

STALINIST WORKERS GROUP SUPPLEMENT

This was a proposed draft of the introduction to the comprehensive document on the Afro-American national liberation struggle that Youth for Stalin was writing in Summer and Fall 1968.

PRESENT SITUATION & CRISIS IN THE AFRO-AMERICAN NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE (September 1968)

The masses of Afro-American people are rising up. Their heroic struggle to free their Black Belt homeland is rapidly developing. The largely spontaneous but massive uprisings of the Afro-American people in over 200 cities across the US show that they now stand ready to meet the counter-revolutionary violence of US imperialism with revolutionary violence. They will no longer tolerate US imperialist domination and are preparing to do whatever is necessary to achieve national liberation.

There is also a widespread understanding among the Afro-American people of their UNITY with the national liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples all over the world--especially with the heroic south Vietnamese national liberation struggle.

The high level of political consciousness of the Afro-American masses has been gained through bitter struggle against US imperialism. In the past decade, the Afro-American national liberation struggle has advanced from legal court fights to non-violent marches, sit-ins and picket lines; from non-violent demonstrations to armed self-defense; and finally from largely spontaneous uprisings in over 200 cities to partially organized massive uprisings in the cities. The masses of Afro-American people cry out for a battle plan that will lead them to victory.

Afro-American revolutionary leaders are actively searching for the correct path--the path that leads to national liberation from US imperialist oppression. Analyzing the rich revolutionary experience of the Afro-American people in their national liberation struggle during the past decade (and especially the recent uprisings in Watts, Newark and Detroit) many Afro-American revolutionaries are now recognizing that the Northern cities, though an important arena of struggle, are not the main arena of struggle.

Brother Imari of the Malcolm X Society points out in his book, "War in America" (1966) that:

"...the Northern cities--where the warfare was fought for the first 3 years--are indefensible over the long-run. Although black populations in these areas run from 25 to 60 per cent, the cities are islands in the middle of white seas. In time of conflict, white strategy has been to surround black communities in the cities with police and National Guard (army) units, cutting these communities off from the outside. In a serious engagement food supplies within the surrounded areas could be depleted (as happened in Watts) in a week. The water and power supplies in many instances cut off, and lack of sanitation services, including the blocking of sewers, could be used as a weapon against the entire black population of an inner city. Finally, the compactness of black-occupied inner cities in the North lends these cities, once surrounded, to classic and brutal military sweeps." (p.21)

More and more revolutionary Black leaders are now recognizing that the main field of operation must be the Black Belt homeland and that the

struggles in the Northern cities (urban guerrilla warfare) must be coordinated with and subordinate to the struggle of an Afro-American liberation Army at the front (RURAL GUERRILLA WARFARE IN THE BLACK BELT).

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In the face of the rising of the Afro-American masses however, US imperialism has been able to carry out a successful crackdown on revolutionary Afro-American groups and organizations, and has temporarily silenced many revolutionary Afro-American leaders.

First of all, US imperialism has intensified its military repression of the Afro-American people. US imperialism has new elaborate plans (from armored tanks to concentration camps) for keeping the Afro-American nation under its subjugation. But US imperialism has learned from its efforts to suppress wars of national liberation throughout the world that it cannot defeat the aroused masses of the oppressed nations with brutal suppression alone.

US imperialism uses both "the carrot and the stick" to fight against national liberation. While arming goon squads of its state apparatus--the Army, National Guard and various police forces--to the teeth for use against the Afro-American people, and arousing the white middle class suburbanites to arms (cf. the white settlers in Azania (South Africa)), US imperialism conjures up the Kerner Commission Report and all the TV series on Black America to tell the Afro-American people in an organized "white-wash" campaign that US imperialism is working to improve the lot of the Black people. Although the situation of the Afro-American masses continue to worsen, many Afro-American people have been thrown off balance by this "goodwill" gesture of US imperialism.

US imperialism uses "the carrot" to mislead national liberation struggles. Its most important and effective "carrot" is international revisionism, headed by Russian revisionism and the Chinese "Cultural Revolution".

The main role of modern revisionism in the Afro-American national liberation struggle is to support Black bourgeois leadership and isolate the Afro-American proletariat, the only class capable of leading the Afro-American masses to national liberation from US imperialism. While the national bourgeoisie of the oppressed Afro-American nation can play a progressive role in the Afro-American national liberation struggle, it cannot fully mobilize the oppressed Afro-American people, nor can it mobilize international solidarity of the Vietnamese and other oppressed peoples behind Afro-American national liberation. Unable to achieve victory, the Black bourgeoisie inevitably depends on "compromise solutions" with US imperialism and the "great American people". Black bourgeois leadership of the Afro-American national liberation struggle renders the Afro-American masses defenseless against US imperialist occupation and domination.

With the aid of modern revisionism, US imperialism has been able to promote and "create" effective Afro-American misleaders, representatives of the right wing of the Afro-American national bourgeoisie, to "contain" the Afro-American national liberation struggle. These misleaders advocate open, non-violent work and tell the Afro-American people to rely on the "reasonableness" and "democracy" of US imperialism--on its courts and pho. elections.

Malcolm X pointed out in his speech at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference in 1963 that: "The white man takes a Negro, a so-called Negro, and makes him prominent, builds him up, publicizes him,

makes him a celebrity. And then he becomes a spokesman for Negroes--and a Negro leader...the white man uses the 'big guns', or Negro leaders, against the Negro revolution. They are not a part of the Negro revolution. They are used against the Negro revolution."*

MARTIN LUTHER KING: NATIONAL BOURGEOIS MISLEADERSHIP:

Calvin Hernton in his article, "Dynamite Growing Out of Their Skulls", exposes the incident around which King first gained the confidence of white America and thereby became the white-appointed leader of the Afro-American people:

"The emergence of the species of non-violent Negroes to the forefront of the freedom movement came shortly after the success of, and even during, the Montgomery bus protest movement in the mid-1950's... There were disputes among the older leaders about Dr. King's role as leader; but in time, the opposition was thoroughly removed, owing partly to the success of the boycott and, more significantly, to the way King had handled an explosive incident which occurred during the heyday of the boycott--the bombing of his home. On that night, a mob of young and lower-class Negroes gathered outside King's house with clubs, bottles, knives and possibly guns, too; the word echoed through the crowd: 'Let's get the white man!' Tremors went over the city. The angry blacks were talking back to the police, and the police got scared, because Negroes constitute a large part of the population in Montgomery and they could have made that city look as if General Sherman had marched to the sea again. Dr. King emerged on the bombed ruins of his porch that night and told the Negroes that they must forgive and learn to love the doers of violence, such as the bomb throwers who had barely missed killing him and his family. Instantly, throughout the nation, the press acclaimed this remarkable new species of the Negro; all of the liberals, and even some Southern moderates and diehards, praised the philosophy of love and non-violence as the best brand of Negro protest. From that night on, there was no question in the minds of white people as to who was the new leader of black people in America."

In the early days of the sit-ins and bus boycotts, the aims of the re-awakening Afro-American liberation movement were centered on bourgeois freedoms such as the right to eat in all restaurants or live in all neighborhoods. These are not serious concerns of the overwhelming mass of Afro-Americans who are concerned in the first place with the right to eat and live period--with or without whites. At this time King, as a representative of the Black bourgeoisie, was a leader of the fight in Montgomery and Atlanta and several other Southern cities.

But as the Afro-American national liberation movement advanced beyond these bourgeois demands--from integrated education to control of Black education, from integrated police forces to control of the police forces in Black neighborhoods, from the right to eat and live in integrated

* For Malcolm X's outstanding exposure of King's role in the 1963 March on Washington, see "Excerpt from Malcolm X's Speech at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference in Detroit" in the Appendix of "Toward Victorious Afro-American National Liberation" (Part I) by SWG.

surroundings to the demand for Forty Acres and a Mule--King was sent by US imperialism to every "trouble spot" to try to contain the struggle, to divert the Afro-American people back to the partial, token bourgeois demands and the non-violent tactics "suitable" to these demands.

Martin Luther King has been US imperialism's most valuable misleader in the Afro-American national liberation movement since the 1963 March on Washington. This March was taken over by the Kennedy Administration in order to establish King as the top leader and non-violence and integration as the "guiding philosophy" for the oppressed Afro-American people.

Before US imperialism's assassination of King, revolutionary Black leaders were increasingly exposing the treacherous nature of King's leadership. King was being more and more openly rejected by the Afro-American masses in favor of revolutionary Black nationalism.

When US imperialism gets away with killing a Black man it is always a setback for the Afro-American national liberation movement. We condemn the imperialists' murder of King, a Black man. We will not, however, prettify the role of betrayal that King has played in the Afro-American national liberation movement in the past and the rotten line of non-violence and integration of which he is now the martyred symbol.

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At least since 1963, King has been US imperialism's chief "fireman" in the Afro-American national liberation movement, trying to put out the flames of revolution in the Black Belt homeland and in the Northern ghettos with the philosophy of non-violence and integration. Brother Imari stated in "War in America" that on at least three occasions between 1961 and 1965, King--while doing his best to disarm the Afro-American people--called for the use of armed white imperialist stormtroopers in suppressing ghetto uprisings.

Why then did US imperialism murder King? Because King, alive, was becoming less and less effective; because the more the philosophy of non-violence in the face of imperialist attack is used, the more it is exposed as a tool of imperialist oppression.

In the summer of 1967, King was rejected by the Black masses of Chicago. With the Afro-American people's growing rejection of non-violence and integration, there has been a growing recognition of the need for LAND AND STATE POWER IN THE BLACK BELT and for ARMED STRUGGLE to liberate the oppressed Afro-American nation.

In April 1968, US imperialism sent King to Memphis to keep the Afro-American garbage workers' strike non-violent and confined to "economic questions only". Once again King was rejected by the aroused Afro-American people, and he was forced to flee. If King could not keep the Black masses of Memphis non-violent, it was obvious that the Poor People's March, which had been joined by militant Afro-American leaders, would overcome King's leadership and US imperialist control.

US imperialism murdered King to create a martyr--to put the tactics and strategy of the philosophy of non-violence and integration above criticism by the Afro-American people. US imperialism murdered King to try to stifle the developing consciousness among the revolutionary Afro-American people of the need for a scientific program for the liberation of the oppressed Afro-American nation. US imperialism murdered King so that the Afro-American and other oppressed and exploited peoples on the Poor People's March would be unprepared for any armed struggle and completely at the mercy of US imperialism.

US imperialism murdered King to try to regain the upper hand in its fight against Afro-American national liberation, to maintain control over the oppressed Afro-American nation and protect its super-profits.

US imperialism's act of desperation temporarily paid off! The Poor People's Campaign was abandoned to King's successor, Abernathy, with no substantial criticism. The revolutionary Black leadership did not warn the Indo-Hispano, Puerto Rican, American Indian or poor Black people of the treachery of Abernathy's leadership. The revolutionary Black leadership did not warn the people in Resurrection City of the grave dangers that they faced--unarmed and surrounded by the guns of US imperialism!

The failure of the Black liberation movement to thoroughly expose the bankruptcy and betrayal of the Poor People's Campaign set back the alliance of the poor and dispossessed within the present boundaries of the US (the very heart of which is the Afro-American national liberation movement)--the Anti-Imperialist Coalition--that has been developing.

US imperialism's murder of King helped to spread confusion throughout the Afro-American national liberation movement. It temporarily diverted the strong orientation that was developing out of criticisms of King--orientation around the liberation of the Black Belt territory from US imperialist occupation as the heart of Afro-American national liberation. The developing orientation toward armed struggle to liberate the Afro-American nation from imperialist oppression was temporarily overcome by an orientation toward "preventing genocide" and surviving imperialist attack.

Only a Marxist-Leninist program based on a perspective for the achievement of national liberation can, in the long run, provide protection from imperialist attack and from selective mass murder--mass murder of Afro-American people in politically advanced "pockets of resistance". It is the only program that can lead to the elimination of imperialist oppression and contribute to the destruction of the imperialist system. A program based on "survival" puts the Afro-American national liberation struggle on the defensive and leaves it unable to effectively deal with US imperialism's efforts to divert and destroy it.

Due to the disorientation caused by Martin Luther King's assassination, US imperialism has been able to carry out an effective crackdown on revolutionary Afro-American organizations and leaders.

Max Stanford and Martin Sostre have been framed and imprisoned.

SNCC leaders throughout the US have been framed and jailed. In Sept [1968] three leaders of Houston SNCC were given 10-30 year jail sentences for phony "drug abuse" charges. H. Rap Brown has been repeatedly harassed and imprisoned. [It is most likely that Rap Brown was assassinated in early March, 1970, along with Ralph Featherstone.]

The Black Panther Party has suffered continuous police attacks: --Bobby Hutton was murdered; Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver have been shot and imprisoned; Newton has been sentenced to 2-15 years in prison for "voluntary manslaughter"; a group of Panthers in New York were openly attacked by a mob of off-duty policemen while attending the frame-up trial of other Panther members; and three Panthers were murdered on August 17 by police in Los Angeles. This brutal repression has pushed the Panther leadership, which was developing a revolutionary perspective, into the lap of the white, middle class Peace and Freedom Party, which was

established by US imperialism and modern revisionism for the express purpose of protecting US imperialist control of the oppressed Afro-American nation by infiltrating and misleading revolutionary Afro-American organizations. Its influence on the Black Panther Party has resulted in a drastic change in the Panther line and program--from a program dedicated to ridding Northern Black communities from their gestapo-cop occupiers to one based on working for "reform" of the gestapo through the gestapo's own courts and elections, through civilian review boards, etc; from a concentration on mobilizing and politicizing the "man on the block" to one designed to rally white hippies and yuppies. [We planned to discuss here the SNCC-Panther split, giving full support to SNCC's revolutionary nationalist stand in opposition to the Panthers' integrationist "class struggle" line and to the Panthers' newly-formed alliance with the US white New Left.]

Why did US imperialism's murder of King disorient the Afro-American national liberation movement?? --The main reason is that no consistent program based on a Marxist-Leninist understanding of the NATIONAL character of the Afro-American struggle for liberation has been put forward. No consistent program based on struggle for LAND AND STATE POWER in the Black Belt and national minority rights for Northern Afro-American communities has been developed. No Afro-American Marxist-Leninist Party which represents the interests of the Afro-American proletariat--the vanguard of the Afro-American national liberation struggle--has been established to effectively mobilize the aroused Afro-American people and LEAD the Afro-American national liberation struggle to victory over US imperialism.

Today the right wing of the Black bourgeoisie, encouraged by US imperialism and backed by modern revisionism, has become the dominating force in the Afro-American national liberation struggle. Saddled with national bourgeois leadership and with the re-penetration of the white New Left representatives of the "great American people", the aroused Afro-American masses have recently suffered important defeats at the hands of US imperialism and are threatened with more terrible defeats if the Afro-American national bourgeoisie remains in leadership of their struggle for national liberation. Until the Afro-American national liberation struggle achieves proletarian leadership, it will be unable to overcome the powerful influence of the King's and Abernathy's and other national bourgeois misleaders and establish a Marxist-Leninist line and policy for Afro-American national liberation in opposition to the "great American people".

Today there is a CRISIS IN THE AFRO-AMERICAN NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE --a struggle is being waged to decide WHICH CLASS WILL LEAD THE AROUSED AFRO-AMERICAN PEOPLE in their national struggle against US imperialism and the "great American people" and for national liberation.

National bourgeois leadership results in disorientation and defeats. Proletarian leadership will lead to victory--to the achievement of self-determination for the Afro-American nation--of LAND AND STATE POWER IN THE BLACK BELT. Which class will lead the national struggle? This is the essence of the crisis which the Afro-American national liberation struggle now faces.

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Stalinist Workers Group for Afro-American National Liberation
and a New Communist International