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THEOLOGY’S GREAT SIN:
SILENCE IN THE FACE OF WHITE SUPREMACY

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ABSTRACT
Drawing on the legacies of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and others, this essay calls academic theologians to break the silence about white racism within their discipline. Four realities are identified that have contributed and continue to create this silence. (1) Whites do not talk about racism because they do not have to. (2) White theologians avoid racial dialogue because talk about white supremacy arouses deep feelings of guilt. (3) Whites avoid talking with African Americans about race because Whites fear engaging Black peoples’ rage. (4) Whites do not say much about racial justice because they are not prepared for a radical redistribution of wealth and power. Confronting these realities gives theologians an opportunity to develop antiracist theologies that go beyond simply condemning racism because they engage the histories, cultures and theologies of people of color. This is the work of love and justice because it is work that enhances our humanity.

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer¹

We will have to repent…not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.

Martin Luther King, Jr²

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr were two of the most outspoken Christian theologians against injustice and suffering in the twentieth century. Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran, was hanged in a Nazi prison at Flossenbürg in Bavaria, on 9 April 1945. King, an African-American Baptist, was assassinated while fighting for garbage workers in Memphis, Tennessee, on 4 April 1968. Both were 39 years old at the time of their deaths. What distinguished Bonhoeffer and King from most theologians was their refusal to keep silent about the great moral issues of their time and situation and their ability to use these injustices in their societies to challenge religious meaning.

They opposed Nazi and American racism fiercely—knowing that it would probably lead to their death. ‘When Christ calls a man’, Bonhoeffer said, ‘he bids him come and die’.3 King was just as prophetic and courageous: ‘If physical death is the price I must pay to free my White brothers and sisters from the permanent death of the spirit, then nothing could be more redemptive’.4

The lives and writings of Bonhoeffer and King tell us far more about what it means to be a Christian and a theologian than all the great tomes in the history of theology. Their martyrdom placed Christian identity at the foot of the cross of Jesus and in the midst of oppressed people fighting for justice and freedom.

We need more theologians like Bonhoeffer and King—more scholars in religion with the courage to speak out against wrong, especially the evil of White supremacy. No one can deny that racism is a major killer in the modern world. Yet there has been considerable resistance to seeing it as a profound problem for the religion of Christianity. During the course of five centuries, Europeans and White North Americans systematically confiscated lands and committed genocide against untold numbers of indigenous people around the world. When Whites ‘discovered’ something they wanted, whether land or labor, they took it with very little thought of the consequences for the lives of the people already there.

‘Can any nation…discover what belonged to someone else?’, asked the seventeenth-century Dutch Jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645).5 Few Europeans asked such questions, but instead, exploited lands and peoples unhindered by philosophy, religion or ethics. In fact, these disciplines assisted them in justifi-

ing their violence as they viewed themselves as God’s chosen people to subdue the indigenous people and their land. Author Eduardo Galeano claims that 150 years of Spanish and Portuguese colonization in Central and South America reduced the indigenous population from 90 million to 3.3 million. During the 23-year reign of terror of King Leopold II of Belgium in the Congo (1885–1908), scholarly estimates suggest that approximately 10 million Congolese met unnatural deaths—‘fully half of the territory’s population’. Then, in one brief moment, the Nazis committed an unspeakable racist crime: the industrialized mass murder of six million Jews in Europe.

Physical death is only one aspect of racism that raises serious theological questions. Spiritual death is another, and it is just as destructive, if not more so, for it destroys the soul of both the racists and their victims. Racism is hatred gone amok. It is violence against one’s spiritual self. Through cultural and religious imperialism, Europeans imposed their racist value-system on people of color and thereby forced them to think that the only way to be human and civilized was to be White and Christian. It not only makes the oppressed want to be something other than they are but also to become like their oppressors. Malcolm X called it self-hate—the worst mental sickness imaginable.

The poison of White supremacy is so widespread and deeply internalized by its victims that many are unaware of their illness and others who are often do not have the cultural and intellectual resources to heal their wounded spirits. In my travels around the world, I am amazed at how much people of color want to be White. They want to look like Whites, talk like Whites, and even pray like Whites. Many are still worshipping a White God and a blond-haired, blue-eyed Jesus—still singing, ‘Wash me and I will be Whiter than snow’. As James Baldwin put it: ‘It is a terrible, an inexorable, law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one’s own: in the face of one’s victim, one sees oneself’.

We are all bound together, inseparably linked to a common humanity. What we do to one another, we do to ourselves. That was why Martin King was

committed absolutely to nonviolence. Anything less, he believed, was self-inflicted violence against one’s soul. ‘Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence increases hate… It [begets] what it seeks to destroy’. 9 King struggled mightily to redeem the soul of America so that people of all colors and religious orientations could create the beloved community.

Racism is particularly alive and well in America. It is America’s original sin and it is institutionalized at all levels of society. It is its most persistent and intractable evil. Though racism inflicts massive suffering, few American theologians have even bothered to address White supremacy as a moral evil and as a radical contradiction of our humanity and religious identities. White theologians and philosophers write numerous articles and books on theodicy, asking why God permits massive suffering, but they hardly ever mention the horrendous crimes Whites have committed against people of color in the modern world. Why do White theologians ignore racism? This is a haunting question—especially since a few White scholars in other disciplines (such as sociology, literature, history and anthropology) do engage with the phenomenon of racism. Why not theologians? Shouldn’t they be the first to attack this evil?

When I began writing about racism in American theology, the churches and the society more than thirty years ago, I really thought that, after being confronted with the sin of their silence, White theologians would repent and then proceed to incorporate a radical ‘race’ critique in their theological and religious reflections. Most were sympathetic with the Civil Rights movement and some even participated in the marches led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Whenever King asked for help, White ministers vacated their pulpits and a few theologians even suspended classes or cut short summer vacations and joined him in the fight for racial justice. Also, the rise of Latin American liberation and feminist theologies and the deepening of the Jewish-Christian dialogue on the Holocaust created a liberating theological atmosphere for a serious and sustained engagement of racism. Some dialogue did occur on ‘race’ and gender between White feminist and womanist and *mujerista* theologians. There were also spirited dialogues on ‘race’ and class among White Latin Americans and people of color in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).

We are all familiar with the many heated exchanges in White churches, as Blacks created caucuses and called for Black Power, and White church people wondered why their Black brothers and sisters felt so powerless and angry

after the breakdown of segregation in God’s house. It took some time for Whites to realize that Blacks and other people of color did not want to be integrated out of power with a few White-selected colored tokens as window dressing. Even Martin King called for a period of ‘temporary segregation in order to get to the integrated society’.10

In contrast to these small but important efforts in the churches and other contexts, White North American and European male theologians hardly ever mentioned the sin of racism in their public lectures and writings during the 1960s and 70s. They wrote mostly about the ‘death of God’ controversy and the secular spirit that created it. It was as if they were intellectually blind and could not see that White supremacy was America’s central theological problem. They engaged Latin Americans on class contradictions, talked to feminists about gender issues, and dialogued with Jews about Christianity and anti-Semitism. However, when the time came to talk about theology and racism, they initially could not believe that we had the audacity to engage them in a serious intellectual discussion about theology and its task. What could Blacks possibly know about theology? When we refused to be intimidated by their intellectual arrogance, they tried to convince us that ‘race’ was of secondary importance to class and would be automatically eliminated when justice is achieved in the political economy. When we rejected that view as faulty and racist, they walked away as if we were too emotional and insufficiently intelligent to understand their sophisticated, theoretical analysis.

Of course, not all White theologians were silent about White supremacy. The late Fred Herzog was a prominent exception, and it was not easy for him to critique racism in the White theological establishment. He spoke to me many times about the pain of his isolation and the rejection by his White male colleagues. When Herzog switched his theological focus from ‘race’ to class, concentrating on Latin American liberation theology, as others like Robert McAfee Brown and Harvey Cox did, his White colleagues became much more open to engaging his discourse about liberation theology. As long as liberation-talk ignores racial oppression, White religion scholars are much more inclined to take it seriously.

I believe that there are White scholars of religion today who are aware that all is not well on the racial front. They know that White supremacy is a horrendous evil that must be destroyed before humanity can create a world free of White arrogance. We may debate strategies for fighting White supremacy but


there can be no debate about whether the antiracist struggle is a worthy and necessary calling of a religious institution and its theology.

Before I get into strategies, it is important to make a distinction between personal prejudices and structural racism. Dealing with people’s personal prejudices should not be the major concern. It is emotionally too exhausting and achieves very little in dismantling racism. I am not very concerned what people think about me as long as their personal prejudices are not institutionalized. The issue is always structural. While I may not get people to like me, it is important that the law prevents them from harming me on the basis of their prejudices.

Before we can get Whites to confront racism, we need to know why they avoid it. Why don’t White religion scholars write and speak about racism? This is a complex and difficult question because the reasons vary among individuals and groups in different parts of the country. There are probably as many reasons as there are people. I will advance my perspective on this issue and invite Whites and people of color to participate with me in an exploration of White silence on racism. We all have some insight into this problem. My reflections focus mainly on White theologians, ministers, and the church. Hopefully what we say will have meaning for people in other institutions as well.

1. Most importantly, Whites do not talk about racism because they do not have to talk about it. They have most of the power in the world—economic, political, social, cultural, intellectual and religious. There is little that Blacks and other people of color can do to change the power relations in the churches, seminaries and society. Powerful people do not talk, except on their own terms and almost never at the behest of others. All the powerless can do is to disrupt—make life uncomfortable for the ruling elites. That was why Martin King called the urban riots and Black Power the ‘language of the unheard’.

The quality of White life is hardly ever affected by what Blacks think or do. However, everything Whites think and do impact profoundly on the lives of Blacks on a daily basis. We can never escape White power and its cruelty. That is why Blacks are usually open to talking to Whites in the hope of relieving their pain but the latter seldom offer a like response, because they perceive little or nothing to gain.

Power corrupts, and as Lord Acton said, ‘absolute power corrupts absolutely’. When this idea is applied to the relations between Whites as a group and people of color, it is possible to get a glimpse of how deep White supremacy is embedded in the American way of life. ‘The sinfulness of man’, wrote Reinhold Niebuhr, ‘makes it inevitable that a dominant class, group, and sex [and race
should be added here] should seek to define a relationship, which guarantees its dominance, as permanently normative’.11

How can we destroy White supremacy and create a more just society when Whites as a group hold most of the power? The rise of Black power in White churches and other institutions was profoundly alienating, gut wrenching, and divisive in every segment of our communities. How do Whites avoid arbitrary group power or condescending patronage? How do Blacks avoid racial essentialism, talking and acting as if biology alone defines truth? Again I quote Niebuhr, but this time on the blindness of the oppressed: ‘Every victim of injustice makes the mistake of supposing that the sin from which he suffers is a peculiar vice of his oppressor’.

That the oppressed are sinners too is a very important point to make but often hard to hear, especially when it is made by the oppressor. The ever-present violence in poor communities is at least partly due to the sins of the oppressed. We must never assume that God is on the side of the oppressed because they are sinless but rather because of God’s solidarity with weakness and hurt—the inability of poor people to defend themselves against violent oppressors.

When Black theology first appeared, the few White theologians who addressed it often quoted Niebuhr to us about the sins of the oppressed. Because I questioned their motives, I quoted Niebuhr back at them.

Socio-economic conditions actually determine to a large degree that some men are tempted to pride and injustice, while others are encouraged to humility. The biblical analysis agrees to the known facts of history. Capitalists are not greater sinners than poor laborers by any natural depravity. But it is a fact that those who hold great economic and political power are more guilty of pride against God and of injustice against the weak than those who lack power and prestige…White men sin against Negroes in Africa and America more than Negroes sin against White men.13

2. White theologians avoid racial dialogue because talk about White supremacy arouses deep feelings of guilt. Guilt is a heavy burden to bear. Most Americans have at least a general idea of the terrible history of White supremacy and that alone can create a profound guilt when Blacks and others tell their stories of suffering and pain. Whites know that they have reaped the material harvest of White domination in the modern world. The material wealth of Europe and

North America was acquired and enhanced through the systematic exploitation of lands and peoples in Africa, Asia, and North and South America. A critical exploration of the theological meaning of slavery, colonialism, segregation, lynching and genocide can create a terrible guilt. As Reinhold Niebuhr said: ‘If...the White man were to expiate his sins committed against the darker races, few White men would have the right to live’.14

Whites do not like to think of themselves as evil people or that their place in the world is due to the colonization of Indians, the enslavement of Blacks and the exploitation of people of color here and around the world. Whites like to think of themselves as hard working, honorable, decent and fair-minded people. They resent being labeled thieves, murders, slaveholders and racists. There are Whites who say that they do not owe Blacks anything because they did not enslave anybody, did not segregate or lynch anybody, and are not White supremacists. They claim to be colorblind and thus treat everybody alike. At an individual level, there is some common sense truth about that observation. But if you benefit from the past and present injustices committed against Blacks, you are partly and indirectly accountable as an American citizen and as a member of the institutions that perpetuate racism. We cannot just embrace what is good about America and ignore the bad. We must accept the responsibility to do everything we can to correct America’s past and present wrongs.

3. Another reason why Whites avoid ‘race’ topics with African Americans is because they do not want to engage Black rage. Whites do not mind talking as long as Blacks don’t get too emotional, or too carried away with their stories of hurt. I must admit that it is hard to talk about the legacies of White supremacy and not speak with passion and anger about the long history of Black suffering. It is not a pleasant thing to talk about, especially for people of color who have experienced White cruelty. I would not recommend ‘race’ as a topic of conversation during a relaxed social evening of Blacks and Whites. Things could get a little heated and spoil a fun evening.

Whites who talk with me about White supremacy need to be informed and sensitive to the common humanity we all share. All I ask of Whites is to put themselves in Black people’s place in this society and the world, and then ask themselves what they would say or do if they were in Black people’s place. Would you be angry about 246 years of slavery and 100 years of lynching and segregation? What would you say about the incarceration of one million of

your people in prisons—one-half of the penal population while your people represents only 12 percent of the US census? Would you get angry if your racial group used 13 percent of the drugs but did 74 percent of the prison time for simple possession?\textsuperscript{15} Would you caution the oppressed in your community to speak about their pain with calm and patience? What would you say about your sons who are shot dead by the police because their color alone makes them prime criminal suspects? What would you say about ministers and theologians who preach and teach about justice and love but ignore the sociopolitical oppression of your people? Black anger upsets only Whites who choose to ignore catastrophic Black suffering.

But even Whites who acknowledge Black suffering often insist that we talk about our pain with appropriate civility and restrained emotions. That was why they preferred Martin King to Malcolm X. Malcolm spoke with too much rage for their social taste. He made Whites feel uncomfortable because he confronted them with their terrible crimes against Black humanity. Addressing the question about whether he spoke with too much emotion, Malcolm responded:

\begin{quote}
When a man is hanging on a tree and he cries out, should he cry out unemotionally? When a man is sitting on a hot stove and he tells you how it feels to be there, is he supposed to speak without emotions? This is what you tell Black people in this country when they begin to cry out against the injustices they’re suffering. As long as they describe these injustices in a way that makes you believe you have another 100 years to rectify the situation, then you don’t call that emotion. But when a man is on a hot stove, he says, ‘I’m coming up. I’m getting up. Violently or nonviolently doesn’t even enter the picture—I’m coming up you understand’.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Malcolm called his style telling the ‘naked truth’ about the White man. He knew Whites did not like to hear blunt truth. ‘I love to talk about them’, he proclaimed to a Harlem rally. ‘Talk about them like dogs. And they should be able to take it. Now they know how we feel. Why, when I was a little boy they called me nigger so much I thought that was my name’.\textsuperscript{17}

Malcolm believed that Whites needed to know how Blacks really felt and he did not think that civil rights leaders such as King were forthcoming in this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} See World, The Journal of the Unitarian Universalist Association 14.2 (March–April 2000), p. 61.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Malcolm X, ‘Unity Rally Speech’, Harlem, New York, 10 August 1963.
\end{itemize}
regard. They were too compromising. They sugar-coated the truth so Whites would not feel so bad about what they did to us. When Malcolm felt that Black leaders were letting Whites off the hook, he turned his anger on them and accused them of making it easy for Whites because they cared more about White emotional comfort than the suffering of the Black poor.

Because the spirit and language of Black theology was closer to Malcolm than Martin, White theologians were reluctant to engage with us. They got nervous and made their way to the exit every time a militant Black theologian came near them. I must admit I was pretty hard on them and that partly accounts for their silence. But I was not going to pamper privileged Whites. How could our relationship be comfortable and easy-going when Black people were dying in the streets?

Blacks invoking the ‘race’ card also make Whites uncomfortable. I must admit that Blacks sometimes play the ‘race’ card in inappropriate times and places. It is a quick conversation stopper. But Whites should remember that Blacks have the ‘race’ card to play because America dealt it to them. It is not a card that we wanted.

When Blacks play the ‘race’ card, it is often a desperate attempt to get Whites to listen to them and to take their suffering seriously. Racism is a highly charged subject for Blacks—similar to the strong reactions anti-Semitism generates among Jews. White Americans have some empathy for Jewish suffering. That is why the US supports Israel and built a huge Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. Whites do not have a similar empathy for Black suffering, even though our suffering is much closer to home. That is why there is no slavery museum in Washington and no reparations forthcoming for Blacks. Such thoughts are anathema to most White Americans. When America is forced to consider Black suffering, Whites advance all kinds of technical and legal reasons to dismiss doing anything about the crimes committed against Black people.

Consider the insightful comment of Pamela A. Hairston of Washington, DC, responding in a letter to the Christian Century on the issue of reparations for African Americans:

With the Homestead Act of 1862, Congress gave away more than 270 million acres of land to more than 2 million White Americans—160 acres per person or family, free. This was enacted on 1 January 1863, the same day President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Another such act, the Southern Homestead Act, granted ex-slaves or freed men 40 acres, and some ex-slaves did receive a few acres, which were later given back to the Confederates. The ex-slaves were evicted. America preferred to keep the ex-slaves as sharecroppers. After 200-plus years of inhumane slavery and hard free labor they gave my ancestors nothing but 100-plus more years of hate, Black codes, Jim Crow laws,
the Klan, lynchings, poverty, oppression, segregation, and fear. Wouldn’t Black America—no, America as a whole—be a better nation if they had given the 40 acres as promised? Right now, I’d take an acre and a chicken.18

With this terrible history, why is it so difficult to get White people to acknowledge what America owes to Black people?

We all benefit and suffer from what happened in the past and we owe it to ourselves to learn from the good and to correct the bad. We cannot survive as a nation with huge economic divisions between rich and poor, deep social alienation between Whites and people of color. We are one people. What happens to one happens to all. So, even if we are not directly responsible for past injustices, we are responsible for the present exploitation. It is our responsibility to create a new future for all. We need to ask what kind of society do we want? Do we want a society that puts more Blacks in prisons than in colleges? We are all responsible for this world, and as human beings, we will have to give an account of what we said and did not say, what we did and did not do about justice for all.

Whites and Blacks must learn to work together. Our future depends on it. But that can never happen creatively until Whites truly believe that their humanity is at stake in the struggle for racial justice. Speaking on behalf of Jews, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, then President of American Jewish Congress, expressed this point eloquently at the 1963 March on Washington:

It is not merely sympathy and compassion for the Black people of America that motivates us, it is above all and beyond all such sympathies and emotions a sense of complete identification and solidarity born of our own painful historic experiences.19

There are few Whites who really know how to express that sort of solidarity.

4. Whites do not say much about racial justice because they are not prepared for a radical redistribution of wealth and power. No group gives up power freely. Power must be taken against the will of those who have it. Fighting White supremacy means dismantling White privilege in the society, the churches and in theology. Progressive Whites do not mind talking as long as it does not cost much, as long as the structures of power remain intact.

Although White Christians and other religious communities acknowledge their sinful condition, and that their inordinate power as a group makes them more prone toward injustice in relation to other minority groups, they find it

nearly impossible to do anything to relinquish their advantage. Individuals are often self-critical but groups are inevitably selfish and proud. No theologian has been more insightful on this point than Reinhold Niebuhr: ‘The group is more arrogant, hypocritical, self-centered and more ruthless in the pursuit of its ends than the individual… If we did for ourselves what we do for our country, what rascals we would be.’

When and how should Whites break their silence? There are many Whites who want to affect change but do not know when and how to do it. There are a few White theologians who want to break the silence and do something about bringing more justice and love in America and the world.

I urge White theologians, ministers, and other morally concerned persons to break their silence immediately and continuously. It is immoral to see evil and not fight it. As Rabbi Prinz put it:

> Bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and most tragic problem is silence. Theologians and ministers, churches, synagogues and associations must not remain onlookers,—that is, silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality, and in the face of mass murder.

We must speak out loud and clear against the evil of racism, not for the sake of the Black poor but for ourselves, for our churches and theologies, for America and the world and most of all for humanity.

Talking about how to destroy White supremacy is a daily task and not just for consultations and conferences. If we only talk about White supremacy at special occasions set aside for that particular issue, the problem will never be solved. Blacks do not have the luxury of just dealing with racism in church meetings. If that were true, it would not be so bad. No day passes in which Blacks do not have to deal with White supremacy. It is found everywhere—in the churches, seminaries, publishing houses, in government, and all around the world. There is no escape. If Whites get tired of talking about ‘race’, just imagine how people of color feel.

The development of a hard-hitting antiracist theology by White religion scholars is long overdue. What would an antiracist theology look like? It would be first a theology that comes out of an antiracist political struggle. Talk is cheap if there is no action to support it. We must do something concrete about dismantling White supremacy. I know this task is not easy; rather, it is a very

difficult endeavor. Yet, do not be discouraged. Despair only supports the enemy. Working together with each other and with the Great Spirit of the universe, we can accomplish more than we ever dreamed. I want to commend people who are fighting structural racism. Keep working at it, ‘don’t get weary’, as the Black spiritual says, ‘there is a great camp meeting in the Promised Land’. That song is not primarily about the geography of heaven but rather a message of hope in dire circumstances. Blacks, with their backs against the wall of slavery, were saying that evil will not have the last word about their humanity. We have a future not made with White hands.

Begin the antiracist struggle where you are. If you are located in the church, get together with other committed persons and analyze ecclesiastical structures and disclose how they reinforce racism. If you are in a seminary, university or college, start there and connect your struggle with others. If you are in a publishing house, start talking with those who are interested in making it more inclusive of people of color.

While it is useful to bring in outside resource persons to assist you, there is no substitution for hard work. Work at a pace as if you were going to do it for the rest of your life. There is joy in justice work because it enhances your humanity. Justice work in any situation is the most satisfying activity one can do. It is something I love, and would not take anything for the opportunity to be involved in it. If you do not love racial justice work, then do not do it. We need and want people who are human beings first—which means taking the same risks for the stranger that they take for their own kind.

One of the most important things Whites can do in fighting White supremacy is to support Black empowerment in the society, church and theology. Black empowerment is Blacks thinking, speaking, and doing for themselves. The Black church and Black theology are Black empowerment in religion.

To create an antiracist theology, White theologians must engage the histories, cultures and theologies of people of color. It is not enough to condemn racism. The voices of people of color must be found in your theology. You do not have to agree with their perspectives but you do have to understand them and incorporate their meanings in your theological discourse. This is what Whites almost never do. There are almost no references to Black scholars or other people of color in any of the writings of major White male theologians. Even when White theologians talk about ‘race’, as Reinhold Niebuhr did occasionally throughout his career, there are no citations from Black intellectuals who informed his thinking. How can anybody write about ‘race’ in an informed way and not engage the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Howard Thurman?
In America, we have a lot of racist theologies. Let us hope that White theologians, ministers, and other concerned human beings will end their silence about the evil consequences of racism so they can join people of color in their fight against White supremacy and connect the struggles in the US with the fight for justice around the world. ‘What we all want’, proclaimed W.E.B. Du Bois, ‘is a decent world, where a [person] does not have to have a White skin to be recognized as a [human being].’

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