fire.

## The 'kill whitey' myth

The myth that the main ambition of Black people throughout America's ghettos is to drown white America in a sea of blood is being sold on imperial-

ism's mass media market in a vain attempt to cover up and justify the brutal crimes being committed against Black people every day. The ruling class is beginning to lose some of its bought-and-paid-for Uncle Tom control over Black ghettos. The white liberal is being threatened withthe loss of his job of managing Uncle Toms, who in turn manage the ghetto for imperialism. In desperation, they are using the plot to kill whitey myth to condition and prepare the white community to accept the wholesale slaughter of Black people. Terrified whites are stampeding gun stores and they are even obtaining machine guns, grenades, and other weapons from U.S. Army sources. Acts of murder and terror are being committed by whites against Black communities with ever increasing frequency.

The events of the past two years put the lie to imperialism's plot to kill whitey myth. From July 18, 1964 to July 23, 1966, there have been no less than 20 uprisings in ghettos across America. In not one case have these rebellions been directed towards the murder of whites in surrounding communities. Absolutely no attacks have been made on white communities adjacent to the ghettos which have risen in rebellion.

Here are some of the latest examples of the newspapers' incitement to terror.

U.S. News and World Report (May 1, 1967), in an article "U.S. Rac-eRiot Outlook for '67," says:

> "The summer of 1967 is likely be another "long, hot summer" of rioting and racial conflict.
>
> "Danger also is believed to be growing that more whites will turn to violence—fight back against rioters or attack Negro demonstrators. This could lead to face-to-face racial conflict.
>
> "In riots of past years, white people have tended to stay away from the scene, leave the trouble to police and National Guard troops. Direct confrontation between white mobs and Black mobs has been largely avoided. This year, in some cities, you hear talk that things will be different."

## Gun club threats

A week later The New York Times carried a front-page story about the National Rifle Association (NRA). The May issue of The American Rifleman, the magazine of the NRA, had an editorial saying white people should have guns to protect themselves from "mobs." The New York Daily News' headline said "GUN CLUB WANTS ANTI-RIOT POSSES."

This Rifleman editorial, which was given full coverage in the only two morning papers in New York, tells Congress not to pass a law to control guns because private ownership is a "potential community stabilizer" in the event of urban riots.

It states that the government should give thought "to the fate of citizens who may be trapped or beleaguered by howling mobs that brush aside police."

It says that "the best police on earth alone cannot stem the kind of mob violence that has swept many of America's cities."

The story in the News ends this way:

"Using figures that showed that last July 6 some 700 National Guardsmen were called to help quell disorders in Omaha, Chicago and Cleveland, the editorial asked:

'What if the National Guard were overseas in a major war, as it has been repeatedly in this country? Who then guards the doors of American homes from senseless savagery and illaging?

'With homefront safeguards spotty and uncertain, the armed citizen represents a potential community stabilizer. His support of law and order, whether as a civilian member of the posse...or as one of the organized militia defined as the "whole body of able-bodied male citizens," could prove essential!"

IS THAT NOT A CLEAR CALL FOR THE WHITE POPULATION TO UNITE WITH THE POLICE AS VIGILANTES AND POSSES TO HUNT DOWN THE BLACK PEOPLE? ISN'T THIS, ALONG WITH THE OTHER STATEMENTS BY WITH THE OTHER STATEMENTS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS

FLUNKEYS, AND THE FOUNDATION BEING LAID DOWN BY THE NEWSPAPERS—ISN'T THIS A DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST THE AFRO-AMERICAN PEOPLE BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

Yes, it is.

## Why they rebel

Black people rebel because they are the most oppressed section of the population. If you had to live under the conditions described below, you would be out on the streets doing the same or more. How long would you put up with a system that forced you to live at substandard levels? How long would you sit by and watch your loved ones lynched, brutalized by police, and victimized by countless indignities?

We ourselves had to fight the cops, the Pinkertons and the National Guard to organize unions. In the first 50 years of organizing unions, several thousand workers were killed and thousands more maimed by the bosses, their goons and cops. The way the government is passing anti-strike legislation and busting strikes with injunctions, we will have to fight all over again to keep our unions.

Now the bosses want us to be the goons who bust organizing by Black people. Let's take a look at how oppression affects Black workers:

## The Black man's share of 'the great society'

### a. jobs and unemployment

1. Unemployment for Black workers is more than double that of whites, and Black workers are more than 20% of all workers unemployed, even though Black people are only 11% of the total U.S. population.

2. Black high-school graduates have a higher unemployment rate than white high-school drop-outs!

3. Only half (50%) of all Black males who worked in 1964 had full-time year-round jobs, as compared with more than two-thirds for whites. The remain-

ing 50% of the Black males who worked in 1964 had only part-time jobs, yet they are still listed as "employed" in Government statistics.

**b. income, housing, expenses**

4. The average white family income is double the average Black family income.

5. Sixty per cent (60%) of all Black families earn less than $4,000, while only 28% of all white families earn less than this amount. Add to this the fact that the size of the average Black family is larger than the white family.

6. 44% of all housing for Black people is classified as sub-standard (slum), while only 13% of all white housing falls into this category. A greater portion (numerically) of the Black population lives in that 44% classified as slum housing than in the remaining 56% classified as standard.

7. Between 1960-61, Black families were forced to spend almost 10% more (proportionately) for food, housing, and clothing than white families. Black people are charged exorbitant rents for slum housing, and they are systematically robbed by corrupt merchants who have a captive market in the ghetto.

**c. mass Black poverty**

8. Eleven million Black people are classified as poor (impoverished), based on the Social Security Administration scale of $1,580 per year (or less) for a single person, up to $5,090 (or less) for a family of 7 persons or more. According to this scale, 55% of the total Black population is classified as poor, while less than 16% of all whites are so classified. But it would be closer to the truth to state that as much as 75% (16 million) of the total Black population lives in poverty. We might add here, that the remaining 25% are not exactly living the 'American Drean' either! For one thing, Black people must pay almost 10% more for food, housing, clothes and other necessities than whites. For another thing, the Government scale is far too low. $1,600 a year is considered above the poverty

level for a single person. This works out to about $31 per week. Is this a living wage for a single person? $5,100 is considered to be above the poverty level for a family of 7 or more persons. This works out to about $98 per week. Is this a living wage for a family of 7 or more human beings?

**d. systematic extermination**

9. The maternal death rate (death during childbirth) is four times greater for Black babies than for whites.

10. The infant death rate (from birth to 1 year of age) for Black babies is double the rate for whites.

11. The death rate for Black people between the prime ages of 25 to 40 years old is double that of whites.

12. Black people are only 11% of the U.S. population, but they are 14% of the U.S. Military. Black soldiers are 40% of the men fighting in Vietnam, and the death rate for black soldiers is over 18%, while the death rate for white soldiers is only 11%. This is the "Great Society's" answer to Black unemployment!

The condition of Black Americans worsens with each passing day. The facts, figures and sum total of the fundamental objective conditions of life prove this—in spite of the big noises that the ruling class and its Uncle Toms are making about "recent gains." The Anti-Poverty Program and all of the other so-called "gains" put together have not changed the fundamental conditions of life for Black people one iota. They are merely band-aids on the festering sores of this system!

It is no wonder that many Afro-Americans are now prepared to pursue a more honorable response to Black captivity than that of powerless slaves—powerless to even guarantee the lives, happiness, and futures of their children.

## Who really pushes us?

Ask yourselves a few simple questions: DO BLACK WORKERS BUST STRIKES? DO THEY PAY LOW WAGES? DO THEY SPEED-UP AND AUTOMATE

WORKERS OUT OF JOBS? DO THEY CLOSE PLANTS TO RUN AWAY TO LOW-WAGE AREAS? DO THEY PASS ANTI-UNION LAWS? DO THEY HIRE SCABS? DO THEY MAKE YOUNG WORKERS FIGHT AND DIE IN WARS AGAINST OPPRESSED PEOPLE FOR THE SOLE SAKE OF PROFITS—LIKE IN VIETNAM? You know what the answers are. WE HAVE ONLY ONE REAL ENEMY: THE COMPANIES AND THOSE THAT REPRESENT THEM IN THE GOVERNMENT AND IN OUR UNIONS. So why should we fight Black people who are also fighting the same enemy for many of the same reasons we are?

We have a stake in the fight that Black people are waging for freedom. If Black workers' wages are kept lower than other workers, the bosses use this to keep the wages of all workers lower. We know this lesson from our own shops. If one group of workers in the plant has low wages, the bosses use this as a lever to keep all wages down. Don't they always come up with the line: "How can we give you more? What will so and so say. Sure we'd love to raise your pay, but then we'd have to do the same for everyone."

What does this mean for the rank and file in the trade unions? There are plenty of labor fakers in our leadership, who try to tell us, like the bosses themselves, that the Black man is trying to take our jobs away. These are the men who keep Black workers out of some of the unions, and they are the same men who will not even fight for their own rank and file when unemployment is hurting, as it is now in many industries. The labor movement should fight for the whole working class, and not try to build a fortress to keep out the unorganized and unemployed.

The bosses, the government and the pie-cards have prevented the organization of unions in the south. The south is used as an escape hatch and as a threat by the bosses. If we don't accept low wages they move away or threaten to move. Low wages in the south—based on terrorism of Black people—hurts wages in the rest of the country. The bosses and their gang of stooges will

go to any length to keep things this way. They have killed, beaten, and jailed thousands of us in the past to prevent workers' militancy and unity. THIS TIME THEY WANT TO USE US TO KILL OFF AND BEAT DOWN ONE ANOTHER AT HOME JUST LIKE THEY USE US TO KILL AND BURN OPPRESSED WORKERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

## When we made real progress

The biggest gains in the history of the labor movement came with the organization of the CIO. The bosses fought this great organizing drive tooth and nail. Workers had to take over the plants and physically defend themselves from the goons, police, and National Guard. It was during this period that there was a great deal of unity between Black and white workers. Without this unity the CIO could never have been organized. Unity meant real unions and real gains in all conditions of life. This is why the bosses fear unity and try to drive wedges between all sections of workers.

In the months ahead the United Automobile Worker's union (UAW) will start serious negotiations. Almost one third of the workers in that union are Black. Undoubtedly, Reuther will sell out again. If the workers take matters into their own hands, to fight over the heads of the union leaders, Black and white unity will be essential.

Race war would undermine this unity and make the bosses' job simple. The sellout will go unchallenged, and the same rotten speedup--layoff situation will stay as it is. If the UAW capitulates this will weaken bargaining in all the other unions that enter into negotiations afterwards. Naturally, race war would weaken unity in every union. The bosses stand to gain billions from race war. Our "reward" will be lower pay, greater job insecurity and watching our kids march off to war killing and being killed. The bosses will rub their hands and pat their bankbooks while their sons are off at college deferred from the draft.

## Let's settle it

Black liberation—the ability of Black people to determine their own destiny—is a vital step in the eventual defeat of a rotten system. If the boss is our enemy, anything that weakens him strengthens us. This system can only survivie because of wars and exploitation of its own people. Let's face it: We are going to have to CONTROL our own affairs, eventually, if we are ever going to have a decent secure life. This means that socialism will have to replace the rotten system of private ownership.

Socialism requires that workers sieze political and economic control of our country and build a government that suits them. In order to do this we need the strength of all sections of the working people. A powerful, organized section of Black workers fighting for freedom can spear-head this development. So, from the short and long-range point of view, support of Black liberation is in our interests.

## Start NOW!

Don't be drawn into the bosses' plans. We should keep our eye on the ball. Let's FIGHT FOR HIGHER PAY, SHORTER HOURS WITH NO LOSS IN PAY; MILITANT UNION LEADERS WHO ACT TO ORGANIZE, NORTH AND SOUTH; FOR THE U.S. TO GET OUT OF VIETNAM NOW.

If the bosses draw us into race war this summer, just remember how they will sit back and laugh—how they will say "look at the suckers doing our dirty work." Why not? We won't be fighting them. We will be fighting our allies.

Black workers have taken nothing from white workers. Some white workers might seem to be making a few bucks more because the boss can toss them a few pennies more from billions robbed from Black people at home and oppressed people in other countries. YOU KNOW WHAT WE CALL THIS—BLOOD MONEY. Some white workers may draw some small comfort in the sick feeling of "superiority" to colored peoples. Don't forget how 30 million German workers

died fighting for similar ideas for the bosses' man in Berlin, Adolph Hitler.

Racism is the enemy of all workers. It is a tool of the bosses to make more money. Just recall that racism has existed in the U.S. for more than a century. What problem has it solved for us? Every time you call some Black guy a name, keep him from getting a better job or fail to fight for his right to hold a job, does it put money in your pocket? It does in the bosses' pockets. Every time he hears you wail about "the rotten Black guys," it's music to his ears. That cash register rings away for him. Remember that in the south, where racism has taken its most open and direct form, WHITE WORKERS ARE POOREST.

Well, it's up to us. We can go on playing the bosses' game, fighting and dying so he can pile up more dough; in other words, be a sucker. Or we can begin to take matters into our own hands. Clean out the mis-leaders in the union. Adopt a fighting program. Unite with all workers for things we all need. If we do this, we can win. We can win enough for ALL workers.

Our labor together with the labor of our Black brothers has created enormous wealth. Black and white workers can start to fight to control and distribute this wealth for the interests of the workers, not the bosses. In other words, start the long, hard job of taking it away from the bosses and placing the wealth and power in our own hands. LET'S START THIS SUMMER. LET'S FIGHT THE REAL ENEMY, THE BOSSES AND THEIR BOYS IN WASHINGTON.

**Don't be a sucker!**

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