

# FROM ANTI-SLAVERY TO THE ANTI-MONOPOLY STRATEGY

By Henry Winston

*2012 is the 101st year since the birth of the former National Chair of the Communist Party, Henry Winston. The article below is taken from Winston's 1973 book, **Strategy for a Black Agenda**. It is a critique of the strategy and tactics necessary to advance the revolutionary process in the face of right-wing extremism and white supremacy from the time of slavery to the upsurge of the 1960s and early 1970s.*

*Although the world has changed since the book was first published, it continues to offer many lessons for fighting right-wing extremism today and moving forward along the road to socialism.*

*Henry Winston, born in Mississippi, became active in the unemployed struggles of the 1930s and soon became a leader in the Young Communist League. He worked with William L Patterson and others to help free the Scottsboro defendants, displaying extraordinary political and organizational skills.*

*In the 1950s he served eight years in prison under the Smith Act, during which time he lost his sight because of medical neglect. A campaign to win his release was waged in the U.S. and abroad. Writer Richard Wright headed a French/American committee to free him and his sentence was finally commuted by President John F Kennedy.*

*On learning of Winston's death in 1986, African National Congress leader Alfred Nzo remarked, "We had come to regard Winston as one of our own."*

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Now, over a hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863, racism and oppression are more than ever essential to the ruling class, as U.S. state monopoly capitalism enters a new and more acute phase of the crisis and decline of capitalism. U.S. imperialism, facing a world in which the forces of socialism and class and national liberation are on the ascendancy, and in which foreign imperialist powers are challenging its domination, certainly can't do today what the slave power was unable to do over 100 years ago — solve its problems through aggression and expansion.

The monopolists are equally unable to solve their problems at home, where they are not only imposing a wage freeze, but are also attempting to impose a far more repressive racist freeze on Black liberation struggles than that of the McCarthy period.

By perpetuating and intensifying racism, monopoly aims to stop the advance of the Black liberation movement, to destroy organized labor and suppress every struggle of the oppressed and exploited.

## *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 increasing political repression, the attempted frameup of Angela Davis and other political prisoners, Nixon's racist nominations to the Supreme Court, are all part of monopoly's attempt to obliterate every advance made through Black and white struggle since Reconstruction was destroyed.

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.

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.

## *Dimensions of the Crisis*

The crisis of poverty and unemployment Black Americans now face is, save for the almost total genocidal elimination of American Indians, without precedent for any segment of this country's population.

"The unemployment rate among Black workers in the ghetto now exceeds the general rate of unemployment of the entire nation during the depression of the 1930's," reported Herbert Hill, NAACP Labor Secretary, at the organization's 1971 National Convention.

“The rate of unemployment of Black workers in 25 major centers of urban non-white population concentration is now between 25 per cent and 40 per cent,” stated Hill, “and the unemployment rate for Black youth will be in excess of 50 per cent by the middle of this summer. In 1933, the national unemployment rate was 24.9 per cent, the highest officially recorded unemployment in the history of the United States.” Hill also pointed out that tens of thousands of Black workers are classified as employed but never have an income that could lift them above the poverty level.

Yet, stark as this statistical report is, it cannot possibly convey the disaster of racism, poverty and oppression affecting every aspect of the lives of Black Americans today. The end of the decade of civil rights struggles left the Black masses with a feeling of vast frustration; not only had their condition failed to improve, it had worsened.

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

### *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.

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.

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.*

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.

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.

### *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 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.

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.

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.*

### *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.

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.

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.

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.)*

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.)

### *Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass*

Martin Luther King’s sectarian opponents proclaimed their Marxism, but their policies and practice were contrary to its principles. On the other hand, King’s philosophy was that of moral suasion, but in practice he came to rely more and more on the liberating force of mass struggle as the foundation for Black freedom and social advance for all the oppressed and exploited.

Though not a Marxist, King was steadily moving toward a strategy that tended to coincide with the Marxist-Leninist concept of an anti-monopoly policy, one involving the Black and white sectors of the working class, the Black liberation movement, the Puerto Rican and Chicano masses, and all others opposed to war and poverty. This strategy continues in today’s terms — when the working-class is the leading force — the strategy developed by Frederick Douglass during the Abolitionist period, when he struggled to form a broad coalition of Abolitionists and other strata to break the slave owners’ control of Congress and the Federal Government.

Just as it is impossible to understand the Civil Rights Decade without understanding the role of Martin Luther King, it is impossible to grasp the meaning of the anti-slavery struggle without understanding the role of Frederick Douglass, the great genius and architect of the anti-slavery strategy.

Like King, Douglass matured in struggle against sectarian, separatist and accommodationist tendencies within the movement of his time. As one example, his writings show that throughout the crucial decade of the 1850s, he resisted the separatist alternative of emigrationism which would have weakened the anti-slavery front. Douglass saw that emigrationism, a forerunner of Pan Africanism, objectively meant accommodation to the slave power.

And, as early as 1848, Douglass began to oppose the sectarianism of William Lloyd Garrison and other anti-slavery forces who were against both electoral action and any coalition with those whose objectives stopped short of abolition.

In this connection, Douglass himself had at first feared that the Free Soil movement, which opposed the extension of slavery but did not demand its abolition, might divert from the anti-slavery struggle. However, he came to understand the objective role of this movement within the anti-slavery strategy and called upon the Abolitionists to support it:

We may stand off ... and in this way play into the hands of our enemies . . . [or] remain silent and speechless, and let things take their course. . . . In neither of these ways can we go. (*The North Star*, August 18, 1848.)

While calling for a common front of the Abolitionists with the Free Soilers and others opposed to the extension of slavery, Douglass at the same time relentlessly advanced the Abolitionists' independent goal of an end to slavery. He wrote:

Free Soilism is lame, halt and blind, while it battles against the spread of slavery, and admits its right to exist anywhere. If it has the right to exist it has the right to grow and spread . . . The only way to put an end to the aggressions of slavery is to put an end to slavery itself. (*Frederick Douglass' Paper*, August 24, 1855.)

Douglass never relaxed in his drive for the development of the strategy which eventually led to a political realignment, one from which the Republican Party headed by Lincoln emerged to challenge the two major parties of the period. At the time this realignment was in the process of formation, he wrote:

We rejoice in this demonstration . . . to bury party affinities and predilections, and also the political leaders who have hitherto controlled them; to unite in one grand phalanx and go forth, and whip the enemy. (*Ibid.*, July 27, 1855.)

### *Frederick Douglass and Karl Marx*

In 1846, two years before writing the *Communist Manifesto*, the young Karl Marx had already revealed his deep understanding of the struggle against slavery in the U.S. His thinking closely paralleled the direction Frederick Douglass was taking, and this remarkable parallelism in the liberation strategy of these two giants of world history continued throughout every phase of the anti-slavery struggle.

Marx, too, saw the Free Soil movement as an objective force against slavery, and opposed the sectarianism of those who resisted coalition with it. At the same time, he warned against the

utopian views of some of the Free Soilers. For example, writing of Herman Kriege, editor of the *Volkstribun* in New York, Marx said:

. . . he continues to chant his paean: And so the old dreams of the Europeans would at last come true. A place would be prepared for them on this side of the ocean which they would only have to take and to fructify with the labour of their hands, so as to be able proudly to declare to all the tyrants of the world, “this is my cabin, which you have not built; this is my hearth whose glow fills your hearts with envy.”

He might have added, This is my dunghill, which I, my wife, my children, my manservant, and my cattle have produced. And who are the Europeans whose “dreams” would thus come true? Not the communist workers, but bankrupt shopkeepers and handicraftsmen, or ruined cottars, who yearn for the good fortune of once again becoming petty bourgeois and peasants in America. And what is the “dream” that is to be fulfilled by means of these 1,400,000 acres? No other than that all men be converted into private owners, a dream which is unrealizable and as communistic as the dream to convert all men into emperors, kings and popes. (Quoted in: Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 327.)

Thus Marx’s aim, like Douglass’, was to develop a strategy that would bring together a coalition to stop the spread of slavery as the precondition for its abolition.

*At the same time, Marx’s polemic against Kriege has profound significance to the struggle against white chauvinism: it demonstrated his irreconcilable opposition to every form of accommodation to the influence of racism.* Marx was battling against the seepage of racist poison into the Abolitionist movement, in this case in the form of the illusion that Western land could be won for the white masses — while the Indians were driven off this same land and the Blacks remained enslaved.

While the Free Soil movement aimed at keeping the Western land from the slave power, Marx saw that it could not halt the eventual takeover of this land and economy by the rising capitalist class. He attacked the petty-bourgeois illusions of the Free Soilers because they carried the seed of the racist division which would weaken the strategy for the most democratic outcome in the struggle against the slave power. And any weakening of this strategy would jeopardize the fight for Black liberation, further the plunder and genocide of the Indians, and profoundly disfigure the struggle for unity of the Black and white working class, whose mission it would be to lead in the battle for the abolition of wage slavery after the abolition of chattel slavery

### *Racist “Disfigurement” of Class Struggle*

In addition, Marx saw that the greater the democratic gains of the masses, the less would the future struggles of labor with a black skin and labor with a white skin be distorted by the divisive ideology of racism. And later, applying Marxism to the imperialist stage of capitalism, Lenin placed the struggle for democracy, in the way Marx viewed it, at the center of the struggle for the socialist revolution. Racism, on the other hand, results in what Marx many times described as the

“disfigurement” of the class struggle — diverting it away from the class enemy into division and fragmentation of the exploited and oppressed.

That is why Lenin tirelessly emphasized that the struggle for democracy is indivisibly bound up with the struggle against racism, and class and national oppression. Lenin saw this struggle as the key to advancing the unity of the workers of the oppressor nation with the workers and the people of any oppressed nation or nationality.

In an article that appeared in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1861, Marx forewarned that the United States would continue to suffer from racist disfigurement if the abolition of slavery was in any way compromised:

The progressive abuse of the Union by the slave power, working through its alliance with the Northern Democratic Party is, so to say, the general formula of United States history since the beginning of this century. The successive compromise measures mark the successive degrees of encroachment by which the Union became more and more transformed into the slave of the slaveowner. (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p.6.)

The confirmation of Marx’s analysis can be found in the “successive compromises” which led to the betrayal of Reconstruction and, finally, the transformation of the Union into the slave of state monopoly capitalism.

The history of this country has been warped and distorted, first by slavery, then the survivals of slavery and the ceaseless propagation of racist ideology. And from this history it can be clearly seen that the class interests of white workers, as in the struggle against the super-monopolies today, can only be advanced in unity with Black workers and as an integral part of the fight to end the oppression of Black people.

In writing of Marx’ simultaneous support of the land reform movement and opposition to those who saw that movement as a means of realizing their petty-bourgeois dreams instead of a way to struggle against class and racist oppression and exploitation, Lenin said:

While mercilessly ridiculing the absurd ideological trappings of the movement, Marx strives in a sober, materialist manner to determine its real historical content, the consequences that must inevitably flow from it because of objective conditions, regardless of the will and the consciousness, the dreams and theories, of the various individuals. Marx, therefore, does not condemn, but fully approves communist support of the movement. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 328.)

At the same time, Marx saw that even an uncompromising struggle against all vestiges of slavery, against the plunder and murder of the Indians, and to gain land for Black and white toilers, could not change the nature of commodity production which would inevitably lead to the take-over of the land and the economy by the rising capitalist class. Lenin wrote:

With remarkable penetration, Marx, who was then only the future economist, points to the role of exchange and commodity production. The peasants, he says, will exchange the produce of the land, if not the land itself, and that says everything! The question is dealt with in a way that is largely applicable to the Russian peasant movement and its petty-bourgeois ideologists. . . . Marx, however, does not simply repudiate this petty-bourgeois movement, he does not dogmatically ignore it, he does not fear to soil his hands by contact with the movement of the revolutionary petty-bourgeois democrats — a fear that is characteristic of many of the doctrinaires. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 327, 328.)

### *Douglass and Black Power*

While Douglass was the champion of Black and white unity within the Abolitionist movement, as well as the architect of the strategy to bring about a national political realignment, he also advocated the self-organization of Black people.

By 1849, Douglass was already calling for such a group, to be named the National League of Colored People. He had even suggested a constitution for it, with a preamble that stated:

. . . we have long deplored the distracted and divided state of the oppressed, and the manifold evils resulting there from, and desiring as we do to see an union formed which shall enable us better to grapple with the various systems of injustice and wrong by which we are environed, and to regain our plundered rights, we do solemnly agree to unite in accordance with the following. (*The North Star*, August 10, 1849.)

Douglass was certain that in their struggle for liberation, and as part of the struggles of all oppressed and exploited, Black people would achieve self-union. “We shall never despair of our people, and union will yet be affected — our ranks cannot always be divided,” he wrote in *The North Star* (November 19, 1849).

It is clear that Douglass was the original advocate of “Black power” and that his concept had nothing in common with the disruptive sloganizing of Stokely Carmichael. Douglass rejected all tendencies that viewed Black power in a separatist way. “It is evident,” wrote Douglass, “that white and black must fall or flourish together.” (*The North Star*, November 16, 1849.)

Douglass not only opposed separatist concepts of Black power, he also polemicized against those who feared that the press would falsely portray Black self-union as anti-white. This group included a prominent Black friend who wrote to *The North Star*, saying, “I believe that the motto, ‘Union of the oppressed for the sake of freedom,’ will be interpreted by the pro-slavery press, to mean an union of the black against the white.” Douglass, continuing in his insistence that there was no contradiction between the self-union of the oppressed Blacks and unity with white opponents of the slave-owners, responded by stating that “it seems worse than timidity for us to hesitate to adopt measures for our improvement and elevation, from fear of misinterpretation.” For Douglass, self-union of the oppressed Black people — as the starting point of Black power — was fully consistent with unity with white Abolitionists and coalition with other white strata in

order to advance liberation. He saw that Abolition could not be achieved if Blacks pursued a separatist policy.

Douglass saw that all struggle, including that for self- organization, was a process. It would be self-defeating, he realized, for Black people to reject the strategy of coalition until some vague future date when they had achieved complete internal organization.

Douglass did not waver in his conviction despite bitter attacks by Garrison and other sectarians in the Abolitionist movement who opposed a coalition strategy against the slave power. The passive acceptance of their views, he was convinced, would lead to the perpetuation of slavery for an indeterminate length of time.

Douglass also realized that refusal to enter into coalition with forces that did not, at that stage of the struggle, accept the goal of abolition would contradict and undermine an anti-slavery strategy. Had Douglass advocated the anti- coalition concept of Black power advanced today by Carmichael, Forman, Boggs and others, the coalition of forces that led to the defeat of the slave power would not have been achieved.

In today's struggle against the genocidal economic and social aggressions of state monopoly capitalism, those so-called radicals advocate the type of "Black power" strategy that Douglass so relentlessly opposed — a separatist concept that would dissipate instead of strengthen Black power, and would result in the perpetuation of unequal power of the oppressed and exploited in the battle against the racist ruling class.

According to Stokely Carmichael, "The major mistake made by the exponents of the coalition theory is that they advocate alliances with groups which have never had as their central goal the necessity for the total revamping of society. At bottom, these groups accept the American system and want only — if at all — to make peripheral, marginal reforms in it. Such reforms are inadequate to rid society of racism." (Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power, the Politics of Liberation in America*, Random House, New York, 1967, pp. 60-61.)

Carmichael is vague about what he means by the "total revamping of society." The only way that can be accomplished is by establishing socialism, which he opposes. Carmichael also states that "reforms are inadequate to rid society of racism." Of course this is true, since only the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by socialism can totally abolish racism. The majority of Black as well as white masses, however, are not ready to wait for socialism as the solution to their exploitation and oppression today. They continue to search for answers to the problems imposed by their common exploiter and oppressor, state monopoly capitalism.

Despite this fact, Carmichael calls upon Black people to reject the struggle for reforms in favor of the "total revamping" of society. In the same breath, he advocates interracial disunity pending the achievement of complete Black self-unity.

But this self-unity will come about only as a part of the revolutionary process in which the struggle for the racial and class unity of the oppressed and exploited is an aim and result of every battle against the racist oppressor. Those who do not understand the role of coalition in the

people's fight to improve their condition fail to see the relationship between reforms and revolution.

Long ago, Douglass answered those who persist in the illusion that the destiny of oppressed Black people is separate and unrelated to the destiny of exploited whites. "We deem it a settled point," wrote Douglass, that the destiny of the colored man is bound up with the white people of this country . . . and the question ought to be . . . what principle should dictate policy . . ." (*The North Star*, November 16, 1849.)

### *Frederick Douglass and Paul Robeson*

In our time, the towering figure of Paul Robeson has personified the link between two significant periods — from the betrayal of Reconstruction to the era of Black liberation begun with Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Decade.

Frederick Douglass had himself been a slave and Robeson is the son of a slave. Like Douglass in his time, Robeson has devoted his life to the cause of Black liberation. And, like Douglass, he recognizes that Black liberation cannot be achieved via a separatist path, but through Black power in alliance with the oppressed and exploited of all colors. Robeson has always seen Black independence and Black- white alliance as related, indispensable components of the liberation struggle.

The principles that should dictate policy," Robeson has declared, are the following: "Dedication to the Negro people's welfare is one side of the coin; the other side is independence. Effective Negro leadership must rely upon and be responsive to no other control than the will of the people. We have allies — important allies — among our white fellow citizens, and we must seek to draw them close to us and to gain many more. But the Negro people's movement must be led by Negroes, not only in terms of title and Position but in reality." (Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand*, Othello Associates, New York, 1958, p. 111.)

Robeson struggled for self-union of his people at home, and for solidarity with the oppressed and their allies at home and abroad. Whereas Douglass travelled widely in Europe to win support for the anti-slavery cause, Robeson travelled even more extensively, rallying support for Black liberation and championing liberation from imperialism everywhere.

That Robeson's travels were more extensive than Douglass' was of course made possible by the October Revolution, which replaced the czar and serfdom with socialism, opening the way for the end of racism and oppression in a major part of the globe, and becoming the most decisive support for the oppressed and exploited throughout the world.

Wherever he went, Robeson earned the hatred of the U.S. imperialists — and never more than in Paris in 1949, when he declared: "It is unthinkable that American Negroes could go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed them for generations against the Soviet Union which in one generation has raised our people to full human dignity."

When Robeson asserted that Black men would never fight against the country of socialism — the Soviet Union, the chief supporter and champion of liberation from imperialism, oppression and

racism — he was expressing what is at the heart of today's Black resistance to fighting a war to oppress others.

### *For a Strategic Breakthrough*

In Douglass' time, the strategy to break the slave power's control of Congress and the Federal Government was the precondition for the abolition of slavery. Today, the precondition for opening the path to the abolition of wage slavery and racist oppression through socialism is the strategy to defeat the threat of fascism and to break the monopolists' domination of Congress and the Federal Government.

“Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism [in its] preparatory stages,” stated Georgi Dimitrov, “*is not in a position to prevent the growth of fascism, but on the contrary, facilitates that victory.*” (*United Front Against Fascism*, New Century Publishers, New York, 1950, p. 9.)

The anti-coalition views of Carmichael, Forman, Boggs and others are nothing less than opposition to a united front against the “reactionary measures” with which monopoly prepares for its imposition of fascism.

However, regardless of the disruptive nature of the views of such Black radicals, it must be recognized that the main obstacle to Black and white unity against the common enemy is the influence of racism on white workers. And it is the primary responsibility of white revolutionaries to lead the fight against racist ideology and to mobilize white workers in the struggle against racism and in support of Black liberation as indispensable to the advance of their class interests.

The aim of monopoly is to force a reversal of every aspect of bourgeois democracy, limited as it is, in order to open the way for fascism. The aim of the anti-monopoly program, as advocated by the Communist Party, is to bring about a *strategic* breakthrough to a deeper and wider degree of democracy, one that would powerfully accelerate the revolutionary process, opening the way to Black liberation and socialism.

Once this anti-monopoly strategy succeeds in breaking the control of state monopoly capital over Congress and the government, the forces exist, internally and internationally — in contrast to the anti-slavery period — that can prevent the betrayal of the struggle. There is such a perspective, and this is so, first of all, because the forces of class and national liberation, headed by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, have changed the world balance of power.

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