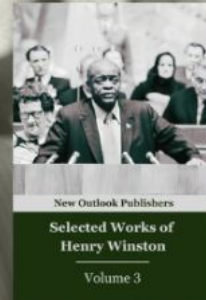
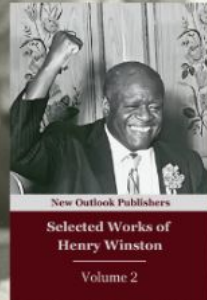




The Internationale

PEOPLES SCHOOL FOR MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES™



Strategy for a Black Agenda by Henry Winston

PSMLS 2.10.26



What we'll be learning today:

- The Crisis of the Black Panther Party & The Meaning of San Rafael
- Explanation of the National Question, Interview with Henry Winston
- From Anti-Slavery to Anti-Monopoly & Strategy for a Black Agenda

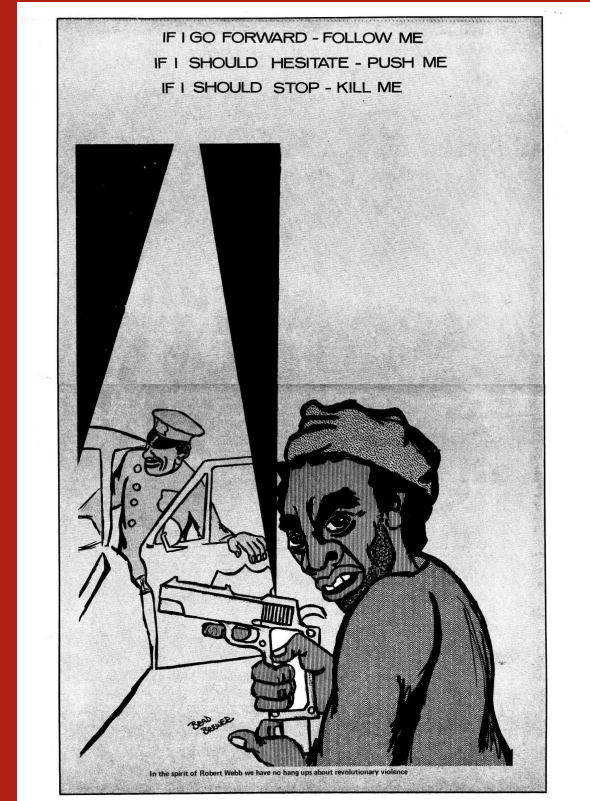


The Crisis of the Black Panther Party & The Meaning of San Rafael



Statement of the Political Committee of the Communist Party USA after San Rafael:

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 to the party turned into frustration and even tragedy? No answer to these questions can be given without taking into account the attacks and frame ups launched by the class enemy against the party, Yet even these brutal and murderous attacks, conducted both from within and outside the organization, cannot alone explain the crisis of the Black Panther Party.





Strategy—Defensive or Offensive?

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, but they also rejected the concept of a defensive strategy. Black people have been warding off attacks for 400 years. They want and need an offensive strategy 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 masses of the people from their own liberation struggle. It involved the idea of an elite few acting for the masses—in fact, supplanting them.

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



The Image-Makers and “Revolution”

It is apparent that neither Newton nor Cleaver have ever based their tactics on the working class and its revolutionary Science, Marxism-Leninism. At the present moment, while Cleaver’s opportunism continues along an ultra-Leftist course and Newton’s has taken a Right opportunist form (although he attempts to maintain a Leftist image), both base their policies on the lumpenproletariat.

In order to give some semblance of credibility to the “revolutionary” role they assign the lumpen elements, Newton and Cleaver would have us believe that the Black unemployed, those on welfare, and high school dropouts are all part of the lumpenproletariat. This is an insult to Black men, women and youth. People are not lumpen simply because they are denied jobs, and when Newton and Cleaver make such claims they sound like Black Moynihans.



The Image-Makers and “Revolution”

Today, in the citadel of imperialism in the era of its decline, there is a massive increase in the army of the unemployed. Alongside this, the number of lumpen elements also increases.

However, these groups do not merge: each has its distinct characteristics. As Marx wrote in *The Class Struggles in France*, the lumpenproletariat “forms a mass sharply differentiated from the industrial proletariat.”

Specifically the lumpen elements are those so demoralized by the system that they are not only jobless, but that to them a job is unthinkable. It is their declassed parasitical status and outlook that sharply distinguish them from the great mass of the unemployed, who are searching for and demanding jobs and the opportunity for a decent life. That is why, in addition to making the distinction that Marx emphasized, it is now even more necessary than in Marx’s time to clearly distinguish between the lumpenproletariat and the great mass of unemployed, which includes so many youth (particularly Black and Brown) who have never been regularly employed.



Incredible Thrust Backward

Between mid-April and the end of May, 1971, Huey P. Newton became increasingly frank in describing his new course. What he only hinted at in the April 17 Black Panther, he made astoundingly clear in the May 29 issue, when he described what he calls a “survival program,” i.e., survival through “Black capitalism.”

Announcing that the Panthers will now operate factories in ghettos, he went on to say: “We will have no overhead because our collective—we’ll exploit our collective by making them work free. We’ll do this not just to justify ourselves, like philanthropists, to save someone from going without shoes, even though this is part of the cause of our problems. People make the revolution; we will give the process a forward thrust. If we suffer from genocide, We won’t be around to change things. So in this way our survival program is very practical.”

Far from being either “practical” or a “forward thrust,” this is an incredibly reactionary thrust backward.



Statement of the Political Committee of the Communist Party USA after San Rafael:

"The violent scene played out to its deadly end in the shadow of the San Rafael courthouse is an American tragedy which arouses profound concern and deep sorrow in all people of conscience throughout the nation.

"Behind the desperate deed of the imprisoned men and their youthful would-be liberator are the goading realities of a bestial prison system, brutal police handling, and a cynical and ruthless courtroom pattern devoid of justice or any touch of humanity or concern for the dignity, lives and liberty of arrested men and women; especially so when they are Black people...

"The Communist party has always made clear its opposition to acts of desperation or resort to gunplay on the part of individuals, no matter how awful the provocation or lofty the ideal. Communists reject the concept of revolutionary suicide or revolutionary superman-ism.

"Communists always stand for the extension and enrichment of life, and commit their lives to the cause of helping the masses to struggle in a winning way for a social system devoid of such tragedies and worthy of mankind.

"We are confident that Communists and all honest leaders of the people will be vigilant against reaction's efforts to exploit the tragedy of San Rafael and to undertake diversionary assaults upon the Communist Party. ..."

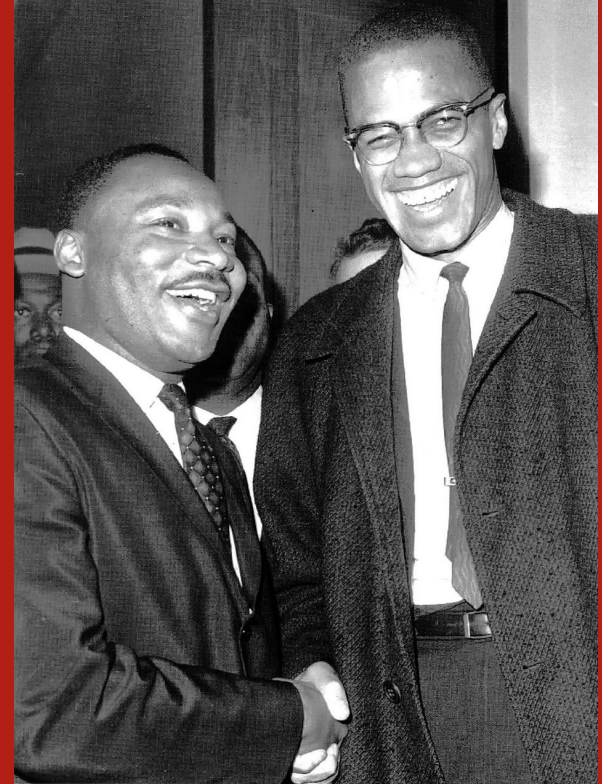


The Meaning of San Rafael

There is a revealing continuity in motive and timing behind the frame-up of Angela Davis and the assassinations of Malcom X and Martin Luther King.

Malcolm X was murdered by the racist establishment, using a police agent to penetrate his personal bodyguard, at the very moment he was turning away from separatism, against capitalism, and toward united mass struggle.

Dr. King was gunned down when he began to identify imperialism as the source of racism, poverty and war, and was translating this deeper understanding into an opposition of new dimensions to poverty and racist oppression at home, and the related imperialist aggression in Vietnam. He was linking these movements with the Black workers' struggle to organize, and was pressing for the unity of workers of all colors as the essential force for meaningful change and liberation.





The Meaning of San Rafael

When Angela Davis affirmed her membership in the Communist Party, her UCLA teaching post was taken away from her. When the brilliant young Black professor continued to intensify her social and activity outside the classroom, the plot to murder her in the gas chamber was initiated. The racist ruling class could not tolerate the meaning, the inspiration, to the nation's exploited and oppressed, of Angela's membership in the Party based on the liberating principles of Marxism-Leninism. Angela Davis was right when she said, "They have taken my job. Now they want to take my life." By dedicating herself not only to explaining the world but to changing it, Angela Davis won the love of millions—and the hatred of the ruling class.





The Meaning of San Rafael

It is within this context that many of those involved in the liberation struggle have expressed their concern with Eldridge Cleaver's attack on Angela Davis and the Communist Party.

Of equal concern is the fact that some leading figures in the Black Panther Party have broken organizationally with Cleaver but have not yet made the break with his philosophy, which does such harm to the Black Panther Party and to the fight for Black liberation and against poverty and war.

Some leading Black Panthers are now jeopardizing the fight against racism and the defense of political prisoners by combining their public attacks on Cleaver with invention of "new" arguments and rationalizations for anti-Communism.



Eldridge Cleaver

Ironically, those in the movement who promote anti-Communism are picking up the traditional weapon of their racist imperialist oppressors. And when anti-Communism is encouraged by individuals who consider themselves militant fighters against imperialism, it becomes an even more disruptive weapon than when directly wielded by the ruling class and its mass media. No one can fight racism with anti-Communism. To fight racism, one must oppose and expose anti-Communism. There is no other way to liberation—in this country or any part of the world.

That the influence of Cleaver's anti-Communist anti-Soviet ideology extends to many leading figures in the Black Panther Party, as well as others on the Left, is particularly evident in much of the current discussion about the meaning of the San Rafael incident.

Too much of this discussion reflects Cleaver's views—which unfortunately are "part of the problem" rather than "part of the solution." Cleaver—echoed by some others—insists that the movement must "focus" on San Rafael as an exemplary "act of revolutionary violence." "Only through actions," he asserts, "can we take our freedom and liberation."



The Meaning of San Rafael

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Under cover of such “super-revolutionary” rhetoric, Cleaver in fact calls for the abandonment of struggle in the courts and the development of mass defense movements. He becomes an advocate of capitulation, of hopeless surrender to the government and the courts that are trampling upon the rights and lives of the political prisoners and of all the people.

Elitist, adventurer, anarchist tactics—individual terrorist actions of “revolutionary” suicide—cannot free political prisoners or advance the cause of liberation. Such tactics, or any form of accommodation to them—no matter who advances them—regrettably mesh with government provocations aimed at disorganizing the mass movement, which is the only basis for freeing political prisoners and achieving liberation.





The Meaning of San Rafael



There are also some of the Left who “differ” with the view that San Rafael’s and other forms of “picking up the gun” are the only valid methods of struggle. Instead, these individuals advocate what they term “tactical diversity” —in reality a perversion of the concept of flexibility into an open-ended invitation to sheer adventurism.

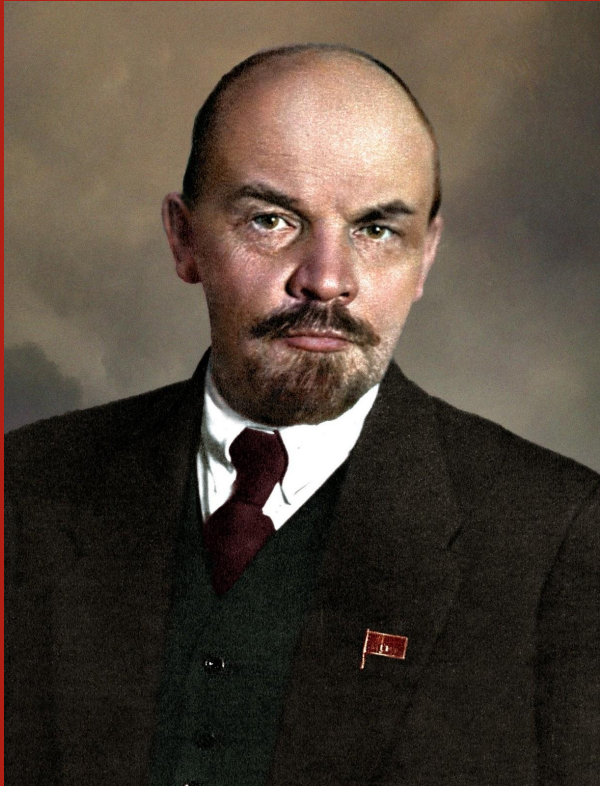
Those who play with adventurist concepts have learned nothing from the experience of the Black Panther Party. The Black Panthers’ rhetoric, focusing on “power coming out of the barrel of a gun,” helps only the ruling class. Calling for confrontations with the police supplants mass struggle against the enemy, who controls the economy, the government *and* the police.

The Black Panther Party became a focal point for FBI Provocateurs and an easy target for nationwide frame-ups and genocidal attacks not because of the courage and militancy of its young members (although they possess these qualities in abundance), but because the party’s anti-Marxist, adventurist policies isolated it from the people and made it vulnerable to attack. Even more important, these policies helped make the total struggle against poverty, racism and war more vulnerable to enemy attack.

Further, the assaults on the Panthers resulted in the tragic loss of some of the movement’s best young fighters. The people cannot afford the sacrifice of Black youth like Fred Hampton, Bobby Hutton, and Jonathan Jackson. This is another vital reason why the struggle for liberation must be guided not by emotion but by the science of Marxism-Leninism.



The Meaning of San Rafael



While these words may seem to have a bold new ring, in reality they represent a revival of pre-Marxist variants of anarchism rejected by Marx, Engels and Lenin. For example, in 1902, 19-year-old Stephan Balmashov, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party—which considered Lenin and his Party too conservative—assassinated Dmitri Sipyagin, the Tsar’s Minister of Interior. The Socialist Revolutionaries immediately issued a leaflet supporting Balmashov’s act—which sounds as if it could have been written by one of those who advocate more San Rafaels. Lenin took a major part of two issues (Nos. 23, 24) of *Iskra*, a revolutionary journal, to answer the views expressed in this leaflet.

“The first thing that strikes the eye,” he wrote, “is the words, ‘we advocate terrorism, not in place of work among the masses, but precisely for and simultaneously with that work.’” If this view were accepted, he continued, “all that history has taught will fall to the ground.” He said further:



The Meaning of San Rafael

“the Socialist-Revolutionaries are talking themselves blue in the face in asseverating that they recognize terrorism only in conjunction with work among the masses, and that therefore the arguments used by the Russian Social-Democrats to refute the efficacy of this method of struggle (and which have indeed been refuted for a long time to come) do not apply to them... We are not repeating the terrorists’ mistakes and are not diverting attention from work among the masses, the Socialist-Revolutionaries assure us, and at the same time enthusiastically recommend to the Party acts such as Balmashov’s assassination of Sipyagin, although everyone knows and sees perfectly well that this act was in no way connected with the masses and, moreover, could not have been by reason of the very way in which it was carried out—that the persons who committed this terrorist act neither counted on nor hoped for any definite action or support on the part of the masses. In their naiveté, the Socialist-Revolutionaries do not realize that their predilection for terrorism is causally most intimately linked with the fact that, from the very outset, they have always kept, and still keep, aloof from the working-class movement, without even attempting to become a party of the revolutionary class which is waging its class struggle.”³



Stepan Balmashov

Dmitry Sipyagin

Дмитрий Сипягин





The Meaning of San Rafael

There is an irreconcilable contradiction between isolated terrorist acts and mass struggle.

Today, in the context of our country, the San Rafael events must be seen as an act resulting from frustration. Jonathan Jackson “neither counted on nor hoped” to relate his act to the mass movement. In fact, Jonathan’s vastly courageous act must be considered in this light. Jonathan, along with Ruchell Magee, James McClain and William Christmas, took this path in the desperate and mistaken hope of finding a shortcut to expose conditions which prevail in the prison system. That system also unjustly and illegally holds Jonathan’s brother. At 17, Jonathan did not yet realize that in the battle for class and national liberation there are no shortcuts, no substitutes for militant class struggle.

That is why Jonathan Jackson’s action was one of futile self-sacrifice. The act that resulted in his tragic loss to the movement, and in the frameup of Angela Davis and her removal from the scene as a dedicated leader of the mass struggle, simultaneously jeopardized Jonathan’s aim—to dramatize the cause of freedom for his brother George and for all political prisoners.

The brutality of the racist ruling class is boundless. It is not enough for this class—with its institutions of exploitation, oppression and repression—to drive the Jonathan Jacksons into self-defeating acts of desperation. Its strategy also calls for a form of double jeopardy—exploiting the desperate acts themselves in order to defeat the mass struggle.

Those who fail to see through this strategy of the ruling class, and instead indulge in “super-revolutionary” rhetoric, obstruct rather than build the movement to free Angela Davis and all political prisoners.



The Meaning of San Rafael

This movement is an integral part of the struggle for an *alternative* for millions of Jonathan Jacksons caught between the dead-end pressures of rat and drug-infested ghettos and unemployment, or forced service in a racist war. These millions want an alternative to genocide in *all* its forms, and toward this end, white allies have a special responsibility.

Although the rhetoric of some would lead one to think otherwise, their role is *not* to provide a cheering section for genocide in the form of “revolutionary” suicide. Their role is to join in building the united mass movement to end racism. They cannot meet this responsibility without rejecting all forms of “super-revolutionism,” which results in accommodation to, rather than struggle against, racism.





Discussion & New Members Introductions



New Member Introductions

- What is your name, pronouns and state (or country/territory)?
- Where do you work? Is it unionized?
- How did you find out about the People's School?
- What do you think about tonight's class?



The National Question, Interview with Henry Winston



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

Two-Sided Pressure on King

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 pseudo-revolutionism.



The Watts riots, sometimes referred to as the Watts Rebellion or Watts Uprising, took place in the Watts neighborhood and its surrounding areas of Los Angeles from August 11 to 16, 1965.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

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 increased, and was particularly aimed at preventing King from linking the Black liberation movement with the anti-war struggle.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

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 could carry the struggle against poverty and racist oppression to a new level.*



During their visit to the United Nations, in 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King and his wife Coretta Scott King are greeted by Mr. Ralph J. Bunche, UN Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs.
Photo: © UN Photo/Yutaka Nagata



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

If King was not without error in coping with pressure from the Right, and later with that of the pseudo-radicals, his overall record was one of firm adherence to militant non-violent 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 super-revolutionary pressures to substitute the rhetoric of violence for the power of mass struggle.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*



King has been dead more than five years, but the attacks on his strategy and objectives continue from the Right and the 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 pre-conditions for the much higher level of struggle needed in the period ahead.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

Pressing for a New Beginning

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 struggle, the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott. This landmark battle was sparked by



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

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 leadership of the liberation struggle, King came to understand that it was workers, more than any other stratum, who possess these qualities.





Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

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, including Black and white youth in the struggle for equal rights, 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.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

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 anti-monopoly struggle—he had come steadily closer to this outlook. *Moreover, it is especially meaningful that King moved in this direction at the time when Marcuse and others, with the assistance of the mass media, were making their greatest headway in promoting the idea among radical youth that the Marxist concept of the working class was outdated.*



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

Democracy, Liberation and Socialism

Another ironic contradiction in the role of many of the new radicals emerged at the end of the Civil Rights Decade: As they lost sight of the historic significance of that period, and more and more heaped abuse on it and its preeminent leader, they became the inadvertent helpmates of the ruling class, whose conscious aim it was and is to distort the meaning of that period to the masses.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

It should not be forgotten that for many long decades the ruling class hid the true history of Reconstruction from the people of this country. Now, at a time when the Black liberation movement has forced at least the beginnings of attention to the Reconstruction era, it would indeed be strange if the rhetoric of the pseudo-revolutionaries helped the monopolists conceal the true meaning, the heroism and achievements of the Civil Rights Decade. This must not be allowed to happen.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

It is important to understand the meaning of this period, and the vital leadership role in it of Martin Luther King, who came to an awareness of the revolutionary relationship between the fight for rights, for security, for peace and the liberation struggle. Despite their “revolutionary” rhetoric, this is something the pseudo-radicals have failed to comprehend. In rejecting this central meaning of the civil rights struggle, these radicals caricatured the Marxist principles they so often proclaimed.



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

As Lenin persistently emphasized, the fight for democracy is at the heart of the class struggle. He continually warned against the ideas of those who ignored the connection between the struggle for democracy, national liberation and socialism. In "A Caricature of Marxism," he wrote:

All democracy consists in the proclamation and realization of rights which under capitalism are realizable only to a very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is *impossible*. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 74.)



Chapter 15: Strategy for a Black Agenda - *Strategy for a Black Agenda*

Lenin also emphasized that Marxists must:

. . . know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. . . . The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights. (Ibid., p. 73.)



Marxism & the National Question

In *Marxism & the National Question*, Stalin defines what constitutes a nation:

“A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.

It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation.

It is possible to conceive of people possessing a common "national character" who, nevertheless, cannot be said to constitute a single nation if they are economically disunited, inhabit different territories, speak different languages, and so forth.”



The Black Belt Thesis

In the late 1920s, the Communist International passed and the CPUSA adopted a resolution stating that “the Negro question in the United States must be viewed from the standpoint of its peculiarity, namely, as the question of an oppressed nation” with distinctions “between the position of the Negro in the South and in the North.” The distinctions were a particular point of debate, as the Great Migration and changing class character of the African American masses necessitated revision of the original position.

In 1946, Claudia Jones wrote an essay, *On The Right to Self-Determination for the Negro People in the Black Belt*, Political Affairs, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1946. She wrote that for Black Americans in the North, “the struggle for equal rights... is chiefly that of heightening the fight to secure equal participation in every sphere of American life” which is “enhanced by the presence of a large and growing Negro proletariat”. In the South, particularly the Black Belt, she says that Black people are “an historically developed community of people, with a common language, a common territory, and a common economic life, all of which are manifest in a common culture” and therefore are an oppressed nation.

Her writing clearly states that although Black Americans residing in the Black Belt constitute a nation, this does not negate their struggle for equal rights and integration.



The Black Belt Thesis

During the Civil Rights Movement, the masses of African Americans struggled to secure integration “in every sphere of American life” on the basis of economic, democratic, political and social equality.

These struggles occurred at the peak of the second Great Migration. Black Americans in the South moved to urban centers in Northeastern, Western and Midwestern regions of the country, dropping the population of Black southerners from almost 80% to just over 50%.

During the 1950s, at the height of the McCarthyism, at both the 16th and 17th National Conventions, Party members debated the question of separatism. James Jackson, Party leader and founder of the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) concluded that the issue of Black liberation is still a national question, however Black Americans “are not constituted as a nation” and are an oppressed racial minority “who are a historically determined component of the American nation in the United States.”



The Black Belt Thesis

Ultimately, the Party adopted James Jackson's analysis of the African American national question, explaining in *Theoretical Aspects of the Negro Question in the United States* that,

...the requisite preparation of the forces for effecting fundamental social change in the system necessitates the completion of the bourgeois-democratic norms of political, economic, and social development for the South in general and the Negro people in particular. Furthermore, a condition for accomplishing the prerequisite unity of the American working class with its class allies for advanced social struggle is to level main rails of the color bar. The struggle of the Negro people for the democratic goals of political, economic and social equality feeds into the general stream of the historic working class cause of our time – a powerful current which raises the torrential power of the whole cause of social advance.

This analysis was formed through participation in the Civil Rights Movement, lived experiences of Black workers along with Black members and candid observations of the historical trajectory of African American workers in struggle for equality that informed the analysis as well as the decision to adopt it as the Party's official outlook.



Henry Winston on the Self-Determination, Black Belt Thesis and the National Question.





Discussion



From Anti-Slavery to Anti-Monopoly & A Strategy for a Black Agenda

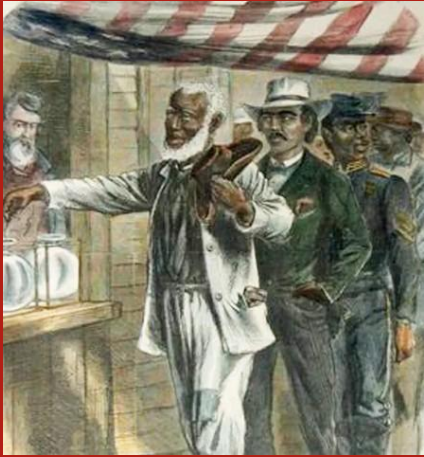


Monopoly's New Assault

Monopoly capital, within today's context, aims to repeat the kind of assault on the people's rights that led to the betrayal of Reconstruction. Reaction of that period, through racism and violence, prepared the way for the Supreme Court to void the Civil Rights Act of 1875, whose passage had been won by the supporters of Reconstruction to solidify the gains they had made. Reaction's aim then was to push the country into a long era of segregation and semi-slavery. Today state monopoly capitalism seeks to wipe out every trace of the struggles of the recent Civil Rights Decade. The betrayal of Reconstruction, it should be remembered, was the signal for a three-sided attack against the masses. The Old Slave Codes were replaced by the new Black Codes, and the former chattel slaves were forced into semi-slavery, segregation and racist oppression. At the same time, the escalation of the military plunder and massacre of the Indians was entering a climactic stage. And simultaneously, the courts that upheld the betrayal of Emancipation were declaring that workers, Black and white, did not have the right to organize. In other words, the courts had not only revived Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's pre-Civil War doctrine that the Black man "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." They had also extended this into another phase of repression—that labor, whatever its color, had no rights that capital was bound to respect.



60 Years of Struggle Against the Violence of the Bosses' Government



During Reconstruction, white terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan terrorized freed Black people.

In 1875, when the robber barons were joining with the former slave owners to prepare for the 1877 betrayal of Reconstruction, Judge Holden Owen, presiding over the trial of striking Pennsylvania miners, declared: “Any agreement, combination or confederation to increase the price of any vendible commodity, merchandise or anything else is a conspiracy under the laws of the U.S.” Of course, this doctrine—like Nixon’s wage-”price” freeze—was applied only to labor, never to the capitalists’ profits.

Because of the perpetuation of racism and the resulting division between the triply-oppressed Black workers and the exploited white workers, it took more than 60 years of struggle against the bosses’ government-supported violence to win the right to organize. Today, the rights of labor are once again under grave attack, and labor’s fate, as in the past, is inseparably bound up with that of the Black liberation movement.



MLK Jr.'s Commitment to the Working Class

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 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 struggle, 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 leadership of the liberation struggle, King came to understand that it was workers, more than any other stratum, who possess these qualities.



The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks at an interfaith rally at the Cow Palace in San Francisco on May 30, 1964.



Punished for Moving in the Right Direction



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 including Black and white youth in the for equal rights, 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 anti-monopoly struggle—he had come steadily closer to this outlook. Moreover, it is especially meaningful that King moved in this direction at the time When Marcuse and others, with the assistance of the mass media, were making their greatest headway in promoting the idea among radical youth that the Marxist concept of the working class was outdated.



Genesis Of the Colony Theory

Among the radicals, Black and white, who have popularized the colony theory are Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton, Regis Debray, James Foreman, Tom Hayden, Harold Cruse, James Boggs, Stokely Carmichael and Robert L. Allen. It is ironic that many of these radicals, who claim that Marxism is European in origin and must be revised in order to apply to the Black people in the U.S., advance theories based on revisions of Marxism by such Europeans as Herbert Marcuse, Leon Trotsky and Regis Debray, as well as the Trotsky-like revisions to be found in the “thought” of Mao Tse-tung. It was especially under the influence of Marcuse and Maoism that the New Left radicals began to be attracted to one or another pseudo-revolutionary theory, including the concept of an “internal colony” of Black people in the U.S. While Marcuse’s ideas are not identical with “the thought of Mao,” the views of both stimulated anti-Marxist misconceptions of the world revolutionary process, the historic role of the working class and its relationship to the liberation struggles of oppressed people, and the imperative need for strategies based on the specific features and historic development of each country, each working class and each national liberation movement.



Herbert Marcuse with his most famous student, Angela Davis



Marcuse, Maoism, and the New Left

During every upsurge in the people's struggles, especially those of the mainly working-class Black people, there is a more extensive activation of counter-measures designed to sustain disunity and block alliance between Black and white workers, together with the Black people as a whole, against corporate monopoly.

In writing about this, Marcuse is revealed as very much a part of the problem, rather than the solution: Contemporary society seems capable of containing social change . . . the capitalist development has altered the structure and function of these two classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat) in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of social transformation. An overriding interest in the preservation of the status quo unites the former antagonists in the most advanced areas of contemporary society.



Poster of Huey P. Newton sitting in a rattan throne chair while wearing a beret and holding a rifle and spear.



The Academic Elitist

Marcuse also makes it clear that his elitist contempt is not limited to the working class: “Technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests—to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible . . .”



And he spells out even more precisely which “social groups” are included in his elitist contempt in the following quotation: If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television program and visit the same resort places, if the typist is attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation (!!!—H.W) indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population.



Mass Satisfaction Instead of Mass Hatred of Exploitation, Poverty and Racist Oppression



There is, of course, no more truth to Marcuse's assertion that Ford assembly line workers go to "the same resort places" as the Ford family (except as moonlighting waiters trying to make ends meet!) than to his racist stereotype of the Cadillac-owning Black workers. It is with such fantasies that Marcuse seeks to convince us that, even though classes have not disappeared, the struggle for class and national liberation has been eliminated because of "the extent to which the needs and satisfactions . . . of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population."

This Alice-in-Wonderland vision of mass satisfaction—instead of mass hatred of exploitation, poverty and racist oppression—forms the core of Marcuse's "revolutionary" ideology. And his inclusion of Black people among those incapable of "counteraction" is a direct ideological descendant of the racist stereotype of the "happy," "docile" slave. It is logical that Marcuse's contempt of the working class and of Black people be accompanied by hatred of the Soviet Union! The Soviet Union embodies the power of the working class and of formerly oppressed peoples. It is precisely such forces that will end exploitation and racism in the U.S. and internationally.



Short-Cut Theories are a Roadblock

It is not far-fetched to assert that those influenced by Marcusean ideology—which dismisses the masses, Black and white, as incapable of struggle against racism and exploitation—would be receptive to any theory seeming to offer a “short cut” to mass struggle. In the recent period these “short cuts” took the form of advocating “instant revolution,” “power out of the barrel of a gun,” “urban guerrilla warfare,” etc. However, as this rhetoric became increasingly exposed as a roadblock to mass struggle, the colony theory emerged as a new diversion. The colony theory, with its radical ring of protest against oppression, has great attraction for radicals on the Left and for advocates of “Black capitalism” on the Right. Although concealed by a rhetorical facade of “colonization,” “under-development,” etc., both these groups can be found on a parallel—or even a common—platform of accommodation to monopoly. However, those radicals who advance the “Black colony in the U.S.” theory fail to see the historic distinction between the effect of the slave trade on Africa—which altered Africa’s relationships internally and externally and resulted in the colonial subjugation of many African peoples—and the role of slavery within the United States.



Black Panther Party outside of the Capitol building in Olympia protesting a gun-control bill - February 28, 1969



Winston On Marx and Capital

The African people transported to slavery within the U.S. became the basis of and impetus for the most rapid rate of original capitalist accumulation in history. Every people, on every continent, has passed through one or another form of slavery in the course of world history. But slavery in the United States was unique: it was the most massive, the most brutal type, because it was directly tied to the capitalist market, to the rise of capitalism. Karl Marx wrote:

. . . as soon as people, whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labour . . . are drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalistic mode of production, the sale of their products for export becoming their principal interest, the civilized horrors of overwork are grafted on the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom, etc. . . . But in proportion, as the export of cotton became of vital interest to these states, the over-working of the Negro and sometimes using up of his life in 7 years of became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. It was no longer a question of obtaining from him a certain quantity of useful products. It was now a question of production of surplus-labor itself. (Capital, Vol. 1, p. 236, International Publishers, 1967.)



Winston On Marx and Capital Cont.

Many times Marx compared the inhuman exploitation of workers in the textile mills of England and New England in the pre-organization days of the working class with that of the slaves in the South. At the same time, Marx did not confuse analogies in intensity of exploitation with scientific explanations, as do the contemporary advocates of the colony theory. Marx never lost sight of the distinction between the nature and role of exploitation on a directly capitalist basis.

Marx, for instance, quoted this statement from the County Magistrate of Nottingham, which appeared in the London Daily Telegram of January 17, 1860:

. . . There was an amount of privation and suffering among that portion of the population connected with the lace trade, unknown in other parts of the kingdom, indeed, in the civilized world. . . . Children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like utterly horrible to contemplate. . . . We declaim against the Virginian and Carolinian cotton-planters. Is their black market, their lash, and their barter of human flesh more detestable than this slow sacrifice of humanity which takes place in order that veils and collars may be fabricated for the benefit of capitalists? (Ibid. , pp. 243-244.)



Moynihhan-Kissinger Doctrine and the “Third World”



Who was Daniel Moynihan and why is he important?

- Moynihan served as Assistant to the Labor Secretary under JFK and Lyndon B. Johnson and as Assistant to President for Domestic Affairs
- He was later made the US Ambassador to the UN
- In 1965, he published a report that sought to take blame for poverty in the black communities away from corporate America and placed the blame on family structures within the black community



Daniel Moynihan



Moynihan Report Briefly

During the '60s, the Moynihan Report came up with an "analysis" of the condition of Black people in the U.S. that placed the blame for their intensifying problems not on the oppressor but the victims. The reasons for inequality in jobs, housing, education, etc., were—according to this report—not to be found in the class and racist structure of U.S. state monopoly capitalism but within the Black community.



Moynihan Report Briefly

the Administration has selected Moynihan to project an international counterpart of the racist concepts in his report: i.e., to blame the widening economic gap between many of the under-developed and less-developed nations and the imperialist nations not on U.S. and world imperialism but on its victims.

In 1964, on the eve of U.S. imperialism's escalation of its "pacification" program in Vietnam, Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Moynihan, then Assistant Secretary of Labor, as head of a committee to develop a program for "pacification" of the Black masses, who refused to interpret the legal gains of the civil rights struggles as an end, but rather as a new starting point in their long fight for the *substance* of equality.





Moynihan Report Briefly

By picturing the Black condition of inequality as arising within the Black “family structure,” this report identified the *results* of oppression as the *cause* of oppression. Thus, it runs head on into the fact that Black family life—despite the “distortions” caused by 200 years on the auction blocks of Northern slave traders and Southern slave owners, followed by more than 100 years of racist economic, social and political pressures of genocidal proportions—has shown a matchless capacity for survival through struggle!

Among its numerous contributions to racism, the Moynihan Report labeled the Black community a “tangle of pathologies.” (This is a phrase Moynihan took over from the writings of Dr. Kenneth Clark. Clark used it in an anti-racist sense, but because the phrase has no scientific *class* content Moynihan was able to twist Clark’s intent into its opposite.)

Now, courtesy of Moynihan, we have yet another racist stereotype at large in the land, aimed at covering up the fact that the “tangle” of institutionalized racism generated by monopoly is the source of inequality.



Daniel Bell's "Revolution of Rising Entitlements"

Basing himself on the premise that the people's demands cannot be met, Bell assists the ruling class in its aim of containing "the resolution of rising entitlements." Ignoring the massive need for jobs, the relationship between inflation and corporate profits and the gigantic military expenditures, he claims that "every imaginable anti-inflationary policy impinges on the welfare of some major interest group." In reality, of course, an inflammatory policy" would "impinge" on the "welfare" of only one "major interest group"—the tiny minority of monopolists.



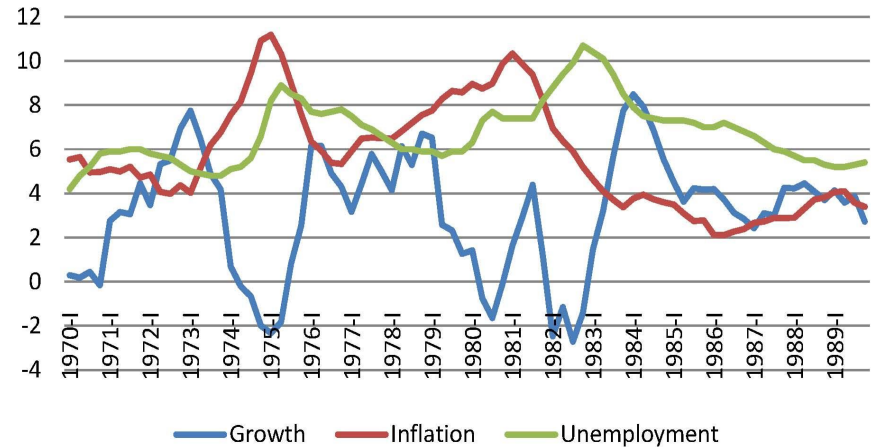
Daniel Bell's "Revolution of Rising Entitlements"

Social programs also "impinge" on the "welfare" of the monopolists—and Bell assists the ruling class in developing a rationale for cutting back on them. Stating that social programs can be financed only through higher taxes or economic growth, he asserts,

"... paradoxically, economic growth may be the source of a distinctive 'contradiction' of capitalism—a contradiction that may prove to be its undoing. For growth has become inextricably linked with inflation, and it seems unlikely that any democratic society can abolish inflation without disastrous political consequences."

Obviously, Daniel Bell equates "democracy" with continuing monopoly domination of the nation's social, economic and political life. Bell speaks ominously of the "dilemma associated with economic growth and inflation." Should an attempt be made to break out of the allegedly insoluble "contradiction" between economic growth and more inflation, or the further slowing of economic growth and the escalation of unemployment, Bell foresees only "danger."

Growth, Inflation, and Unemployment, 1970-89



We see that inflation is generally directly proportional with unemployment and inversely proportional to economic growth



The Anti-Monopoly Coalition is Needed to Halt the Crisis in Capitalism

A massive independent people's alternative to the two parties of the ruling class would most certainly result in "undoing" monopoly's stranglehold. Bell reveals monopoly's fear of such a formation when he warns that "one third of the electorate now designates itself as 'independent.'"

Far from bringing the "disastrous political consequences" Bell predicts, an anti-monopoly alternative is the only way to block still greater onslaughts against the people's rights and living standards. Bell inadvertently confirms this when he slates:



The Anti-Monopoly Coalition is Needed to Halt the Crisis in Capitalism

“... it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the revolution of rising entitlement may become unmanageable. If this process is not reversed, it will work to undermine the legitimacy of our society.”

When Bell asserts that this “process” must be “reversed,” he is pointing in the direction of pro-fascist measures. Only through mass struggle for an independent alternative can the people prevent this drastic “reversal” of their rights. Without such a struggle to “undermine” the “legitimacy” of monopoly’s control of government, it is impossible to combat unemployment, inflation, poverty and racism.

Contrary to Bell, “economic growth” is crucial to meet the vast needs of the people. *Only the monopolies profit from production that diverts from instead of helps to meet the people’s expanding needs.*

Ben Davis, Paul Robeson and Henry Winston





The Anti-Monopoly Coalition is Needed to Halt the Crisis in Capitalism

When the Bells and Moynihans distort this issue—which is at the heart of the crisis facing the people—their aim is “undoing” the people’s struggle against the intensifying disaster synonymous with monopoly rule.

The source of escalating inflation, taxes, unemployment, poverty and racist oppression is the class and profit aims of US imperialism, based on exploitation and national oppression, domestically and internationally. Inherent in capitalism, these factors are aggravated by monopoly control and militarization of the economy.



Discussion



Discussion & Wrap Up



Announcements

- PCUSA Cell Chairs need to call members of their cells to remind them about attendance.
- The next issue of New Masses (2026) has begun production. If you have art you want us to feature, email it to info@partyofcommunistsusa.net.



Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers for the staff of the People's School! Here's a few roles we need filled:

- People to help manage posting on our social media and podcast platforms
- Video Editors, Audio Editors, Graphic Designers, Artists, Narrators
- Web Controls, Moderators

Email info@peopleschool.us if you're interested and try to attend our next staff meeting if possible.



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